COMMENT

September 11, *ET*, and *ETe*

This issue of *ET* was put together in later 2001, when terrorism dominated the world's headlines. Yet, among the reports and commentaries on what was happening, I had not by the end of the year come across any significant media discussion of the language of terror and counter-terror or of the usage of the media itself when reporting the events that flowed from Sept. 11, S11, or 9/11 (to use the adapted US emergency phone number that has become a short form for this apocalyptic global date).

During the same period, and after a series of unanticipated delays, *ET* has at last acquired the cyberspace extension which we promised in *ET*61 (16:1) in Jan 2000, the first issue in our 16th year. *ETelectronic* – *ETe* for short – now exists, and I am happy to welcome it in *ET*69 (18:1).

On p. 4 we include the remarks with which *ETe*'s moderator (and *ET* board member) Professor Alan Kaye, of California State University at Fullerton, welcomed the website's first visitors, while, from p. 3 onward, there is a revised and up-dated version of the opener I wrote for *ETe* on the language of terror, counter-terror, and related media comment. This is followed both by the comments of our first two *ETe* respondent/participants and a series of items from our files that further illustrate novel usage during the on-going crisis. Like most e-projects, there have been initial teething troubles, but *ETe* has already had many 'hits'. Alan Kaye and I look forward to the creative evolution of this novel extension, as well as interplay between paper and screen. Comments are welcome, on the one hand by email or letter to the Editor and on the other through e-offerings to the Moderator.

*ET*69 has been an intriguing issue to put together, ranging from an interview with a giant of language scholarship, Michael A. K. Halliday, through a reminder of just how multilingual London is, and reports on the links between the Englishes of Africa and African America, on a new language (English) being taught to children through a medium they already know (Chinese), on North Korea's ideology-driven English-teaching regime, as well as more grist to the descriptive/prescriptive mill, a survey that demonstrates how adverbially different American and British can be – and Shondel J. Nero's illustrative 'point' that there are always surprises in the way the world uses its English.

Tom McArthur

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English and 'the war on terror'

A revised and extended version of *TOM McARTHUR*'s essay in *ET*electronic, October 2001: <www.cambridge.org/forums/etelectronic>. The original version opened the proceedings in our e-forum, moderated by Editorial Board member *ALAN KAYE* (see panel, p. 4)

The explosions of 11 September 2001 in Manhattan continue to reverberate, and English reverberates with them. Indeed, at the time of writing, at least three language themes have emerged out of the terrorist assault on New York and Washington, the US-British attacks on Afghanistan, and an ensuing global unease that has included postal anthrax attacks in the United States. The first theme covers social, political, military, and other issues centring on terrorism and counter-terrorism. The second covers the style and usage of the American president and his government. And the third relates to Islam in general and Muslim fundamentalism in particular, and particularly a range of Arabic and Persian expressions that are intimately tied to the crisis. I will take each in turn.

1 Terror and disruption

Over time, this theme is likely to be the largest area of interest, concern, and indeed creativity, but currently it is the least clear-cut, because many of the 'hot' usages in the media and elsewhere may be short-lived. However, some have powerful resonances and may remain part of the language at large. The most immediate, a simple dateline, appears to have seared itself into the minds of hundreds of millions …, and at the time of writing it has been ubiquitous in the news media, as in:

- 'The calamitous events of Sept. 11…', 'The World Trade Center, attacked in 1993 and brought down on Sept. 11…' (*International Herald Tribune*, 10 Oct 01)
- 'In the wake of Sept. 11…' (*TIME*, 15 Oct 01)
- 'Before September 11, such a dressing-down by the President's top spokesman would have drawn a howl of protests from free-speech advocates' (*South China Morning Post,* 15 Oct 01); 'How September 11 descended into horror' (same, 17 Oct 01).
- '…19 maniacs who died on September 11th', 'the September 11th air crashes', and 10 such other references in *The Economist*, 20-26 Oct 01)

In the *South China Morning Post* (14 Nov 01) at least the following phrases occurred: 'following the September 11 attacks' (twice, in articles on the front page); 'on September 11' (four times, in four articles); 'before September 11' (twice); 'since September 11' (once), 'the September 11 attack/attacks' (five times, two on the same page, one of them in an editorial); 'worse than the 11th' (once, no September); 'on the 11th' (once); 'the aftermath of September 11' (once); 'the events of September 11' (once); 'the tragic events of September 11 (once) 'the September 11 tragedy' (once); 'by September 11' (once); 'their pre-September 11 levels' (twice). Seven of these phrases occurred in a single article entitled 'Overload for carriers'. This makes 23 items in all, and the *SCMP* edition was by no means unusual. *The Economist* (27 Oct 01) had at least 26 mentions and the *IHT* (25 Oct 01) at least 38.

This date may become as emblematic as the day on which Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the

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Starting up *ET*electronic

The following are Alan Kaye's welcoming remarks when he inaugurated *ET*'s Web extension in October 2001:

Welcome to *ETe* – an international forum devoted to the English language, all of its dialects in all contexts and in all their ramifications and implications, and from all perspectives. We begin with the event of the day (or of the millennium, if you will) – "the war on terror." Following is Tom McArthur's essay "English and 'the war on terror'." We invite commentary on any aspect of it or from any angle. For example, it is interesting to note that Reuters News Service is no longer using the word "terrorist", since this organization believes that one person's "terrorist" is another person's "freedom fighter", as is mentioned by Dr. McArthur. This is a very recent overt change in a genre which will have enormous implications for the English of the future.

Since this is a refereed forum, we would ask our authors to make substantive points and to avoid anything which may offend or be considered objectionable, especially in these very sensitive times which "try men's souls." We would especially request shorter communications on specific points.

Alan S. Kaye
Fullerton, California, U. S. A.
Moderator, *ETe* (*English Today Electronic*)
October 9, 2001

Houses of Parliament, in London in 1605: 'Remember, remember, the Fifth of November: gunpowder, treason, and plot!' Four centuries later, the name, the day, and the month survive strongly, but the year and the nature of the Gunpowder Plot have largely gone from public notice. For Americans, a closer and stronger comparison is another 'day of infamy': December 7, 1941, on which Japan launched the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour that brought the US into World War II.

There are signs that the new date has staying power. On the cover of a special issue of *Time* is a single picture of the twin towers of the World Trade Center burning, and beside them, in small letters, 'September 11, 2001'. In addition, some weeks after the 11th, I received a copy of a collective e-mail initiated in the US, whose topic was simply *S11*.

The core event on S11 was the detonations in New York and their aftermath, and the area where the twin towers had stood was almost immediately called *Ground Zero*. This was a radically new application of a coinage quietly in use since the mid-20th century for the point of detonation of a nuclear weapon – not of a conventional bomb blast and certainly not the explosion of hijacked airliners and targeted skyscrapers. However, it may be that this will become the primary sense of the term, and the only sense that many will know.

Rather different is use of the US government's phrase *the war on terror*, as in an account of some journalists in Pakistan begging 'for a ride to the frontline of the so-called war on terror' (*SCMP*, 19 Oct 01). Later variants include *the war against terror*, *the war on terrorism*, and *the war against terrorism*, all widely used in the media. Such coinages have made many people wonder what such a war might be like: certainly very different from the paradoxically peaceful phrase 'war on want' as used some decades ago. Some ask whether war as the term is more usually understood can in fact be waged against such a clandestine network as Osama bin Laden's.

The nature and behaviour of bin Laden's network parallels the famous or infamous 11th-century Ismaili Muslim group called the *hashashin* ('users of hashish'), whose headquarters were in Alamut, near Tehran – not so very far from Afghanistan. Its founder, Hasan ibn Sabah (nicknamed 'The Old Man of the Mountain') used to send out his men to kill his enemies, often Christian leaders, after which they immediately killed themselves, believing that they would instantly go to Paradise. The medieval *hashashin*, who bequeathed the world the word *assassin*, are probably the historical template for the Sept. 11 terrorists.

The idea of a *war against terror(ism)* has given a new lease of life to the decades-old comment 'One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. However, if as seems likely Osama has financed or otherwise backed guerrilla warfare and acts of destruction in such locales as Chechnya, Xinjiang, Nairobi, the Philipppines, and New York, then perhaps in this particular 'war' the meaning of *terror* will be bin-Laden-specific: the enemy will not be the set of all killers of innocent people for political reasons, but only those associated with him or Islam, and the 'terror' will only be the kind that Muslim activists engage in. Other 'men of

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violence' (as they say in Ireland) may therefore be set to one side for the duration. No Tamil Tiger need lose much sleep.

At the same time, however, many people from many backgrounds are hoping – or assuming until proved wrong – that no distinctive spin has been or will be imposed on *terror*, *terrorism*, and *terrorist*. The US has asked for a world response, but the world's largely generous response demonstrates that every group joining the *coalition against terror* has its own concept of terror. The response of Russia regarding Chechnya and China regarding the Uighurs of Xinjiang should therefore hardly be a surprise. The British may already, however, have had a positive result, if indeed donations in the US to the IRA are drying up, and have therefore been a factor in impelling that group to put some of its many weapons 'beyond use'.

The second phase of terror probably relates to the first, although at the time of writing no link had been publicly established. Few people in the developed world have had much to do with the disease called *anthrax* – which got its name from the Greek word for 'coal' (as also found in *anthracite*), because the ulcers it causes look like hot coals. Military experts have been aware of anthrax for years as a potential weapon, notably as purportedly stored in Iraq by Saddam Hussein. Now two of their usages – *weaponize* and *weaponized anthrax* – have entered public consciousness. It has often been emphasized that Osama bin Laden is immensely wealthy, yet the anthrax panic has been generated at little expense: a little white powder (with or without anthrax spores), some envelopes, and use of the postal service. The casualties do not compare with those on S11, but this sinister campaign has been vastly effective, and has spawned a novel rash of compounds, such as *anthrax scare*, *copycat 'anthrax' attacker, anthrax outbreak, inhalation/respiratory anthrax,* and *skin/cutaneous anthrax*.

2 Bushisms

George W. Bush shares with his father a capacity for what some media commentators have called 'Bushisms': expressions that don't come out quite the way they should or don't quite fit the occasion. At the end of the 1980s, the journalist Simon Hoggart had a mini-column in the London *Observer* called 'Bushism of the Week', an example of which was: 'I wouldn't want to say this kind of development makes things to be moving too quickly at all… so I'm not going to hypothecate that it may – anything goes too fast' (17 Dec 1989). George W. became noted for similar foot-in-mouth-isms during his campaign for the presidency, along with an apparent parallel lack of what his father called 'the vision thing'.

In September, the second President Bush was widely shown on TV, and quoted in print, as saying, with regard to Osama bin Laden: 'I want justice. And there's an old poster out West that says, Wanted: Dead or Alive.' By that point, however, many people around the world were already using such cowboy analogies negatively. Thus, Ebbe Norsk, a Norwegian in the letter section of the *IHT* (20 Sep 01), noted: 'The John Wayne approach will lead to escalating violence. Terrorism cannot be fought with missiles.' Intriguingly, however, on at least one occasion, the analogy worked rather differently. In Hong Kong's *Sunday Morning Post*, Daniel Lak, reporting from Pakistan, referred to 'the bazaars of Quetta, a Wild-West-style border town' (30 Sep 01). The President may yet prove to have been closer to the reality of things than many Bush-watchers have supposed: the North-West Frontier and the Wild West have plenty in common.

Few headline-writers can resist word-play, especially if it refers to something topical. For example, a *NYT/IHT* report by Elisabeth Bumiller and Frank Bruni, was headlined 'Unscripted, Bush Shoots From the Lip – President's "Regular-Guy" Language Draws Both Cheers and Jeers'. Part of the report ran:

> In the last week, Americans have watched their president move from the quiet language of grief to the rowdy colloquialisms of the Old West… Are these the words of a White House image-maker, or is this the real President George W. Bush? Not surprisingly, White House officials and Republican strategists said Tuesday that, for better or worse, the gunslinger rhetoric had all come straight from the mind and the mouth of the president…. White House officials gave three reasons for the change in Mr Bush's style and rhetoric. First, they said, there has been little time during the crisis to script an intensely unscripted president. Second, they acknowledged that the president had grown more comfortable in straying away from prepared remarks and speaking from the gut. Third, White House advisers said they had been planning since the summer to put the president

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> in more informal settings, where he is more natural than when speaking behind a podium.

President Bush has also drawn flak, in the Muslim world and at home, for using the term *crusade* to describe the response of the US and its allies to terror in New York and Washington, as in 'Mr Bush warned the American people Sunday that "this crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take awhile"' (in 'Bush's Remark on "Crusade" Offends Muslims', *IHT*, 19 Sep 01). However, it is worth noting that *Time* unreflectingly used 'crusade' in its 1 Oct issue ('…the analogy to Woodrow Wilson's determination to make the world safe for democracy, a crusade disavowed at home and mocked abroad') while noting on another page that it was 'a mistake… at a time when the U.S. needs to be sensitive to its Muslim citizens and friends in Islamic countries, to cast the nation's task as a "crusade"; it was crass for Bush to adopt the attitude of a frontier sheriff and say he wanted bin Laden captured "dead or alive."' Mr President, sir, don't do as we do….

It is highly likely that many others besides the staff of *Time* would have fallen into the same verbal trap as Dubya. In the Western world, *crusade* long ago lost its medieval anti-Islamic associations, becoming a neutral campaigning term. However, such a secularized neutrality is hard for Muslims to appreciate. Because of this, a new kind of political correctness may emerge that limits the word, or makes its current everyday use ill-advised. As Niall Ferguson has noted in the *NYT* (and *IHT*, 21 Sep 01), in 'America's Struggle Will Be Long – Just Ask Europe':

> The fear of indiscriminate retaliation by the United States is particularly acute in countries like France, Holland, Britain and Germany, which have substantial Muslim populations. Only a tiny minority may respond to calls for a jihad, but that is reason enough for Europeans to feel nervous about American talk of a 'crusade'.

3 Islamic terms

Some of the most striking language aspects of the crisis relate not to S11, anthrax, or Bush and the war on terror, but to Islam itself. There is no problem regarding how to spell (and by and large pronounce) such names as *Islam* ('submission' to the will of God) and *Muslim* ('one who so submits'). Both press and public have generally abandoned the older (respectable but un-Arabic) form *Moslem*, as well as the once-widespread but now virtually defunct *Mohammedan* (a term intensely disliked by Muslims, because it suggests that they focus on Mohammed/Muhammad rather than on God).

There have however been some inconsistencies among key Islamic usages in the media. For example, is the organization that runs Afghanistan the *Taliban* (as in *Time*, *The Guardian, The Economist*, and the texts of BBC World and CNN) or the *Taleban* (as in *The New York Times, The International Herald Tribune*, and *The South China Morning Post*)?

William Safire in his syndicated *NYT* column (cf. *IHT,* 24 Sep 01) has *Taleban*, which he derives from Arabic *taleb* ('student'), noting that the word 'has been given a Persian suffix, an, which is an unusual amalgam or was a mistake'. However, the usual transliteration from Arabic into English is *talib*, and *taleb* is a Persian variant, for which the plural *taleban* is unremarkable. Persian is used in Afghanistan (notably in the form Dari) and has strongly shaped Urdu in the subcontinent, as a result of which the form *Taleban* in the two regions is routine. Both *Taliban* and *Taleban* are accurate, and the media outlets have generally been consistent in their use of one or the other.

Again, is bin Laden's loose-knit organization properly called *Qaida* (Arabic 'Base', originally referring to a base camp he once ran in Afghanistan for Muslim volunteers fighting the Soviets), as in the *NYT/IHT* ('the members of Qaida'; 'bin Laden's Qaida organization'), or is it *al-Qaida* ('the Base'), as in *The Guardian* ('…we fitted Bin Laden and al-Qaida into existing paradigms of terror'), or *al-Qaeda* (as in *Time*, *The Economist*, and the *SCMP*)?

Again, as with *Taliban/Taleban*, the key issue is the immediate source language. The form *Qaida* is the original Arabic and *Qaeda* is a Persian variant (*al-*, the Arabic definite article, often being retained in expressions adopted into Persian). The only problem might be if Western media used the form 'the al-Qaida' (as once happened with 'the Alcoran' rather than, as today, keeping *the* and dropping *al* as in 'the Koran/Quran'. *Qaida* on its own seems less satisfactory than either 'the Qaida' or 'al-Qaida'. If one follows the Arabic norm, the forms will be *Taliban* and *al-Qaida*; if one follows the Persian model, they will be *Taleban* and *al-Qaeda.* Safire in his column has *el Qaida* ('the Base'), with a variant spelling for the Arabic article, as in the place-name *El Alamein*. Oddly enough, *Time* consistently has Arabic *Taliban* alongside Persianized *al-Qaeda* (as in

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'… the cells of al-Qaeda and the Taliban', 1 Oct 01, in a text entitled 'The Taliban Troubles' and not far from a rather novel verb in the phrase 'the idea of Talibanizing the Muslim world').

The word *Islam* (Arabic: 'submission') and its derivatives can also pose problems. Thus, S. Wayne Morrison, in a letter to the editor of the *SCMP* (5 Oct 01), notes:

> Amid the global stereotyping of Muslims and Arabs, I ask that everyone be discriminating in the use of the term Islamic. It means 'of Islam', which has no part in acts of terror. Some of the terrorists are Muslims, but their acts are not Islamic. That such people call themselves Islamic does not mean they represent the religion…. By repeatedly using terms such as 'Islamic terror', governments and the media play to the terrorists' base aims.

In tandem, the use of *Islamist* for a fundamentalist Muslim (usually perceived as menacing) is currently widespread in the non-Muslim world, but may prove hard to sustain once tempers cool and a politically correct solution is sought. No one, for example, calls a fundamentalist Christian a **Christianist*.

Another word that may now have an uncertain future is *infidel*, which is always negative. Recent uses include: 'For him, life is preordained, written in advance by God, who in bin Laden's view must have delighted in the deaths of all those infidels in Manhattan last week' (Lisa Beyer, 'The Most Wanted Man in the World', *Time*, 24 Sep 01); 'Over the succeeding years, bin Laden redrew the map of infidels to include Israel, the US and sometimes its Arab allies, Egypt and Saudi Arabia' (Tim Golden, *NYT*, in the *SCMP*, 2 Oct 1).

Infidel has an Arabic ring to it, like *intifada* ('shaking-off'), the name for the uprising against the Israelis that began among the Palestinians in 1987. But the term is entirely Western, from Latin *infidelis* ('faithless'), related both to *hifi* and the Spanish name *Fidel.* However, *infidel* has had unique associations with Islam, and may as a result become taboo (as may also happen with *crusader*), except maybe among anti-Western Muslims who are fluent in English and eager to make a point: 'We will not, we cannot, permit the presence of infidel forces on Pakistani soil' (a Muslim cleric, quoted in 'Musharraf walks a tightrope', *SCMP,* 30 Sep 01).

An Arabic term that has gained wide distribution in recent years is *jihad* (Persian variant *jehad*). Although its basic sense is 'effort', focusing on personal spiritual struggle, it also means a war waged in defence of Islam. Someone who wages such a war is a *mujahid* ('striver, holy warrior'), plural *mujahidin* (Persian equivalents *mo-* or *mujahed* and *mo-* or *mujahedin*). The more colloquially spelt form *Mujahedeen* came into English as the name of self-described holy warriors fighting against the godless Soviets in defence of Afghanistan in the 1970/80s. The terms *jihad* and *mujahidin* are in essence the Muslim mirror images of *crusade* and *crusaders.* It was as a mujahed that Osama bin Laden set up his Afghan qaeda in the days when he and a crusading CIA were (more or less) on the same side. □

FOLLOW-UP

Terror and ideology

From *ROBERT GRANT* in Los Angeles

Tangential to Tom McArthur's discussion of language issues present in the context of the 'war on terror' is the Reuters editorial decision to cease using the lexeme *terrorist/ism*. I disagree with respect to this decision to redefine *terrorism*.

The term is precisely applied to the political philosophy articulated and practiced first by Lenin and then by Stalin and his successors in consolidating power in a young Soviet Union, in coercing submission on the part of all classes of the society not actively engaged in party activities, and, along the way, in consolidating sufficient labor to develop the military-industrial state that was (perceived to be) needed to extend the revolution throughout the world. Lenin's terror program was characterized by the threat, backed up by the application, of sudden, unpredictable, overwhelmingly violent force. This practice was exported to agents in client states and movements, including some Muslim organizations, who were supported and frequently directed by the Soviets from the late fifties until the demise of the Soviet Union.

It is ironic but hardly surprising that it is apologists for Sovietism, wearing the academic garb

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of 'relativists', who would deny the verisimilitude of applying the term 'terrorism' to the program of imposing one party's political will by sudden, seeming random, overwhelming and demoralizing acts of violence, just as was articulated and exercised by Comrade Lenin.

Certainly the Soviets and their clients have produced at least their fair share (among all political stripes) of politically efficacious euphemisms: *liberate* for 'conquer' (or 'steal', in some contexts); *re-education* for 'forcible indoctrination' (or 'slave labor', in some situations). The equivocation of *terrorist* – an active participant in this manner of political activity by the use of sudden violence – with *freedom fighter*, in its usual English context 'one who fights for political freedom', as understood in the context of the Anglo-American tradition (after all, this is English), is accomplished only by the construction of a neo-Marxian dialectic in which the presence of an authority that somehow prevents us from having our way entirely is, by a series of equivocations, recast terminologically as an 'oppressor' (another good Marxist word), against whom the erstwhile terrorist, now freedom fighter, struggles (another good Marxist word).

And along these lines, it seems that recognizing that some terrorists have their own histories and grievances which justify (to themselves?) their attacks, is only to euphemize the commonplace observation that many sociopaths do in fact hear the voices that they claim provoke them to commit violent acts – or, as articulated by a Simpson supporter during the OJ murder trial, "Even if he did it, he musta had a reason."

As Tom McArthur points out, the present situation provides a fruitful field for the observation of many linguistic principles.

Wild West justice?

From *BO EISERSJO* in Stockholm, Sweden

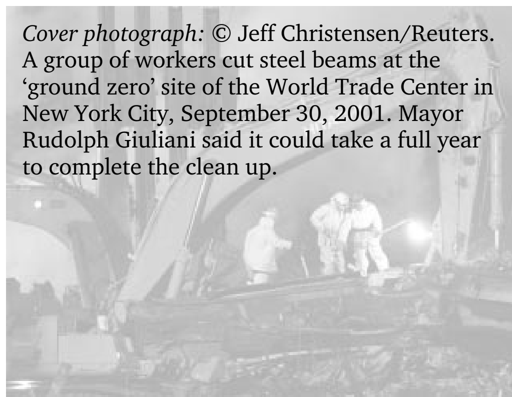
Do we need a new concept whose meaning is something between *justice* and *revenge*? *Rough justice*?

"In September the second President Bush was widely shown on TV, quoted in print as saying with regard to Osama bin Laden: 'I want justice. And there's an old poster out West that says, Wanted: Dead or Alive'" (T. McArthur, 7 October 2001). I suppose President Bush meant justice as an individual justice: If you *do justice to someone or something* you deal with them properly and completely.

One good feature with words is their flexibility: "Human languages exhibit a unique combination of characteristics: first, semantic world-to-world relations that we share with other primates; second, syntactic structures as complex and exact as in formal languages; and third, an openness, flexibility and ambiguity that formal languages do not allow" (G. Pullum & B. Scholz, 'Nature, Concepts', 27 September 2001). Justice in my mind denotes justice as a legal social system: Justice is a legal system that a country uses in order to deal with people who break the law.

But the development in the Middle East during the last decade appears to me to have changed people's view of justice, from justice as a legal system to justice as an act of revenge. "There occurred in the law of Hammurabi what follows: If a person pulls out the eye of another, his eye shall be pulled out. He who kills, shall be killed. If a person steals a thing belonging to another, he shall return it and the like of it" (F. Ziadeh & B. Winder, *An Introduction to Modern Arabic*, 1975). Collins *COBUILD* defines *revenge* as 'hurting or punishing someone who has hurt or harmed you' (*English Dictionary*, 2000).

Are we on our way of losing the concept of justice as the social International/The Hague idea of justice to the individual Babylonian/Wild West idea of justice? "When you lose a language," Kenneth Hale told a reporter, "you lose a culture, intellectual wealth, a work of art. It's like dropping a bomb on a museum" (*The Economist*, Obituary, 3 November 2001). □



Cover photograph: © Jeff Christensen/Reuters. A group of workers cut steel beams at the 'ground zero' site of the World Trade Center in New York City, September 30, 2001. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said it could take a full year to complete the clean up.

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FROM OUR FILES

Verbal fallout

The following quotations demonstrate the range and tone of recent commentary on the West's 'war on terror', mixing Western spookspeak with expressions and imagery drawn from Islam.

Sleepers and clearskins

(From Jason Burke, 'Bin Laden: public enemy No 1 and prime suspect', *Guardian Weekly*, 20–26 Sep 01)

> "What went wrong was we fitted Bin Laden and al-Qaida into existing paradigms of terrorism and terrorist organisation," said one former CIA official. "But that doesn't work. He is something entirely different, entirely new."… Al-Qaida maintains at least four elite training camps in Afghanistan, which teach bomb-making, security, intelligence-gathering, disguise, sabotage and abduction. And the hijacking of buses, trains and planes. For the Nairobi operation the team comprised a list of long-term sleepers, who had been in Kenya for years, and "clearskins", who had never been on an operation before. The same structure is now being discovered in America.

Greater and lesser Satans

(From Scott South, Dubai, in a letter to the *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Sep 01)

> The Muslim extremists cannot be appeased no matter what line of behavior the United States pursues in its foreign policy…. America's pervasive, infidel cultural influence deeply offends the religious oppressors, those bearded oppressors who recoil in horror at images of liberated, "provocatively" dressed women, treated more or less as equal human beings…. They deeply fear a world in which any person who reaches a certain mature age might choose any religion, or no religion at all, without incurring the merciless wrath of apostasy laws. In short, they profoundly resent the passing of the 8th century. Much of the world holds values similar to America's, but the latter is viewed by the mullahs as Satan's anchor, the standard-bearer that must be destroyed before the Lesser Satans can be confronted.

Which Satan?

(From Howard Schneider, 'Saudi Missteps Gave bin Laden Time to Build His Qaida Network', Washington Post News Service, in the *IHT*, 16 Oct 01)

> Riyadh – As Saudia Arabia's long-time chief of intelligence, Prince Turki al Faisal helped nurture the Afghan resistance movement that begot the country's Taliban leadership. So the sense of betrayal last week was understandably deep when he publicly addressed Osama bin Laden, another Saudi veteran of the anti-Soviet Afghan war. "God help us from Satan," Prince Turki wrote in the Asharq al Awsat newspaper… 'You are a rotten seed like the son of Noah, peace be upon him. And the flood will engulf you like it engulfed him'. But underlying Prince Turki's public show of frustration… is a series of miscalculations by Saudi Arabia that helped legitimise the Taliban even as it was offering sanctuary to Mr. Bin Laden, and that gave Mr. Bin Laden time and space to build his Qaida organization.

A 'mecca of terrorism'

(From Johanna McGeary, 'The Taliban Troubles,' *Time*, I Oct 01)

> If bin Laden is the bull's-eye in America's target, the Taliban is the next concentric ring, the masters of a country that has played host not just to the world's most wanted terrorist but also to thousands of jihadis who flock there to learn the tricks of the trade. Out of their harsh version of "pure" Islam and to keep themselves in power, the Taliban has made of Afghanistan a mecca of terrorism, a land whose aura of Islam ascendant lures volunteers from a vast pool of Muslims who want to partake of Afghanistan's great victory.

The 'Osama excuse'

(From Jerry Knight, '"Osama Excuse" for Company Woes: Attacks Are Being Exploited to Explain Away Poor Performances', the *International Herald Tribune*, 9 Oct 01)

> The terrorist attacks allowed AOL Time Warner to blame Osama bin Laden for its disappointing

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[corporate] performance, a stratagem instantly replicated. Every spin doctor and special pleader has figured out that the "Osama excuse" is the mother of all alibis. Not since "the dog ate my homework" have so many corporations and politicians used the same excuse. Bad profits? Blame Mr. Bin Laden. Want a multibillion-dollar taxpayer bailout for badly managed airlines? Just say that it is the terrorists' fault.

The Soviet infidel

(From Fred Weir, Moscow correspondent, *Sunday Morning Post* (*SCMP,* Hong Kong), 'A war the US "can't win"', 14 Oct 01)

> Andrew Sherstov says his worst memory is the ferocious cold that crept into his bones as he lay in ambush, waiting for Afghan Mujahedeen – Islamic " warriors of God" – bringing arms and supplies across the high Hindu Kush ['Hindu killers'] mountain passes.... The war quickly escalated... as the United States began to provide arms, money and training that made it possible for traditional Afghan warriors to take on a modern army. The CIA also encouraged "volunteers" from around the Islamic world – including Saudi multi-millionaire Osama bin Laden – to go to Afghanistan and fight the Soviet infidel.

In Kabul, an Orwellian ministry

('Homes of bin Laden, Omar razed', Agence France Presse, Kandahar, in the *South China Morning Post*, 1 Nov 01)

> "Their houses are completely flattened, razed to the ground," a local man said. "The Taleban headquarters in the centre of town is completely destroyed, so is the office of Vice and Virtue." The Ministry of Vice and Virtue is the Taleban's notorious department for enforcing a strict moral code based on the militia's puritanical interpretation of sharia law. It shuns all things Western, bans music, television and cinema, forces women to be covered from head to toe when in public and demands men wear untrimmed beards. Adulterers are publicly flogged. "I heard that when Vice and Virtue was flattened, people were dancing in the street," the resident said.

Westoxication?

(Salman Rushdie, 'Islam's Problems Come From Within', *The New York Times*, in the *IHT*, 3–4 Nov 01)

> "This isn't about Islam." The world's leaders have been repeating this mantra for weeks.... Of course this is "about Islam." The question is, what exactly does that mean? For a vast number of "believing" Muslim men, "Islam" stands, in a jumbled, half-examined way, not only for the fear of God, but also for a cluster of customs, opinions and prejudices that include their dietary practices; the sequestration or near-sequestration of "their" women; the sermons delivered by their mullahs of choice; a loathing of modern society in general, riddled as it is with music, godlessness and sex; and a more particularized loathing and fear of the prospect that their own immediate surroundings could be taken over – "Westoxicated" – by the liberal Western-style way of life.

Suitcase nukes

(Dan Solomon, Montreal, letter, *Time*, 26 Nov 01)

> I am not a terrorist, but if I were I'd thank you for giving me so many hints on how to make attempts at mass destruction more effective (Oct 29). In a single short article – "Can a Nuke Really Fit into a Suitcase?" – you gave information on the availability of a suitcase nuke, what type of plutonium and uranium one would need to make one, and which area of a nuclear power reactor should be attacked to incur the highest number of casualties.

Multicultural tourists

(Christopher Hudson, 'Losing the hearts and minds of young Muslms', the *Evening Standard*, London, 28 Nov 01)

> Like other first-generation immigrant Muslims [in the UK], they were determined that their son should maintain their Islamic faith.... But Sarfraz Mansoor, perhaps because he was not sent to the mosque or to Islamic classes after primary school, was seduced, like so many second-generation Muslims, by western culture.... The songs of Bruce Springsteen drowned out the austere melodies of Islam. At university , he became a "multicultural tourist", taking the things he liked from his heritage, especially the strength of the family unit, and rejecting the rest – "arranged marriages, overwhelming deference, bad haircuts."

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The position of the adverb certainly will make a difference

SOLVEIG GRANATH reports on the placement of adverbs in American and British English

Since English is used increasingly as the major international language, it would be advantageous to its users if different varieties of the language were to change in one another's direction, i.e. converge. Consequently, communication will be more laborious the more idiosyncrasies each variety takes on, i.e. if varieties diverge.

Defining the problem

Trudgill discusses different kinds of change in English today, and concludes that in phonology there are obvious diverging tendencies. When it comes to lexis, we identify certain words as belonging to a particular variety, and there is also ample evidence that words are incorporated from American English into the other varieties as a result of increasing contact through travel and the media (Trudgill, 1998:30). Concerning syntax, however, the situation is more problematic. On this level, differences tend to be slight, and, when changes are noted in one variety, it is difficult to say whether this change is the result of the influence of one variety on the other, or whether it is an independent development. Trudgill's conclusion concerning syntax is thus that there is no conclusive evidence one way or the other for convergence or divergence (Trudgill 1998:32).

However, in grammars aimed at foreign learners of English, the authors sometimes note that certain syntactic patterns are typical of either British or American English. For instance, it is often pointed out that the mandative subjunctive is preferred in American English, whereas the so-called periphrastic *should* is preferred in British English (Svartvik & Sager, 1996:77, Hasselgård *et al*., 1998:179), as illustrated in the following examples:

(1) She insists that he report the theft to the police.
(2) She insists that he *should report* the theft to the police.

Some decades ago, it was said that the subjunctive was on the verge of extinction in British English. However, research from the past decade indicates that the use of the subjunctive is now on the increase not only in British English, but also in Australian and New Zealand English (Hundt, 1998). The tendency here is thus one of convergence rather than divergence.

Another area where a difference has been noted between American and British English is in the placement of adverbs, where American English is said to give users a choice of place when there is an auxiliary (e.g. Ljung & Ohlander, 1994:286). Christophersen & Sandved (1969:164) use the following examples:

If there are two or more auxiliaries, the adverbial generally follows the first:

He would never have done it.

NOTE: This account is based on British usage. In American English adverbs can freely be placed before or after an auxiliary:

Br. E.: *She has probably seen it anyway.*
Am. E.: (The same, or) *She probably has seen it anyway.*

It is easy to see how learners of English can be

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led to believe that the last two sentences are in what could be referred to as 'free variation', i.e. that there is no difference in what the two sentences express. Grammars aimed at advanced learners sometimes point out that pre-auxiliary placement of adverbs is more emphatic than post-auxiliary placement (Meyer-Myklestad, 1968:401/405; Quirk *et al*, 1985:493f; Svartvik & Sager, 1996:400). Other grammars refrain from mentioning that the adverb may be put in anything but post-auxiliary position (Hasselgård *et al.*, 1998:287; *Collins Cobuild English Grammar*, 1990:283). This is also the only position afforded this type of adverb in generative grammar (Haegeman & Guéron, 1999:85–90). A third way out is to mention that there is a choice in placement, without giving the reader an indication of when this option should be selected (Leech & Svartvik 1994:226).

The seminal work done by Jacobson (1975, 1978, 1981) demonstrates that there was indeed a difference between American and British English in the frequency with which adverbs occurred in pre-auxiliary position at the time of his study (the 1970s), pre-auxiliary placement being rather rare in British English, but frequently found in American English, particularly in certain text categories. The following quote sums this up quite well (M2 referring to pre-auxiliary position):

> In Jacobson 1975:156 it is shown that present-day American newspapers constitute one type of text which differs radically from most other written texts as regards the use of M2. Thus the proportion of M2 in ten American newspapers systematically examined was found to be as high as 23% as compared with 11% for other non-fictional literature and 13% for fictional literature. A corresponding investigation of four British newspapers carried out in 1969 by Britt Sandberg showed as low a proportion of M2 as 4%. (Jacobson, 1981:89)

Interestingly, Jacobson found indications that the use of adverbs in pre-auxiliary position had increased in American English from the end of the 19th century. In a study of adverb placement in an issue of *The New York Times* from 1878, Jacobson found that only 4% of the adverbs occurred in this position, incidentally the same as the proportion found in the British newspapers examined by Sandberg (Jacobson, 1981:89). Compared to some other American newspapers, such as *The Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times* had a lower number of adverbs in what Jacobson refers to as M2 position, but the percentage still by far exceeded that found in the British newspapers: 16% as compared to 4% (Jacobson, 1981:89). It could therefore be assumed that differences between adverb placement in American and British English might turn out to be even greater in present-day newspaper texts, perhaps to the extent where it would even be possible to say that, in American English, speakers are free to choose either pre- or post-auxiliary position for adverbs. The aim of this paper is thus to try to determine to what extent the two varieties differ in present-day English regarding adverb placement.

Source material

The Brown University Corpus (Brown) for American English and the Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen Corpus (LOB) for British English, both with texts from 1961, were used as a starting point to make it possible to contrast usage in 1961 with that of the 1990s. Since previous research had established that the greatest differences in adverb placement in British and American English could be found in newspaper texts, two newspaper CD-ROMs from 1996 were used as sources for present-day usage, The New York Times for American English, and The Guardian/The Observer for British English. In addition, the spoken part of the BNC sampler was used to establish patterns of usage in spoken British English, and Broadcast News (1995-1996), which is a CD-ROM consisting of scripted and unscripted spoken news reports and interviews from four different American TV-channels, was used as a source for present-day spoken American English.

The individual items selected for study were chosen mainly because they were the ones most often cited in grammar books in the section on word order. Two of Jacobson's (1975) adverb classes were considered to be of primary interest, namely *temporal* and *modal* adverbs. In grammars, many of the adverbs here called *temporal* are referred to as adverbs of frequency, and the semantic function of the words in this group is to indicate some aspect of the time or frequency of an event. *Modal* adverbs can be said to express speaker attitude to the proposition made, and can thus be referred to as denoting epistemic modality. Below is a list of the fourteen adverbs in each group:

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Temporal adverbs
already, always, ever, eventually, finally, generally, never, often, recently, seldom, sometimes, soon, still, usually

Modal adverbs
actually, apparently, certainly, clearly, definitely, evidently, maybe, obviously, perhaps, possibly, probably, really, simply, surely

In the four corpora consisting of approximately one million words (Brown, LOB, and the spoken and written part of the BNC sampler), all tokens were recorded. In the three news corpora, which are considerably larger, the same number of tokens was checked as the number found in Brown and LOB respectively, e.g. *already* occurs 269 times in Brown, and therefore 269 tokens were taken from each of the two American news corpora (*The New York Times* and *Broadcast News*).

Syntactic description and scope

Adverbs may occur in four different positions in the clause: initially, finally, medially, and what grammars often refer to as 'other', meaning that they modify some other phrase than the verb phrase. Examples of initial (3), final (4), and other (5) placement are

(3) *Really*, girls you must try harder. (*The Guardian*, 18 Jan 1996, p. 5)
(4) The newspaper groups can now own TV stations. It's like African dictators, *really*. (*The Observer*, 28 Jan 1996, p. 22)
(5) But the really hard part has only just begun. (*The Guardian*, 13 Jan 1996, p. 37)

The frequency with which the two groups of adverbs occur in initial and final position is interesting because of what it tells us about the focusing uses of these words, but goes beyond the scope of this study. It is worth mentioning, however, that the number of modal adverbs in final position is very low (in fact zero for many adverbs), and that certain adverbs from both classes often take initial position, this being the most common position for *maybe* and *perhaps*. Mid-position is unproblematic when the verb phrase consists of only a finite verb:

(6) It *really* feels wonderful to be so wanted. S V (*The Guardian*, 17 Jan 1996, p. 3)

It is only when there is an operator present that the adverb can be found in two different positions (the term *operator* is here used in line with Quirk *et al.* (1985:79-81) to cover both the finite auxiliary (7), (9), and the finite form of *be*, i.e. the copula, followed by a complement (8), (10)). The first, or unmarked, case is post-operator position:

(7) Acupuncture may be different. ... I've no idea whether needling will *really* help.
OP V (*The Guardian*, 23 Jan 1996, p. 17)
(8) I think that was *really* the first time
OP COMPL I played as well as I can play. (*The Guardian*, 10 Jan 1996, p. 19)

The second case, pre-operator position, will also be referred to as the marked word order:

(9) "You *really* will have to learn to keep cool under
OP pressure." (*The Guardian*, 26 Jan 1996, p. 2)
(10) It really was an amazing time.
OP (*The Guardian*, 19 Jan 1996, p. 13)

Note that in ellipted clauses, where only the auxiliary/operator is overt, this is the unmarked word order (11), and ellipted clauses are therefore excluded from the results.

(11) – Was it an interesting play?
– Yes, it *really* was.

The present study indicates that when a form of DO (*do/does/did*) is the operator, adverbs are not allowed the same range of choice of placement as with other operators: emphatic *do* in most cases shows signs of preferring pre-operator placement, which should consequently be regarded as the unmarked word order. In sentences negated with *not*, the situation is less clear, so that some adverbs, such as *sometimes* and *still*, tend to occur in pre-operator position only, whereas others, for example *always* and *ever*, only occur in post-operator position, and only a few, among them *generally* and *usually*, are found to vary. For this reason, all instances of sentences with auxiliary *do* have been excluded from the present study. The fact that the placement of adverbs is more idiosyncratic when the auxiliary is DO is not mentioned in grammars, and it goes beyond the scope of the present study. Still, this seems to be an area where more research is required and larger corpora need to be consulted.

Results

The totals, as is shown in Table 1, demonstrate a clear difference between the two groups of

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Table 1. Temporal and modal adverbs in pre- and post-operator position

Corpus	Am 1961		Br 1961		Am 1996		Br 1996		Am spoken		Br spoken		(Br written)	
Position	pre	post op	pre	post op	pre	post op	pre	post op	pre	post op	pre	post op	pre	post op
Temporal adverbs														
Total	97	1520	31	1926	42	1596	32	1839	90	1525	63	1350	22	1414
Per cent	6%	94%	2%	98%	3%	97%	2%	98%	6%	94%	4%	96%	2%	98%
Modal adverbs														
Total	115	560	65	707	79	620	70	645	152	492	171	1451	41	452
Per cent	17%	83%	8%	92%	11%	89%	10%	90%	24%	76%	11%	89%	8%	92%

Table 2. Pre- and post-operator placement of adverbs in American and British English (1961)

	Am 1961		Br 1961		
Pre-op position	(9 %)	212	(4%)	96	
Post-op position	(91 %)	2080	(96%)	2633	(^{2} = 71.19 $p < 0.001$

Table 3. Pre- and post-operator placement of adverbs in American and British newspaper articles (1996)

	Am 1966		Br 1966		
Pre-op position	(5 %)	121	(4%)	102	
Post-op position	(95 %)	2216	(96%)	2484	(^{2} = 4.33 non-significant

adverbs. Whereas the highest percentage of pre-operator placement for temporal adverbs is 6 per cent (in the American corpus from 1961 and present-day spoken American English), the lowest percentage for modal adverbs is 8 per cent (in the British corpus from 1961). Pre-operator position is thus much more frequently found with modal adverbs, ranging between 8 and 24 per cent, than with temporal adverbs, where the corresponding figures are 2–6 per cent. This indicates a functional difference in the choice of word order, since word order is clearly linked to the semantics of the adverb.

The overall conclusion is that the unmarked word order predominates for all the adverbs investigated in all seven corpora, which justifies the use of the term unmarked for this clause pattern. When it comes to individual items, the highest percentage of pre-operator position is found for *apparently* in spoken American and British English, where the ratio is 45 and 40 % respectively. Other adverbs with a high ratio of pre-operator placement are *certainly, really, surely,* and *probably*, all of which belong to the group of modal adverbs, used to convey speaker attitude to or underscore what is said.

To establish whether the difference in placement between the two varieties is in fact large enough to be statistically significant, a chi-square test was used. The results for the two corpora from 1961, shown in table 2, confirmed earlier research by Jacobson (1975, 1981), in that pre-operator placement was more often found in the American corpus.

When we turn to the results from the newspaper corpora from 1996, however, no statistically significant difference can be found, even though the percentage of adverbs in pre-operator position is slightly higher in the American than in the British corpus (table 3).

In the two corpora of present-day spoken

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Table 4. Pre- and post-operator placement of adverbs in present-day spoken American and British English

	Am spoken		Br spoken		
Pre-op position	(11 %)	242	(8 %)	234	
Post-op position	(89 %)	2017	(92 %)	2801	$(^2 = 14.24$ $p < 0.001$

English, there is again a significant difference, with the marked word order being used more often in American English (Table 4). However, the fact that the spoken corpora differ should be ascribed rather to the differences in speech style in the two corpora than to the variety used. The BNC sampler consists of a demographic and a context-governed sample; the demographic sample being instances of informal conversations, thus reflecting ordinary, every-day language. *Broadcast News*, on the other hand, from which the American sample was taken, contains interviews with politicians and other public figures, appearing on television and often using a persuasive style. The difference between spoken American and British English is due exclusively to the much higher number of modal adverbs used in the marked word order in American English (for temporal adverbs, the difference is non-significant), which underscores this point (see above, Table 1).

Finally, in an attempt to establish whether the marked word order is used more often in certain text categories than in others, adverbs in pre-operator position were classified according to text category. For Brown and LOB, the samples are subdivided into genres. In the two newspaper corpora, it turned out to be easier to categorise texts from *The New York Times*, which contained information as to which 'desk' each article belonged to. For *The Guardian/The Observer*, this information was not always provided, and the categorisation of the texts from the latter newspaper is therefore not completely reliable.

Briefly, the results show that in the two corpora from 1961, the largest number of adverbs in pre-operator position are found in American newspaper texts (categories A–C), again corroborating Jacobson's (1975) results. A high number is also found in category F (Popular lore) in the American corpus. Most of the other categories contain at least a few instances of adverbs in the marked word order. In the newspaper corpora from 1996, pre-operator placement is fairly evenly divided between the different text categories, with the exception of scientific articles, where only one instance is found in each variety. Again, these results indicate that use of the marked word order depends on communicative function rather than text category/genre.

Conclusion

The survey indicates that whereas there was indeed a significant difference in the frequency of pre-operator placement of adverbs between American and British English some forty years ago, this difference has become all but obliterated today, at least in written newspapers texts. It is of course possible that *The New York Times* is not representative of American newspapers in general, considering the fact that Jacobson (1975) found that pre-operator placement was more frequently used in certain newspapers than in others. Even so, the main variable that could be said to account for choice of position of adverb (marked or unmarked) in this investigation was type of adverb rather than variety of English. This means that pre-operator position is used expressively in both varieties of English.

One could of course speculate as to why the increase in the use of the marked word order in American English, as indicated by Jacobson (1981), should have come to a halt and even been reversed in the past few decades. One reason could be that if a certain linguistic feature is overused, it loses its force, and if there are two competing features of equal force, there is no need to retain both. If, on the other hand, there are two options for speakers, one of which allows them to add information (such as attitude, force) to a statement, the latter is more effective only if used more sparingly than the first. There is little to suggest that the change is due to influence from British English; rather, this seems to be an independent development in American English.

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The implication of the results of this survey for teachers of English as a foreign language is that they should make their students aware that it is the communicative function rather than the variety used that will decide which word order should be used. Finally, concerning the issue whether these two varieties of English are converging or diverging when it comes to syntax, this is yet another area where the tendencies are towards convergence rather than divergence. ☐

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FROM OUR FILES

Elite and fluent in English

Mohamed Atta, who is suspected of being a leader of the hijacking plot, was a city planner, fluent in German, English, and Arabic, who held advanced degrees. During the years he spent in Hamburg he supported himself with a variety of legitimate jobs. Members of a terrorist cell broken up in Milan typically supported themselves through such crimes as drug dealing, Italian authorities say…. When Qaida sent an Algerian, Ahmed Ressam, to bomb the Los Angeles airport in 1999, he drew attention to himself at a U.S.-Canada border crossing partly because he did not speak English. And so… Mr. bin Laden turned to well-educated, English-speaking operatives from Egypt and the Gulf.

– 'QAIDA: An Elite Cell of Hijackers, Isolated from the Main Network', *International Herald Tribune*, 6 Nov 01.

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Englishes, attitudes, education

SHONDEL J. NERO looks at aspects of varietal difference, prescriptivism, and language prejudice

A few years ago, while visiting my fiancé, I offered to help him with the vacuuming. With the vacuum cord in my hand, I was ready to plug it in what I called the "point." After carefully looking over sections of various walls, and not being able to locate the point, I asked my fiancé,

"Where's the point?"

To which he replied, "The point? What point?"

I then began waving the cord and making the sign of plugging it into something, as I continued in a frustrated manner, "The point... the point." Finally, he figured it out.

"Oh, you mean the outlet... You mean where you plug in the cord."

"YES," I responded, exasperated. "Outlet. Whatever. I call it a point."

"Point?" he said, obviously befuddled by this seemingly strange use of the word.

"Check the dictionary if you don't believe me."

So he did. *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*. (Interesting how dictionaries are often used unquestioningly as the final arbiter of linguistic disputes). Point, meaning 28(b) – British. "outlet or socket." Case resolved. We were both right.

This little scenario was a real-life lesson on language in contact. Well, what language? My fiancé (now my husband), an Italian-American, and I, a Guyanese, both thought we were speaking English. So why the misunderstanding? Clearly, we were used to speaking our own brand of English with others who spoke like us, and this served our purposes well up until then. Only when our separate "Englishes" came into contact and communication broke down were we forced to think about our own language. Lest you come away from this story thinking that I speak British English, far from it. In Guyana, the language spoken ranges from Creole to Creole English to Standard English (the latter two forms being influenced by British English because of Guyana's history of British colonization).

My own language ranges somewhere between Creole English and standard English, characterized by my husband as "mid-Atlantic," that is, in his opinion, my English is not quite American and not quite British. His characterization of my language is, of course, funny on one level but indicative of how we grapple with defining and responding to language difference on another.

Now we might amicably resolve our language difference by consulting one or some combination of the various dictionaries in our library (among them, the Webster's alluded to earlier, the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and the *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, also Oxford). That simple resolution is aided by the fact that we're both college professors and our language contact is, by and large, on an even keel, that is, there is no marked power differential in thee contexts of our shared language use, so our language differences are just that...differences. But what about the students in our classrooms? How do we address their language difference – their Englishes? – in the context of the asymmetrical power relations in classrooms? How do we respond to those among them who claim to be native speakers of English but whose spoken and/or written English may be at odds

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with the standard that is typically privileged in school? And beyond school, how do we respond to language difference in the wider world?

Language difference and linguistic prejudice

Language difference is, of course, a complicated matter, and the level of complication that emerges from difference is often less linguistic and more attitudinal or sociopolitical. We expect, for example, to not understand someone who speaks Russian if we speak English. If, however, we encounter someone who claims to speak English or who we believe to be a native speaker of English, and we seem to have difficulty understanding that person, then somehow their (this should be highlighted) language difference becomes problematic. The problem, of course, is the us-and-them distinction that is constructed from claiming exclusive ownership of English, or of a particular variety of English.

Ownership of English is anything but exclusive because of its historical colonial expansion and its current and rapid globalization. With over a billion users of English worldwide, many people claim English as their native language and countless others use it as a second language or lingua franca. As Widdowson (1994) notes, "The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it.... It is not a possession which they (so-called native speakers) lease out to others, while still retaining the freehold. Other people actually own it" (p. 385).

Small wonder that we are now encountering in North America a growing number of immigrants who claim English as their language but whose claim to nativeness is often questioned by Americans, the implication being that their English is "different" and therefore not "native." Inherent in the judgment is different and deficient. Even within the United States, speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), who are considered native speakers of English, often encounter their English being seen as different and deficient. It should be noted, though, that the view of difference is not uniform.

Kachru and Nelson (2001) correctly point out that American and British speakers of English are rather tolerant of each other's English (quite a diversity themselves), but are unlikely to be tolerant of the English of South Asians and Africans. The authors are clearly underscoring the racial prejudice that frequently accompanies linguistic prejudice. Race, of course, is not the only factor underlying linguistic prejudice. Negative judgments on social class, nationality, education, regional provenance, and accent, can all manifest themselves as linguistic prejudice. Furthermore, all of these factors are implicated in the term "native speaker" (a far cry from Chomsky's notion of mere "native speaker intuition").

I must point out here that the linguistic prejudice I speak of is not only found among speakers of English of European ancestry toward non-European speakers. There is, for example, as much negative judgment of language difference among speakers of Asian and African descent both outside of and within the United States. A case in point is the recent furor over Ebonics (AAVE), which was as intense within the African American community as it was in the society at large. The furor itself pointed to a very real ambivalent attitude towards so-called nonstandard varieties of English, that is, they are at once celebrated and denigrated by their speakers, aptly characterized by Kachru and Nelson (2001) as "attitudinal schizophrenia" (p.14).

The ambivalence is understandable. On the one hand, English as a language of colonial expansion took on a life of its own as it spread to diverse communities worldwide, and its emergent varieties (AAVE, pidgins, creoles, etc.) reflect the lived experience of its speakers in the various contexts. Its speakers, therefore, have a right to celebrate, claim, and use their respective varieties of the language as legitimate and reflective of their identity. By the same token, the spread of English has been, and continues to be, in contexts of asymmetrical power relations (slavery, colonialism, globalization, etc.), which gives privilege to the English spoken by the group who holds power and concomitantly stigmatizes the language of the disempowered group. Unfortunately, this stigmatization is often internalized by disempowered groups as they clamor, with good reason, to embrace the standard form of English that give access to, and power in, the society at large.

English or Englishes?

If what I've said so far is any indication, you might have surmised by now that language use

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in the anglophone world cannot be fairly captured solely in a monolithic term called "English." The presence of a diversity of Englishes (or what McArthur 1998 calls "the English languages") is now, and has historically been, fact, and the sooner we recognize this, along with the richness and complexity that it has brought to the world, the sooner we might be able to respond positively to this growing phenomenon.

Speakers of AAVE, Caribbean Creole English, Appalachian English, Spanglish, Tok Pisin, Scots, Welsh English, Krio, Australian Aboriginal English, Hawaiin Pidgin, Indian English, Nigerian English, and many other varieties, all share affinity in the world of Englishes both within and beyond their respective locales, and they experience varying degrees of mutual intelligibility. McArthur (1998) notes that the members of this family of Englishes are "distinct yet linked, usually with overlap and interplay in ways that are comparable to members of Romance and Turkic families" (p. 203). Here, then, is what he calls "the paradox at the heart not only of English but of most languages: that they are monolithic and multiple at the same time" (p. 201).

In the case of English, its speakers have a shared "Englishness" that coexists with levels of mutual exclusivity. Thus, as Crystal (2001) notes, neat models of World English such as Kachru's now well-known concentric circles of (of English as a native, second, and foreign language) need radical revision to cope with the reality of language spread, languages in contact, hybridity, fluid and/or multiple linguistic identities, multiple standards and various kinds of and claims to nativeness.

Standards, written English, and education

Crystal (2001) contends that English is only standard in written form, which he refers to as "World Standard Printed English" (WSPE). He further suggests that eventually a "World Standard Spoken English" (WSSE) might emerge which could manifest itself on two levels – one for home or regional use and another for international interaction. Crystal's first point on written English is arguable or partly true. I believe that the grammar of written Englishes is fairly uniform worldwide. However, there is a wide range of what counts as standard in the lexicon and in rhetorical patterns, and this relates to the fact that the lexicon and rhetorical patterns typically reflect the local culture and sensibility. In India, for example, the word prepone (used to mean the opposite of postpone) is quite standard. Yet prepone would hardly count as standard in the United States or, worse yet, might not be recognized as English at all.

There are thus many standards among Englishes, clearly defying the notion that there is one fixed written standard. On spoken language, Crystal might be more accurate; that is to say, many speakers of Englishes operate on two levels very naturally. They use a "home" English for the in-group and another for wider communication.

Yet, the one standard myth prevails, and it is particularly so with regard to writing. McArthur (1998) asserts that our modern day preoccupation with writing can, in large part, be traced to the invention of the printing press. He argues, "people may talk about a standard language as being both spoken and written, but it is hard to conceive of a language in our time as truly having a standard form if it cannot be printed with all the panoply of modern technology" (p. 109). I would also argue that writing itself suggests something else. It has come to be associated with educated practice (the assumption being that speech is natural, writing is learned, usually in school). Put another way, one of the principal reasons that written language is so privileged is the fact that it marks its user as having been schooled.

Within written language itself, we have privileged a very narrow standard in school – one that adheres to strict rules of prescriptive grammar, orthography, and Western essayist rhetorical conventions. Students whose writing are at variance with these norms or show influences from other kinds of communicative or rhetorical traditions are therefore marked as different, and, as I've noted, deficient. In my own research (Nero, 2001), I have described the academic writings of Caribbean Creole English-speaking students as "academic interlanguage," that is, a language characterized by features of both Creole English and essayist writing, and one that marks them as "outsiders" to academic English if not to academia as a whole.

It is interesting to note the conflicting attitudes among educators towards the English of those who are perceived as outside of the mainstream (although what counts as "mainstream" is highly debatable). We know, for instance, that many educators will readily acknowledge

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the talent of world renowned writers such as Alice Walker, Derek Walcott, V.S. Naipaul, and Chinua Achebe, and regularly assign their works as required readings. Achebe himself asserts that his English carries "the weight of [his] African experience". It is "a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" (as cited in Kachru, 1986, p. 223). The message, then, is that Achebe and writers of his caliber have made their mark, so to speak; they've earned a kind of poetic license for their language, and so their "new, other, different Englishes" are accepted, even revered.

But our students are not there, yet. We might accept their English "carrying the weight of their experience" only if it were in a journal or in a creative piece, but never in "serious writing." As language teachers, we typically expect our students' "serious writing" (by which I mean the kind of writing that significantly impacts on a student's placement, performance, promotion in class or an institution and/or exit from it) to adhere to the writing conventions alluded to earlier that are privileged in school. And because of the asymmetrical power relations in the classroom, we have the means to enforce this expectation.

In general, this means insisting that students write in standard academic English, and correcting or penalizing them if they don't. This is not only a noble goal, it is a pragmatic one. As I mentioned earlier, proficiency in standard English brings tangible reward to students. At the same time, many progressive educators today want to validate their students' vernacular, which poses a dilemma: how do we reconcile privileging a certain kind of standard English in school, particularly in writing, while telling students that their home language is equally valid? Perhaps the dilemma might be recast as a necessary tension for progressive language teaching; that is to say, we cannot avoid standard English(es) any more than we can avoid the students' vernacular Englishes. They are part and parcel of language use in the real world.

Crystal (2001) calls on teachers to develop a flexible attitude towards principles of language usage. He suggests that we need a more "relativistic" and "less prescriptive" model of language use. How might such a model work in the educational arena? First, I've argued elsewhere (Nero, 2001) that teacher preparation in graduate school should include courses in sociolinguistics, language diversity, and the teaching of writing. Second, there should be ongoing professional development on the history, structures, and use of varieties of Englishes, and ways to respond to language difference in the classroom; use of literature by writers of diverse Englishes; classroom assignments that accept written work in both standard and diverse Englishes; ongoing meaningful dialogue on Englishes, language use (standard and nonstandard), language difference, and language attitudes, with all the ambivalence and paradoxes entailed therein.

I don't expect these suggestions would change language attitudes and prejudices overnight, but I believe that a more relativistic, less prescriptive model of language teaching, as Crystal suggests, is a move in the right direction. It's certainly an approach that allows for the messiness, the paradoxes, the inconsistencies that inhere in language use, but (going back to my opening anecdote), it would also allow my husband and me (and many of our students) to all be right about our "point."

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English and Euro-English

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I read with great interest the articles 'No good past Dover' (John Edwards) and 'Euro-English' (Jennifer Jenkins *et al.*) in 17:4 (October 2001). My concern is that, while agreeing that new varieties of English are indeed emerging in Europe and beyond, I disagree about their potential as a pedagogical model which teachers (including native-speakers of an existing 'standard' variety) should teach and especially the view that native-speakers of an existing 'standard' variety might need to learn it.

EIL is, in my view, a temporary communicative construct that will vary with the LIs and L2 learning experience of the interlocutors. It will take a different form between, say, a Spanish speaker and a Chinese speaker than between a German and a Swede. And indeed if the interlocutors have more than one meeting it may develop between them at further meetings. EIL is a language of productive use rather than a language of receptive learning. As such, it is both a 'defective' form of a learned 'standard' variety and, more importantly, a communicatively effective one. It may be possible to describe it but surely in such a superficial way which will depend very much on the corpus participants?

Phonologically, a Euro-English may emerge which will omit certain phonological distinctions which an Englishman/woman might make, and be perfectly understandable without these distinctions, but, does the inclusion of these distinctions make an English non-understandable? Only if this last point is true should EIL be taught rather than 'just' used.

I teach my learners a receptive knowledge of a standard of English but I accept a production of EIL. It is not necessary to teach EIL, as it will naturally be produced by learners. As for native speakers, they do not need to 'learn' EIL but rather need to be made aware of it and to have a desire to compromise in their efforts to communicate. This compromise will be more important in regard to idiomatic language use than in pronunciation. It is the desire to communicate which drives the production of EIL in its myriad, unteachable forms. It is the teacher's job to recognise EIL for what it is and to accept its production in the classroom as the communicative English which the vast majority of learners will use outside the classroom. □

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