

## Perfectly queer

Thank you, Laurence Urdang, for your astute observation (*Post & Mail*, ET37, Jan 94). Some of the terms in the glossary of "The Queen's English" (ET35, Jul 93) echo the bitter cynicism of Gay life in the 1950's and '60's. Expressions like "Let me make myself perfectly queer" (1980's) or "I'm not Gay, but my boyfriend is" (1990's) reverberate more acceptance from society.

Barry Zeve,  
San Francisco, U.S.A.

## Disqualifouled

A small point regarding ET36 (Oct 93): *Post & Mail* p. 62. In my letter there is a misprint: it is that "disqualiful" appears and NOT, as intended, "disqualifoul". A "disqualiful" is a foul that is so heinous the player is sent off the field, "disqualified from playing any more".

J. P. Cross,  
Pokhara, Nepal

## Word order in phrasal verbs

I enjoyed reading Anthony Cowie's interesting article in ET 36, (Oct 93). Cowie points out that phrasal verbs present a major difficulty for learners of English and that such verbs must be treated with great care in dictionaries of English.

In his article, Cowie refers to monolingual dictionaries. I should like to share my experience when treating phrasal verbs in a bilingual dictionary. In my *English-SerboCroatian Dictionary*, I made a major effort to treat phrasal verbs in such a manner as to enable learners of English to use and comprehend the verbs correctly. Rather than using codes, I showed alternative word order by providing both possible constructions in juxtaposi-

tion. Thus, the entry for *break down* gives as an example *to break down a door* and *to break a door down*; the entry for *break in* gives *to break in shoes* and *to break shoes in*; the entry for *break up* gives *to break up a marriage* and *to break a marriage up*, etc.

To be sure, providing alternative constructions in place of codes meant that the dictionary would be slightly larger and more expensive. However, I feel that this method was justified. Many users of the dictionary have expressed their pleasure at being able to find immediately all possible word orders when they examine an entry for a phrasal verb.

Morton Benson  
University of Pennsylvania,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,  
U.S.A.

## Nouns make verbs – most of the time

*Father* is a clear and simple noun, and makes two clear and robust verbs: patriarchal and procreative. *Mother* is a simple noun, and makes one broad and protective verb. *Husband* is a proud noun and an active verb, both at home and in the field, and leads us to wife – and 'wife', that most cherished noun, is never a verb. Whether or where the Feminist Lobby sits, stands or acts, I cannot tell, they will not say.

Alan Rae,  
Greenock, Scotland

## A further comment on TESOL

I was ("was" being the operative word) a member of TESOL for 10 years. I never got much out of all the dues I paid. I have been an ESL teacher but found TESOL's publications mostly filled with "ivory tower" theories and articles – much like most of my education at university level. Luckily, I also had a B.A. in modern language teaching, so becoming a teacher of ESL wasn't so daunting as it could have been.

The point of all this is: I, for one, would much rather read *English Today* than any TESOL quarterly, journal or whatever. I have let my membership in TESOL expire. I hope I will always be a reader of *ET*.

Name withheld, U.S.A.

*Ed.* This is an entirely *bona fide* letter, and that the writer's name does not appear with it is a remarkable comment in itself.

## Tunch

At first I thought Félix Rodríguez González's article (ET36, Oct 93) on times for meals in Britain was fully comprehensive, but now find I can offer one more variation.

One of the many complexities of the game of cricket is the timing of refreshment intervals. In 1993 the new professional Sunday cricket league involved games beginning at noon, with the single

### What To Look Out For

- ❖ Players' names on the back of shirts and sweaters
- ❖ High scoring during the early part of the innings with only two fielders outside the circle.
- ❖ Fewer no balls!
- ❖ Lunch/Brunch (Tunch) at 3.10 pm.
- ❖ White balls and black sightscreens.
- ❖ Latest designer clothing!

interval lasting from 3.10 p.m. to 3.50 p.m., not a traditional meal time in anybody's scheme of things.

Surrey County Cricket Club offered brunch before the start of play, lunch during the first session of play, and for 3.10 p.m. (too early for tea, too late for lunch) invented *tunch*. The full menu now begins: Brunch/Lunch/Tunch (see specimen).

David L. Seymour,  
London, England

## Relatively speaking

I was fascinated by François Chevillet's discussion of 'English or Englishes' (ET36, Oct 93), but wonder whether he is entirely correct in asserting that the zero relative construction with subject missing 'has disappeared in Standard English'.

Quirk *et al* 1985 [*A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, 17.15] suggest that zero subject is not uncommon in existential and cleft sentences, giving as examples *There's a table ( ) stands in the corner*, and *It's Simon ( ) did it*.

These seem remarkably like Chevillet's Somerset, Irish, and James Callaghan quotes. Admittedly Quirk *et al* says this usage is 'very colloquial', but significantly

## Defiance and deviance

We apologize to Alec Bristow (*Post & Mail*, ET37 Jan 94) for turning his phrase 'defiance of the fifth commandment' into 'deviance of the fifth commandment'. Alas, our post-and-mailbag is a challenging range of hand- and typewritten material that needs keying into electronic form – and our keyboarders (like our typesetters before them) do sometimes deviate from the norm and defy the best efforts of our proofreaders.

## North and South

"Sit down," she said, "And have a scone".  
"A scone," she said. That rhymed with stone,  
Yet in the North, we say a scone,  
A short, sharp sound, as we say one,  
And then she offered me a bun,  
Yet Southerners say "wun" not one,  
So did she really mean a bone,  
No, hers was a very pleasant tone.  
Next she offered me a rum,  
How nice, I thought, to warm my tum.  
That surely made us laugh,  
To think,  
She meant a room,  
I meant a drink.

Dorothy Morris,  
York, England

they do not label it either obsolete or dialectal. All right, we don't teach it. But you've a reader here think the structure is alive and well – and not all that colloquial either. Who was it said, *Inside every fat rule there's a thin rule trying to get out?* (Note – I've scored two zeros here!)

May I comment also on the equally fascinating meals article by Félix Rodríguez González? I think *evening meal* is often a term in its own right, and not a mere generic description. I associate it with bed-and-breakfast establishments, farm holidays and so on. So to me it is a meal that in content could be the same as a 3-course dinner but is probably served earlier and in places that do not claim to be hotels. Whether the phrase is used because the users think *dinner* is ambiguous or pretentious or because evening meal is what they would call it at home I do not know. I don't think it is regional, because guest houses etc north and south offer this meal. Any ideas?

Incidentally, hotels appear to think in terms of overnight visitors and quote DB&B rates; but guest houses quote daily or weekly rates, and offer BB&E.

Sylvia Chalker,  
London, England

## ARELS and the Government regulation of language schools

"Caveat emptor". Translate it into modern parlance and we get something like "Tough luck: you should've checked the small print". This philosophy epitomises the thinking that marked the 80's. A return to the values of Victorian England could also mean a return to the values of the 1845 Railway Mania and the Tay Bridge Disaster where "Caveat emptor" preceded the realisation that regulation is very often needed not only to protect John or Joan Citizen but also the operators themselves. The same applies to English language schools.

If we look at the present British Government's attitude to regulation we see the same "Caveat emptor" approach is the presupposition of perfect choice where the consumer controls the market-place. In British EFL this is patently not the case. The consumer does not have perfectly informed choice. We need to provide him or her with some sort of protection and guarantee. If we want to set up a bus company in these deregulated days we must still satisfy certain statutory requirements. In other words there is still regulation of working hours for drivers, MOTs, PSV licences etc. If we want to set up

---

Readers' letters are welcomed. ET policy is to publish as representative and informative a selection as possible in each issue. Such correspondence, however, may be subjected to editorial adaptation in order to make the most effective use of both the letters and the space available.

---

an airline we can't just get a PPL and taxi off down the runway.

Too often the efforts of ARELS to urge the Government to come up with a mandatory registration scheme for language schools result in an ideological knee jerk which would not be out of place amongst the sheep on Animal Farm: *Free market forces good, statutorisation bad.*

What is even more galling is to read a piece by Douglas Hurd our Foreign Secretary in the British Airways *Business Life* (March 93) entitled "Who's afraid of the European Dream?" There he claims that the EC should be involved in the setting out of general principles with industries left to set the actual detailed standards. This seems to me to be exactly what we in the EFL business are asking of HMG with the general principle being statutory registration and the Recognition Scheme as the industry-set detailed standard!

No-one in British ELT that I know of really wants the cartelism and phoney "regulation" of the old-style bus companies and airlines. No-one in British ELT that I know of can really understand why the Government can't see the difference between minimum statutory requirements to protect consumers and crazy regulations governing the size and density of an in-flight sandwich.

If the UK were the only place offering EFL courses in the world then market forces might operate to the consumer's benefit and the benefit of bona fide operators in the UK. The market would punish the cowboys very quickly. But the UK is not the only place offering EFL courses in the world. There is tough competition from USA, Eire, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and even Malta not to mention from non-English speaking countries around the world.

To protect the UK's share of this very large market we must have a minimum quality requirement which can only come from a

## The New London Voice

In his article 'Estuary English – tomorrow's RP?' (ET37, Jan 94), David Rosewarne comments: 'In the early 1990's Tom McArthur suggested the term New London Voice to describe the accent variety already outlined in detail in 1984 as Estuary English. The term has not gained currency, perhaps in part because Estuary English is now the term in common usage. A further reason could be that the accent variety in question is not New, nor is it confined to London and Voice is an inappropriate word to describe an accent.'

A brief response is necessary. It is certainly the case that in 1984 Rosewarne reported on, and offered a name for, this important phenomenon. However, the extent to which it was 'in detail' and the appropriateness of the label he chose are open to debate. I do not feel comfortable with the term Estuary English because of its vagueness: like calling usage in and around San Francisco Bay Area English. This may work for the locals, but does not help people elsewhere – there are all too many estuaries and bays around the world. I am not particularly committed to my own alter-

native term, the New London Voice, but a better case can be made for it than Rosewarne implies: (1) New: Although the accent cluster in question has been evolving for some time, public perception has only recently caught up as NLV speakers have become increasingly prominent in the media. It is therefore new in terms of impact and news value. (2) London: Although the cluster is not confined to the metropolis, its focus is London, as Rosewarne concedes – not the adjacent counties, and certainly not the Thames Estuary (which, metonymy apart, is uninhabited). (3) Voice: I chose this term because of a distinctive voice quality related to how the mouth is held: much slacker than traditional tight, 'clipped' RP.

All this said, I am very glad that David Rosewarne has written a more detailed account of the subject for ET ten years after his initial article, and look forward to a further development still in due course, in this journal or elsewhere. Whatever its label, the subject deserves close attention.

Tom McArthur, Cambridge,  
England

statutory scheme. How long do we have to wait before the scales fall from the Government's eyes and they recognise that it is not a bunch of left-wing loonies who want a statutory registration scheme for language schools in the UK but lots of sober Conservatives, as well as Liberal Democrats and Labourites. ARELS has already floated the idea of a self-

financing registration scheme where the only cost to the Exchequer would be in the occasional prosecution. I am not alone in worrying about the ideological blindness of the Government in this respect.

Robin R. Mackenzie,  
Principal, Basil Paterson College,  
Edinburgh, Scotland