Euro-evolution?

Business Week calls it 'The Great English Divide', by Stephen Baker and Inka Resch in Paris, and its lead-in runs: 'In Europe, speaking the lingua franca separates the haves from the have-nots.'

In preparing the article by Marko Modiano, Barbara Seidlhofer, and Jennifer Jenkins for this issue I found myself thinking about something not far from haves and have-nots: essentially, the marked difference between northern EU members and everybody else in the mainland EU. The Scandinavians, the Dutch, and the Germans are generally so competent that, in effect, they speak English as a second first language. But they also risk 'Scotlandization', if their languages lose their academic registers and become secondary, like Scots and Gaelic. The 'have-nots', however, run the risk of being left behind or managing with a second-tier kind of English that might do the job but will never shine. As *BW* puts it (13 Aug 01, European edition):

● 'English is becoming the binding agent of a continent, linking Finns to French and Portuguese as they move toward political and economic unification. A common language is crucial, says Tito Boeri, a business professor at Bocconi University in Miland, "to take advantage of Europe's integrated labor market. English, in short, is Europe's language." And while some adults are slow to embrace this, it's as clear as day for Europe's children. "If I want to speak to a French person, I have to speak in English," says Ivo Rowekamp, an 11-year-old in Heidelberg, Germany… . The English-speaking children appear to be in charge, ordering food in English for their parents, and arranging early-morning taxis to the airport.'

● 'The need for a lingua franca is most pressing for global technology players. "We need a common language," says Alcatel CEO Sereg Tchuruk. "There aren't many choices." So in the early '90s, Alcatel and Finland's Nokia embraced English as the corporate language. In Europe, where the Germans and French have long battled for supremacy, English also makes political sense: "It's the closest thing to linguistic neutrality. When France's Rhone-Poulenc and Germany's Hoechst joined forces to found Aventis two years ago, they set up headquarters in the border city of Strasbourg. And they further defused cultural tensions by adapting English as the company language.'

'That's the Europe that's taking shape,' say Baker and Resch (France). Edwards (Canada), Modiano (Sweden), Seidlhofer (Austria), and Jenkins (the UK) have further observations.

Tom McArthur

The editorial policy of *English Today* is to provide a focus or forum for all sorts of news and opinion from around the world. The points of view of individual writers are as a consequence their own, and do not reflect the opinion of the editorial board. In addition, wherever feasible, *ET* generally leaves unchanged the orthography (normally British or American) and the usage of individual contributors, although the editorial style of the journal itself is that of Cambridge University Press.

Klamp Santouits — buttered or battered?

MICHAEL BULLEY looks at some vowel sounds in English, by way of modern Greek

The title of this piece is an unfair dig at the problems inherent in representing certain English sounds in printed Greek. My main point will be the pronunciation of the vowel in words like 'but' and 'sup'.

To clear up the mystery: *Klamp Santouits* is the English transliteration of the Greek Κλαμπ Σάντουιτς, which, if it were really Greek, would be pronounced something like "Clab Sandwits". This is the nearest that Greek can get for a phonetic representation of the dish that is appearing more and more on the menus of Greek restaurants – the Club Sandwich.

Before dealing with its vowels, let us look briefly at the consonants. The Greek language does not have the sounds of 'chatter', 'jewel', 'she' or 'vision'. Hence the approximation of t + sigma (τς), for the final sound of 'sandwich'. When I began writing this article, I was in Greece and I noticed a newspaper headline about the French politicians, Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin, whose names were printed as Ζακ Σίρακ and Λίονελ Ζοσπέν, which, if transferred back into French, would emerge as 'Zac Sirac' and 'Lionel Zospenne'.

From the 'Klamp', you can see that there are problems too with 'b'. The letters mu + pi (μπ) represent, in conventional Greek: [b] in initial position, and [b], [mb] or [mp] medially (though the last is rare in present-day pronunciation, and the combination is anomalous at the end of a word). Greek, therefore, has no way of distinguishing, in a phonetic representation, among the English words *rubble*, *rumble* and *rumple*: they would all be ραμπλ (= *rampl*). For those who may be wondering why β (beta), the second letter of the Greek alphabet, does not produce the sound *b* (as in English), its present-day pronunciation is *v*, so that the Modern Greek word for 'alphabet' is pronounced *alfaviton*.

Now to the vowels of the Club Sandwich: in the Greek version, the letter alpha (α) has to do for both the *u* of 'Club' and the *a* of 'Sandwich'. In whatever way these vowels are pronounced by native speakers of English, they are usually distinct. Greeks learning English must master a distinction, therefore, that does not exist in their own language. This is why a Greek waiter, telling you in English the price of a cup of coffee, might well say that it costs "six h*a*ndred drachmas". I am begging the question here, though, with that 'handred', since the Greek waiter's pronunciation of the *u* is similar to that of many native English speakers and of many of those who use English regularly as a second language. It is not, though, I would say, the standard modern British English pronunciation. How, then, should that be defined?

The issue is, I think, similar to one I discussed in *ET* in 1999. In *ET*58, in an article entitled "It isn't /hæt/, it's /hat/!", I talked about the short *a* in modern BrE. This was taken up in *ET*61 (Jan 2000) by Edmund Weiner and Clive Upton of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, who, while rightly criticizing some incorrect statements of mine about the phonetic representation of the TRAP vowel in current dictionaries, confirmed that the new *OED* would be giving [a] for this vowel for British English rather than the [æ] of previous editions. In my article, I quoted from W. Sidney Allen's *Vox Latina*, where he equates the short Latin *a* with the vowel in English 'cup' [ʌ], rather than 'cap' [æ]. So, in 1960, it seems that Sidney Allen was hearing the vowel in 'cup', 'sup' and 'but' in standard English as similar to the Greek waiter's 'h*a*ndred'. To give that same phonetic symbol [ʌ] would be of no help therefore in

MICHAEL BULLEY studied classics and linguistics at Edinburgh University. He then went to London as a Ph.D. student where he stumbled into school-teaching and, ever since, has taught Classics in various parts of England, currently at Highworth School in Ashford in Kent. He has contributed previously to ET as well as to other journals on classical, philosophical and linguistic topics. When he is not talking up the revival of Latin in state education, he tries to improve his smattering of modern languages and plays the clavichord.

indicating my view of the vowel in 'cup' in current standard BrE.

At this point, this article suffers from not being audible. If it were a multimedia production, you could click with the mouse and hear me saying 'butter', 'mundane' or 'sully', to get an idea of my view of this vowel in present-day BrE. I could try to define it with the traditional descriptions of tongue and lip positions, or even print a sound spectrograph, but I think in this context it is better to be vaguer. Let us say, then, that it is clearly distinct from the vowels of 'cat' and 'put', and closest to the 'neutral' vowel of 'potato'. We could contrast the first vowel of 'potato', therefore, with the first of 'putter' (the golf club). They are close enough for you to be able to get away with pronouncing the first syllable of 'potato' like that of 'putter', but not vice-versa.

As for this neutral vowel [ə], it may be worth saying that, for present-day English, the first vowel of 'potato' should not be thought of as a 'weakened' form of the vowel in 'pot'. There are other words, though, where this is not the case: I would say that the [ə] pronunciation, as recommended in dictionaries, of the *o* in 'contain' or 'observe' was a weakened form. I am among those who usually pronounce those two words, and others, with the vowel of 'pot' [ɒ]. I am not sure if there is some guideline to distinguish the two types – (i) either [ɒ] or [ə], and (ii) only [ə] – or whether it just happens on a word-by-word basis, like the alternative pronunciations of 'corridor', with either [ə] or [ɔː] at the end.

To return to the *u* of 'cup', the current situation is, I think, a bit like that of the short *a*, where the old [æ] has yielded to [a]. The old variety is still heard, but it is not now standard. Similarly, the pronunciation of 'cup' with a vowel close to the short *a* is still heard – from the aristocracy, the 'refained', in Cockney and in 'Estuary' English, but it is not now the standard, or 'educated', sound. You hear this 'a' version also in some parts of the world that were influenced by British colonialism (though some recent spelling changes, such as 'Punjabi' to 'Panjabi' have helpfully rationalized the modern situation). There are other varieties in the British Isles, too, such as the 'Yorkshire' one, where the vowel is like that in 'put', and some Irish ones where it approaches the vowel of standard 'cop'.

We can understand that Greeks, for example, may have difficulties with this sound, as it is not a distinctive one in their own language. The situation is different, though, in those parts of the world where English has come from British colonialism and is naturally spoken as an everyday language and where the 'a' pronunciation has remained and may also be affected by educational practices. It seems mistakenly condescending for a modern Briton to regard such a pronunciation as 'old-fashioned'; yet the temptation is almost irresistible to say "No, that's not how you say it! Close your lips a bit and feel the sound more towards the back of your mouth", just as you might if the Greek waiter unexpectedly asked for your opinion on his English pronunciation.

I suppose that what fascinates me about this sound is its elusiveness. When I was young, it seemed to me to be the most basic of sounds – the noise you might make if you were punched in the stomach – and yet I soon realized, to my surprise, that it did not exist in the speech of some of my fellow Britons nor in the foreign languages I began to hear and learn. Maybe it is the very naturalness of the sound that prevents it from being a distinctive one in some languages. My first lessons in Modern Greek (in which I have still not made much progress, despite having the advantage of being a classicist) were given to me by an old lady who had taught the Queen of Greece. She told me, mentioning (unwittingly I am sure) two of the four things it is said many English tourists come to Greece for, that she found it very difficult to tell whether an English person was saying 'sun' or 'sand'. □

Following *Langscape*…

GRAHAME T. BILBOW & *LI LAN* respond to Pam Peters's *Langscape* Survey (*ET*, 1995–2001) with commentary and comparisons based on their Business Corpus at Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Introduction

Langscape is a joint project of *English Today*, Cambridge University Press and Macquarie University, organized by Professor Pam Peters at Macquarie in order to survey contemporary English usage worldwide. The project started in 1995 and produced its final report in Jan 2001: See *ET*65. Approximately 1,800 responses to questionnaires were received on various points of English usage in six sections in either postal form or e-form via the World Wide Web. The results have been regularly reported both in *English Today* and on the Web and have attracted much interest. The data elicited by *Langscape* reinforces the view that 'Because

1 This project was generously funded under the Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme. The project is entitled, "The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Business Language Lexicon: Developing a Multilingual, Corpus-based Research and Language Learning Facility".

DR GRAHAME T. BILBOW is currently Head of the Department of English, Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He has also worked as Manager of Business English courses at the British Council in Hong Kong, and as a consultant to the Hong Kong Government. In addition to a number of papers in the area of professional communication, he is the author of a number of specific-purpose textbooks in business English.

DR LI LAN is currently a Research Fellow in the same Department. She holds both an M.Phil. and a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Exeter, where she studied lexicography. Before this, she taught English at university level for over 15 years in China. She has published a number of articles on bilingual lexicography, English for Specific Purposes, and computational linguistics.

English is a world language, any account of usage that is limited to one person's views and resources is inadequate' (Peters, 1998:4).

This paper is driven by a desire to discuss some of *Langscape*'s assumptions about variation in English usage in relation to empirical evidence from the Hong Kong PolyU Business Corpus (PUBC)[1], which was compiled by Hong Kong Polytechnic University with the aim of investigating business languages used in Hong Kong. The corpus contains 1.2 million words of text from a variety of business sources in Hong Kong. It differs from other corpora in that: (1) it covers three languages: English, Chinese and Japanese; (2) it bears local marks; and (3) it focuses on financial services, namely banking, accounting, auditing, insurance and investment.

The designer of *Langscape* intended to investigate the use of certain words by means of questionnaires which queried whether particular forms of a word are used more commonly than others.

The results of such questionnaire-based research must, however, be judged in the light of the fact that it rests on indirect evidence of experience and attitudes, rather than documented actual practice. As Hatherall has put it in general terms:

> Are the subjects saying here what they do, or what they think they do, or what they think they ought to do, or indeed a mixture of all three? … do we not, on this basis, arrive at a consensus on how subjects are likely to behave when faced with a particular questionnaire, rather than authentic data…. (1984:184)

This paper pursues certain issues raised by the *Langscape* Survey, and probes special usages among Hong Kong's English users. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that, as distinct from Singapore English, which is documented as a "true" variety of English, the English used in Hong Kong is less coherent and pervasive, with significant variation among users.

1 The use of letter *e*

The first *Langscape* questionnaire focused on the use of *e* in English, which is not only the

most frequent of the five vowel symbols, but also the most common letter of the alphabet. Although native English scholars have noted the loss of final e, e.g. changes from *facette* to *facet*, from *toilette* to *toilet*, from *citie* to *city*, second-language learners just tend to take this for granted as a feature of modern spelling.

Peters found from *Langscape* that her respondents are currently most inclined to use "-es" plurals with words ending in -o, such as *echo(es)*, *hero(es)*, etc., although they were never endowed with final -e in the singular. This suggests that the gratuitous e is beginning to disappear from the plurals of various words ending in -o. However, our evidence from the PUBC still shows the conventional way of pluralising such words (Table 1).

Langscape also revealed a strong tendency for dropping the letter e before the suffixes -able, -ment, -ing, and -y. Although most words used in *Langscape* do not occur in the PUBC, data from the corpus also shows mixed use of e in English as used in Hong Kong. However, a marked preference for the classical digraphs is clear (Panel 1).

As suggested by other morphological research, 'the letter e is the key to many alternative spellings in twentieth-century English. Its presence or absence in suffixed forms of words is usually of no consequence to the meaning of the word, and won't affect communication' (Peters, 1998: 5).

2 To capitalize or decapitalize?

The tendency to reduce capitals in English writing can be seen as a process of modernization that has occurred since the eighteenth century. Twentieth-century English has tended to move away from this, though the practice is more advanced in some quarters than others.

Peters found that several variables affect whether capital letters are used or not. The regional and professional contexts of communication are an important influence, though individual words and phrases set their own agendas according to the speed with which they are assimilated. Europeans tend to stick to *Commonwealth*, but decapitalize *president*, while the Americans tend to do the reverse. Australians seem rather less inclined than others to shed the capital letter as used in various political expressions.

The words listed in *Langscape 2* are mostly literary words which are not commonly used in

Table 1 The plural of words ending in -o (PUBC)

-es	Frequency	-s	Frequency
cargoes	2	casinos	3
echoes	1	pesos	11
zeroes	1	portfolios	49
		ratios	46
		scenarios	10
		studios	4

PUBC data: the letter e 1

eyeing	5	eying	0
ageing	4	aging	0
queueing	4	queuing	3
sizeable	24	sizable	2
discloseable	19	disclosable	2
exchangeable	3	exchangable	1
exerciseable	5	exercisable	14
knowledgeable	6	knowledgable	0
rechargeable	3	rechargable	0
measureable	0	measurable	3
rateable	1	ratable	0
acknowledgement	12	acknowledgment	3
judgement	40	judgment	25

business contexts. Only 4 of them, *government*, *commonwealth*, *bank* and *federal*, occur in the PUBC. All 12 *commonwealth*'s are capitalized. Of the 158 occurrences of the word *federal*, only 16.5% use lower case *f*. *Federal Court* and *Federal Funds* can be found in both cases. The concordances from the PUBC illustrate this (Panel 2).

There are sentences in which a previously mentioned proper name is repeated in a reduced form, relying on the generic component. Depending on the context of publication, this generic word may be decapitalized. The word *bank* provides a typical example. Since the PUBC is not semantically tagged, we could not check the word *bank*, which had a frequency of 3,148, in terms of its occurrence both as a proper name and as a repeated form. However, such usage can be explained by the fact that *bank* is polysemous, and the capital represents the writer's attempt in each case to connect it more specifically with the previous reference. The principles of cohesion are such that readers are likely to make the connection, yet a little redundancy is perhaps desirable. The

PUBC data: capitalization   2

ll-text materials relevant to *federal*	and state health care compl
e also referred to variety of *federal*	and state regulatory and enf
iamentary session to pass the *federal*	budget. [p] Traders were als
aid, in court papers filed in *federal*	court in Manhattan, that th
force its US$4.1 million U.S. *Federal*	court judgment against her a
tes Federal Reserve increased *federal*	fund rates 25 basis points bu
nts to 4.625 per cent. The US *Federal*	Fund Target rate last week
arket Committee, leaves the *federal*	funds overnight bank lending
esday that it would raise its *federal*	funds rate 25 basis points -
expects the Fed to raise its *Federal*	Funds rate by 25 basis points
deral Reserve to increase the *federal*	funds rate by 25 basis points
basis point rise in the US *federal*	funds rate in the second quar
int rise in the United States *Federal*	funds rate to 5.25 per cent.
emlin had allowed yields on *federal*	government bills, known as GK
t have come under state and *federal*	investigation. The Compliance
to 23–3/16. On Thursday, a US *federal*	judge dismissed a lawsuit fil
week down 5 per cent after a *federal*	judge ruled the software gian
dvantage of newly liberalised *federal*	laws, the largest bank in the
data bank of more than 700 *federal*,	state and other sanctioning
created by Congress to study *federal*,	state, local and internati
ation and subject to ordinary *federal*	tax rate up to maximum 39.6

word *council* appeared 411 times in the PUBC. Only 26 are in lower case, taking up 6% of occurrences. As can be seen in the concordance (Panel 3), the notion of discourse repetition impacting on the use of capitals does not seem to be operating in the PUBC.

The *Councils* here represent various government institutions and branches, namely the Legislative Council, the Executive Council, General Insurance Council of Hong Kong, Life Insurance Council, the Travel Industry Council, the Trade Development Council, the Consumer Council and so on.

It is also interesting to notice the various forms of the term *Hong Kong*, including full capitalization, partial capitalization and abbreviation (Table 2).

3 Singular, plural and agreement

The dilemma of grammatical agreement or concord is discussed in *Langscape 3*. Peters discerns three principles: formal agreement, notional agreement and proximity. Formal agreement is expressed in a sentence through the matching of words in terms of number, gender and person. Notional agreement draws attention to itself in cases where the agreement diverges from that which might be expected according to the formal principle. The divergence may take the form of a plural where the singular might be expected, or vice versa. Prox-

Table 2

Item	Frequency
Hong Kong	6,027
Hongkong	388
HK	2,504

imity is a major factor in the overruling of formal agreement, under the influence of the nearest noun or noun phrase. Again, this may work to replace the formal agreement in either direction. All three phenomena are found in the PUBC. Formal agreement is perhaps naturally the most common, as in:

(i) *The setback in the stock market has been a painful experience for many of us.*

(ii) *Customers who maintain an account with our bank can authorize a direct debit from their account to settle the remittance amount.*

Conversely, notional agreement depends on the writer's concern with either the group or its individual members, and leads the reader to consider them as one or the other.

(iv) *The Executive Committee meets regularly to review the management and performance of the Bank.*

Collective words such as *committee*, *government*, *board* and *company* were usually consid-

3

m against the Exchange or the	*Council*	for any loss or damage whatso
these Rules available to the	*Council*	for inspection or audit by an
tive markets. It said the	*council*	had highlighted the "lack of
pproval:- (a) whenever the	*Council*	has a statutory obligation to
ness Risk and the CFO'. The	*Council*	has made the following appoin
quirements 415. Where the	*Council*	has reasonable grounds for th
be submitted directly to the	*Council*	in accordance with Rule 427(1
ement of business, notify the	*Council*	in writing of the date on whi
olicy-holders' interests, the	*council*	is also preparing a standard
s of the SEHK and HKSCC. The	*Council*	is constituted as follows:
m," he said. However, the	*council*	is more optimistic. "Ever
olicy. It is believed the	*council*	is under pressure from the co
ds and other documents as the	*Council*	may demand. (2) In addition
g Partnership except that the	*Council*	may disclose the information
such persons appointed by the	*Council*	may from time to time inspect
02 to 407 both inclusive, the	*Council*	may increase the Financial Re
or such longer period as the	*Council*	may specify, of the receipt o
ter the end of a month as the	*Council*	may stipulate. (2) In submi
the Securities Ordinance, the	*Council*	may, upon written application
rt II forward the same to the	*Council*	members permitted to sit unde
s in question. (2) If the	*Council*	notifies the Commission pursu
ee will work closely with the	*Council*	of Advisors; set up a new I
nformation or evidence to the	*Council*	or any Committee), no member
nformation or evidence to the	*Council*	or any Committee) of Part II,
tter is being referred to the	*Council*	or SEOCH in accordance with C
nformation or evidence to the	*Council*	or those Committees). 2. S
tnership concerned unless the	*Council*	otherwise determines. (3) A
Business 428. (1) Unless the	*Council*	otherwise directs in writing,
ion should be obtained by the	*Council*	regarding the Member's or Dea
e. 7.2 The Secretary to the	*Council*	shall as soon as practicable
al. 7.6 The decision of the	*Council*	shall be final and conclusive
e Disciplinary Committee, the	*Council*	shall deal with this matter a
the relevant Committee or the	*Council*	shall determine. SEHK (98
to the Council, whereupon the	*Council*	shall deal with the matter as
Clause 4.18.3 of Part II, the	*Council*	shall fix a date for the hear
final and conclusive and the	*Council*	shall not be required to give
ch disciplinary action as the	*Council*	shall think fit. (6) Every
or such other penalty as the	*Council*	shall think fit or deal with
e, disciplinary action as the	*Council*	shall think fit. A Member or
. Mr Frankland said: "The	*Council*	supports the Bill in principl
te to the satisfaction of the	*Council*	that he or it is able to comp
cern had been raised to the	*council*	that mere exchanges of such d
nless otherwise agreed by the	*Council*	the Monthly Reporting Stateme
1 In any case referred to the	*Council*	under Clause 4.18.1 of Part I
er to avoid." He said the	*council*	was urging flexibility becaus
to attend any hearing in the	*Council*	whilst it is considering any
ition to those members of the	*Council*	who have declared an interest
nnovation and Technology. The	*Council*	will advise on all aspects of
lity and, as a corollary, the	*Council*	will need to commit to clear

ered singular in the PUBC. When individuals need to be referred to, the term *the members of the Committee* was used and followed by the plural. This indicates that *committee*, *board* and *company* always denote the group rather than its individual members in English in a business context in Hong Kong.

Although it may seem unusual to native English speakers, since nouns in the Chinese language may have plural notions but not plural forms, there exist in the PUBC many plural forms that occur when writers seek to express the quan-

Kong Branch. The Bank <u>**is confident**</u> that the newly appointed mana
economic growth. Our Group <u>**is confident**</u> about the future of the mark
s making good Group remains **confident** in the progress
customer base, the Company <u>**is confident**</u> that the number of new cardho
23 June 1998. The Board <u>**is confident**</u> that the new leadership will
sound growth and the Group <u>**is confident**</u> that it is well positioned t

e you have. The Hong Kong <u>***community***</u> has always been ahead of its
to deny that the securities <u>***community***</u> has reached an implicit conse
private sector. The banking <u>***community***</u> has so far been strenuously o
The members of the <u>***Committee***</u> are Mr Vincent H C Cheng (Cha
the members of the Steering <u>***Committee***</u> have devoted a lot

hairman Michael Sharpe said <u>***board members***</u> were convinced the country ha
tralian Stock Exchange's nine <u>***board members***</u> are selected by a nomination

Table 3

Word	PUBC (1.2 mil.)
billings	15
lettings	2
restructurings	13
sackings	2
signings	4
tradings	4
understandings	9
workings	2
maturities	9

Table 4

Geminated		Ungeminated	
channelled	3	channeled	3
budgetted	2	budgeted	4
benefitted	1	benefited	17
combatting	1	combating	1
equalled	1	equaled	0
focussed	7	focused	91
focussing	4	focusing	38
fulfillment	2	fulfilment	2
millennium	108	millenium	2
travelling	23	traveling	1
totalled	43	totaled	1
labelled	0	labeled	2
modelled	8	modeled	4
enrollment	7	enrolment	2

tity of a noun, either concrete or abstract. In Table 3, occurrences of "non-standard" plurals in the PUBC are shown. In all cases, such plurals do not occur in the British National Corpus (BNC) Sample (2 million words).

The PUBC contains few examples of plural forms of words from Latin. Where they occurred, there is no clear preference for the English or Latin plural pattern. Thus, the word *memorandum* has 60 singulars, 1 *memorandums* and 1 *memoranda*. The singular form of the word *formula* has an occurrence of 28. However, its plural forms are one Latinated *formulae* and two anglicized *formulas*. All the plural forms for the word *focus* were *focuses*, not *foci*. The words *census* and *stimulus* appear 5 and 19 times respectively without any plural.

4 Gemini

Double consonants cause difficulties for many users of English, in the stems of words like

accommodation and *millennium,* and at the junction with suffixes, as in *medal(l)ist* and *travel(l)er*. In some cases, either appears to be used; in others, only one spelling appears to be acceptable. The rules are many and varied and difficult to generalize, and spellings tend to be learnt by rote in early language learning. Therefore geographical differences in learning practices may explain varieties that exist in the PUBC (Table 4).

5 British spelling or American spelling

'Spelling is a good point at which to introduce a major factor in language variation, and that is

Table 5

BrE	Freq	AmE	Freq
analyse	44	analyze	7
authorise	177	authorize	139
authorisation	58	authorization	51
amortise	16	amortize	0
amortisation	24	amortization	1
behaviour	25	behavior	2
capitalisation	127	capitalization	33
capitalise	48	capitalize	10
categorise	6	categorize	2
centralise	18	centralize	5
endeavour	7	endeavor	1
programme	195	program	92
cheque	52	check	13
catalogue	12	catalog	0
favour	64	favor	6

the extent to which a feature in language use is "institutionalised"' (Quirk & Stein, 1990:46). Data from the corpus support the view that two major English language varieties exist in the English used in Hong Kong, and it is perhaps not surprising to see that British English enjoys a degree of dominance (Table 5).

It may, however, be surprising how common American spelling appears to be in the PUBC, given that language policy in Hong Kong government, law, business and education often specifies that a British spelling model should be followed. The use of American spelling may result from the fact that a large number of professionals brought up or educated in the USA work in Hong Kong, and there are also many people who are not sure which conventions belong to which style. While Americans and Britons may use their respective spelling models fairly consistently, non-native speakers may tend to use mixed spelling models. However, it is important to recognise that in most respects British and American English spellings are very similar, and seldom lead to misunderstandings. American English is, however, becoming more common around the world due to the influence of American business, technology, popular culture and the like.

6 Apostrophes and stops

In English, apostrophes and stops serve a variety of purposes. In some words they have *ad hoc* or interim value; in others, they seem essential – in the absence of any other indicator. It is noticeable that in the PUBC, there is a much higher frequency of possessive use of apostrophe *s* than in the British National Corpus sample. This may have something to do with non-native English users' difficulties in using prepositional phrases (e.g., banks in Hong Kong), noun phrases (e.g., Hong Kong banks) and apostrophe '*s* (e.g., Hong Kong's banks) consistently (Table 6).

In her final report of *Langscape*, Peters reported a decline in using stops in abbreviated titles and common words. She found that 'while the native-speaker group is letting go of the stops and apostrophes in various words and names, they continue to be endorsed in second-language users of English. … but greater use of stops was most interestingly seen in the Asian group. They register greater majorities in favor of stops for almost every item, and indeed counter to the overall trend in cases such as "Sunset Blvd.", "Dr." and "Mrs."' (Peters, 2001: 15). However, this conclusion was based on questionnaire responses at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and may

PUBC data: Stops or no stops

Date: 29/06/1999 5:24:04 PM	*Dr.*	Doom the second is being ign
Mr Dragon Wong's comment on	*Dr.*	Doom's sarcastic message is q
Banking Corporation Limited.	*Dr*	Edgar W K Cheng resigned from
D C Eldon, Mr J [Strickland,	*Dr*	Edgar W K Cheng, Mr Vincent H
o Chairmen, Dr. H C Lee and	*Dr.*	Geoffrey Yeh, for their unfa
y professional has urged.	*Dr*	Gerhard Mueller, a member of
of the Audit Committee are	*Dr*	H C Lee (Chairman), Mr Richar
ateful to the two Chairmen,	*Dr.*	H C Lee and Dr. Geoffrey Yeh
r Jenkin Hui, Mr C P Langley,	*Dr*	H C Lee, Mr H KLo, Mr Roger K
them were Dr. T.K. Ann and	*Dr.*	Henry Fok, Vice Chairmen of
ciation are Mr John C C Chan,	*Dr*	Ho Tim and Mr H K Lo. Mr John
H K Lo. Mr John C C Chan and	*Dr*	Ho Tim, being eligible, offer
John C C Chan, Dr Y T Cheng,	*Dr*	Ho Tim, Mr David T C Ho, Mr J
Stanley Ho as its chairman.	*Dr*	Ho, who has spent the last fo

Table 6

Word	Freq. (PUBC)	Freq. BNC
Hong Kong's	738	5
Group's	484	63
Company's	479	44
Bank's	272	2
Government's	204	58
China's	181	16
Year's	123	92
People's	115	95
World's	114	48
Asia's	73	1
Yesterday's	69	17
Stock Exchange's	69	0

not represent current usage among the business community in Hong Kong. In fact, data from the PUBC reveal a rather different picture: nearly half of the 3,296 *Mrs* are without stops; of 241 *Ms*, only 42 are followed by stops; 40 out of 99 *Dr* have stops (Panel 5).

Based on the idea that more Americans observe conventional abbreviations than Britons, Peters suggests that 'writers of English there (in Hong Kong) are subject to both older British and newer American influences'. Our data, on the other hand, suggest that English used in Hong Kong still tends to follow British practice, old and new, in omitting stops. Other evidence can be found from the words *UK* (6/198), *USA* (6/36), *HK* (10/2,056) and *Dept* (5/12).

7 Conclusion

Project *Langscape* initiated a fascinating survey of international usage of English. It is clear that corpus evidence can best support such a study, for it is difficult for any individual to describe by intuition how a language is used and changes in real practice.

We would be the first to admit that a 1.2 million words corpus is rather limited. However, some general trends can be observed from the PUBC. Firstly, it appears that two major English language varieties co-exist in Hong Kong, with only slight domination by the British variety. This is perhaps surprising, given that language policy in Hong Kong actually stipulates that if there are two varieties of a word, the British form is to be preferred, and schools in Hong Kong still mostly use British English as the norm. We imagine that the entertainment industry is decisive in transmitting American terms and usage, and making them equally well-known in Hong Kong. With more and more people using worldwide English for business, politics and general communication, English has become a vast complex with numerous distinguishable varieties.

Whatever their strengths, and whatever their advantages may be over the use of questionnaires for self-assessment, language corpora can only describe the language. They do not make judgements about which forms are right and which are wrong, but can indicate where the preferences lie and suggest the direction in which elements of the language are moving. Contrastive corpora across the English-using world, as in the International Corpus of English (ICE) project, may yet be able to provide the

kind of information that would tell us where English at large and its many world communities are going over the next few decades. □

References

Biber, D., S. Conrad & R. Reppe. 1998. *Corpus Linguistics: Investigating language structure and use.* Cambridge: University Press.

Grishman, R. & R. Kittredge. 1986. *Analyzing language in restricted domains: sublanguage description and processing.* Hillsdale, N.J. : Erlbaum.

Hatch, E & C. Brown. 1995. *Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education.* Cambridge: University Press.

Hatherall, G. 1984. 'Studying dictionary use: some findings and proposals'. In R. Hartmann, ed., *LEXeter 83 Proceedings*. Niemeyer, Tübingen, 183–189.

Li, L. & G. T. Bilbow. 2001. 'From Business Corpus to Business Lexicon.' In *Lexikos*, 11(1).

McArthur, T. 1998. *Living Words: Language, Lexicography and the Knowledge Revolution.* Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

—. 2001. 'World English and World Englishes: Trends, tensions, varieties and standards.' In *Language Teaching: the international abstracting journal for language teachers, educators and researchers*, 34/1, 1–15.

Peters. P. 1998. '*Langscape* 1: Surveying contemporary English usage.' In *English Today*, 14/1, 3–5.

Peters. P. 2001. 'Kaleidoscope: A final report on the worldwide Langscape Project'. In *English Today*, 17/1, 9–20.

Quirk, R. & G. Stein. 1990. *English in Use.* Harlow: Longman.

SNIPPETS 3

(From Joan Dunayer, *Animal Equality: Language and Liberation*, Ryce Publishing, Fairborn Court, Derwood, MD 20855-2227, USA: 0-9706475-5-7, hb $25.00)

The concept of nonhuman rights completed my shift in worldview. No conscious being should be treated like an exploitable thing, Tom Regan argued in *The Case for Animal Rights*. He stressed the moral rights of individuals, nonhuman and human. Currently the law recognizes only human rights. Regan proposed changing nonhuman animals' legal status from property to person (rights-holder). Yes, I thought. Universally, humans exploit and kill other animals because legally they can. As history shows, humans readily take advantage of those with less power. Because they receive little moral consideration from humans and lack political power, nonhumans are especially vulnerable to concerted abuse.

Combining Regan's ideas with Singer's [Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, New York Review of Books, 1990], I concluded: Sentience entitles nonhuman animals to legal rights, which must protect them, as individuals, from speciesism. I left the psychology program, stopped eating flesh, and soon avoided all animal-derived food.

Having previously worked as a writer and editor, earned master's degrees in English education and English literature, and taught high school and college English, I returned to a focus on language and worked as a writer-editor, primarily on college English textbooks. Increasingly I noticed that standard English usage legitimizes, trivializes, and conceals speciesist injustice.

As a feminist, I knew that words can foster oppression or liberation, deception or truth. Sexist and speciesist language share certain features, I found – such as pronoun use, metaphors, and syntax that discount the experiences of those deemed inferior. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat* Carol Adams linked sexism and speciesism. She also cited evasive and speciesist language that serves the flesh industry. Her analysis prompted me to think more about connections between nonhuman and human oppression, and about the role of euphemism and definition in keeping nonhumans oppressed.

I began to write this book.

Its time for a sound change

MARY BLOCKLEY takes on a possessive with problems all its own

The stubborn insistence of students and journalists upon sticking an apostrophe in the vitals of the atomic unit of the possessive pronoun adjective its has occasioned despair and ridicule.

The unusual circumstances that added a neuter singular late in the pronominal game play a crucial role that has gone unacknowledged in discussions of this problem. The new Englishes offer, or rather, renew the opportunity of rectifying this irregularity and thus adding in some small way to the happiness and peace of the English-speaking world.

Donald Hook's admirable survey (*ET* July 99, 42–9) of apostrophic catastrophe doesn't quite get its own message. However well the possessive form of nouns can be selected according to pronunciation, trying to "test sound against form" for *its* produces not a cure but a puzzle, and encourages the use of a now-errant diacritic.

Edward Carney, among others, directs attention to the analogy that explains the apostrophe *it's* for *its*: pronouns imitate the nouns they replace, and nouns regularly indicate possession with an apostrophe. Additionally, Carney points out that the homonymous contraction of *it is* to *it's* with the apostrophe of deletion understandably adds to the confusion. Indeed, among the historically minded, the idea that the apostrophe marks the place of a deleted syllable also holds, though tenuously, even for the possessive form of a few nouns. In *fish's*, for example, the apostrophe could be seen to mark the deleted vowel -*e*- of the -*es* genitive ending derived from the Old English strong masculine genitive singular inflection, though a syllable-forming vowel, other than the one necessary for the possessive after sibilants, has not been around since Middle English. But this is hardly an explanation.

There are other things about *its* that makes it more mischievious in the link it has to its homonym *it's* more than other, superficially similar pairs such as *their* and *they're*. One is the extremely high frequency of *it*. It is the fourth most common word in spoken English by some counts, preceded only by the definite article and the inflected forms of the most common verbs. The effect of this high frequency is to entrench any peculiarities about the mismatch of form and sound. How many words rhyme with "the" in the sound it has before a consonant? But the main and criterial difference is the outsider status that the *t* of *it* gives to the paradigm to which *its* has to belong.

The origins of its are not shrouded in much mystery. The first edition of the *OED* notes that its entry into print in the 1598 first edition of John Florio's Italian-English dictionary must have been preceded by dialect use, probably south of London. But if from the south, it did not have enough of a southern tooth to have voiced the final sibilant decisively. It is a great inconvenience that the vowel of the old inflectional ending was indeed gone by the sixteenth century, as with the lack of an **it-es* English lost probably its last chance for a truly balanced possessive system.

That loss of unity in the possessive paradigm stems from the monosyllabic pronoun *it*, or rather its coda. The *t* unvoices the possessive *s* and makes *its* sound less like a warm, fuzzy syntax word, and more like a predicating wannabe. A look at the family of pronominally derived adjectives shows why *its* is destined to

MARY BLOCKLEY has been at the University of Texas at Austin since 1985, where she is a member of one of the largest English departments in the US. She teaches the History of the English Language and other courses in their program in English Language and Linguistics, hypocoristically Lang-Ling. Her book on the punctuation of the ancestors of 'and' and other connectives, 'Aspects of Old English Poetic Syntax: Where Clauses Begin' (University of Illinois), is currently on the Walmart.com list of the top-selling 100 medieval titles. She is at work on the forthcoming 3rd edition of the late Celia M. Millward's 'Biography of the English Language', published by Harcourt, and contemplates a guide to the habits and history of the ten most frequent words in Present Day English.

35

sound always like the unvoiced and unvoiceable outsider that it is, even compared with the other late additions to the possessive pronoun paradigm:

> *his his their theirs* (in London since Caxton)
> *her hers* (since 1300 in the north, replacing *hern* by mid-16th c.)
> *it its* (replacing *his* by the 16th c.)

The voiced coda holds throughout the first and second persons, even in the forms that did not receive promotion into the evolving standard:

> *my mine our ours* (since 1300 in the north; competing with
> *ourn* in the early 14th-c. Midlands)
>
> *thy thine your yours* (since 1300, but not predicative before 1375)

Note that even were these possessives to be levelled with the third person forms, hypothetical forms like *mys and *thys would still end in voiced consonants. It is interesting in this regard to remember that *its* competed with not only the neuter use of *his*, but a paraphrase with *thereof* that sixteenth-century writers had resorted to, as in "the day thou eatest thereof" (Genesis 2:17), in order to avoid the periphrastic possessive "of it". The bond of sound that held these together was broken when *its* entered the picture, just in time to draw the apostrophe along with it.

One might imagine that in collocations like *its own* that the quasi-reflexive *own*, immediately subsequent, could voice the preceding sibilant in rapid speech and then, its dirty work done, glide away, leaving a paradigm without its sole means of allophonic support. But the next syllable does not seem to help in voicing such an -*s*. The stop plus fricative of *its* seems rather just the environment to keep a stop stressed, alive, and unvoiced, with the tongue contact on teeth that can even unvoice a voiced fricative. Peter Ladefoged specifically draws attention to its unvoicing in the elision of "it's" ("it is", pp. 92 and 248) without commenting on the isolation the homonym pronoun adjective occasions within is possessive paradigm.

The trouble had begun long before any Germanic speakers set sail for Britain, in the Germanic improvidence about preserving any Indo-European third-person pronouns. Had the Anglo-Saxons thought to take a tip from the Germanic dialects of the east, something like the Gothic neuter singular *is*, with a voiceable sibilant, would have saved a world of trouble.

Perhaps a world well lost, however, when one considers the possibilities for confusion with the copula. Continental German has settled on the demonstrative *dessen* to do the work of the third person singular possessive.

A single stop rather than a cluster in the coda would have helped, but such variants seem not to have gotten south respectably in enough time to get into the incunables as a prestigious form. More important, a possessive **id* would have looked more out of sorts than did *its*, even though it was more consonant with the sound aspects of the paradigm. There are examples in *King Lear* of the possessive pronoun *it* in "it head" and " it young" (*OED* s. v. *it* III.10), but they are given to the Fool. The fifteenth-century Scottish solution of making the reduced form of the word a voiced stop can be seen in *OED*. But this happy voiced stop apparently appears only for the pronoun, not for the possessive adjective derived from such a pronoun.

It was at just this time that the grammatical status of possessives was in flux, as what had been pronouns began to lead the more constrained lives of adjectives. As Roger Lass puts it: "During the course of Middle English the genitives of the personal pronouns were syntactically 'detached' from the pronoun paradigm, and came to function rather as adjectives than as true case forms. They could no longer occur as objects of verbs (as in OE *fanda min* 'try me'), or as partitives (*an hiora* 'one of them') . . . . Eventually the genitives became exclusively noun attributes, i.e. 'possessive adjectives.'" This shift in function might have moved them up into being non-syntax words, though their monosyllabicity tends to keep them in that category.

The bond of sound, broken by dialect combination hundreds of years ago, could yet be restored from it. Rajend Mesthrie notes that in varieties of broken English spoken in South Africa there can arise an invariant free possessive particle as a pidgin-like structure in the pre-basilect in phrases like *Joseph iz aunty me* meaning "I am Joseph's aunty" and *my mother iz father* "my mother's father". These phrases from the outermost edges of South African Indian English are uncannily reminiscent of the *his*-genitive of Shakespeare's time, in phrases like "as red as Mars his heart".

But even if the language police or planners could institute an **ids* or **iz* to replace the possessive *its*, the damage has been done. The Chadwyck-Healey English poetry database

reveals that many homonyms have gone astray, though to be fair its texts, all printed before 1900, therefore give full scope to the flurry of pre-standard paratextual markers in the pre-modern centuries. The collocation "its own" occurs just under five thousand times, with 96 instances of the incorrect "it's own" to make up the number. The earlier spelling "owne" produces 73 instances of "its owne" and 14 with the errant apostrophe. About the same proportion of error occurs in the other direction, but with lower numbers, as with the 6 instances of "its done" (none from George Bernard Shaw) that are just a diacritic away from the 36 instances of "it's done" in that corpus.

The numbers are too small to be significant, but it is worth noting that when "its" precedes "truth", with a voiceless stop, there are only 4 or 5 instances of an apostrophe that does not legitimately signal the copula, and 162 examples of the possessive pronoun in all its integrity.

For those who cannot feel with Bill Bryson that "the distinction between these two (*its* and *it's*) ought not to trouble a ten-year-old," there may be some wisdom to be found in Claire Cook's prescriptive mantra: "The possessive forms of personal pronouns do not have apostrophes." The minimal pair sentences she cites "When the salt has lost its savor, the Bible tells us, it's good for nothing" and "It's a wise dog that scratches its own fleas" have also achieved wide circulation.

Katie Wales' otherwise incisive discussion of the *its/it's* problem, which warns that pronominal *it's* has achieved a beachhead in the press, does contain a curious statement on the possessive in "for all it's worth". Assuming that the American linguist Deborah Cameron uses contractions elsewhere in *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*, she is entitled to hers here, as English has homonymous but distinct phrases. An American eye sees nothing ungrammatical in "the medium of the written word should be exploited for all it's worth". Though perhaps slangy-sounding in its contraction, it is a perfectly idiomatic expression meaning "for all that it is worth." The Chadwyck-Healey poetry database includes the similar "for what it's worth" fron the British poet C. Mackay.

Our present cumbersome exceptional status for the unvoiced final sound of pronoun its serves perhaps as a useful shibboleth, or as an irritant that produces the baroque pearl of English style, even though giving voice to the end of our problem possessive might make it comprehensible as something other than obstinance or ignorance, and help it to shed the pesky apostrophe at last.   □

References:

Bryson, Bill. 1987. *The Penguin Dictionary of Troublesome Words.* 2nd edn. New York.

Carney, Edward. 1997. *English Spelling.* London and New York.

—. 1994. *Survey of English Spelling.* Routledge.

Chadwyck-Healey Full-Text Poetry Database.

Cook, Claire Kehrwald. 1985. *Line by Line: How To Improve Your Own Writing*. Boston.

Dobson, E. J. 1968. *English Pronuciation 1500–1700.* 2nd edn. Oxford.

Ladefoged, Peter. 2001. *A Course in Phonetics.* 4th edn. Harcourt.

Lass, Roger. 1994. *Old English: A Historical Linguistic Companion.* Cambridge: University Press.

—. 1992. "Phonology and Morphology" pp. 23–155 of Norman Blake, ed., *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Vol 2. 1066–1476.* Cambridge: University Press.

Mesthrie, Rajend. 1992. *English in Language Shift: the history, structure, and sociolinguistics of South African Indian English.* Cambridge.

Murphy, Cullen. March 1988. "The Big Nine," In *Atlantic Monthly*.

Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd edn., 1989. Prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner. Oxford: University Press.

Wales, Katie. 1996. *Personal Pronouns in Present-day English.* Cambridge: University Press.

The dictionary and the disk

PAUL PAUWELS and a readers' panel in Belgium review the CD-ROM versions of the *OALDCE*, *LDOCE*, and *CIDE*

Five years ago, we at VVLE (the Flemish Association of TEFL) organized a workshop looking into the new editions of the major EFL explanatory dictionaries, and put down our findings in a review article (NL 78), which was later taken over by *English Today* (46, vol 12 no 2). Now, with the publication of the new CD-ROM versions of three of these dictionaries, we decided it was time for an update. Our readers' panel for this review consisted of: Tom Bekers, Raf Erzeel, Raymond Janssens, Johan Vanparys and myself.

Evaluating a CD-ROM dictionary involves looking at two major aspects: content and access. Where content is concerned, a CD-ROM dictionary need not be very different from a paper version. It can however try to make a mark in the deparments of sound and of moving image. Access is another story altogether: here, the CD-ROM dictionary breaks through the limitations of linear presentation (alphabetical or otherwise) and physical location which characterize a paper version.

Where contents are concerned, many of the differences outlined in the earlier review still hold. *LDOCE* is based on the 1995 paper edition, and as such it does not contain many of the new internet-related vocabulary items or meanings (*chat*, *online*, *BTW…*) which are included in the other two dictionaries' new 2000 editions. The paper version of *OALDCE* (2000) is larger than its 1995 predecessor by some 100 pages, and has used the extra size to elaborate some entries (e.g. *arcade*, *irregularity*), to divide its definitions of highly polysemous words more systematically into subsections with semantic labels (e.g. *area*, *issue*), and add AmE pronunciations more systematically. Definitions have been rewritten using a revised 'defining vocabulary', and there has been a change in the usage notes comparing related words. Some of these notes have been dropped, while others have been rechristened as "which word" sections or "vocabulary building" sections (and occasionally elaborated). At first sight *CIDE 2000* is a less radical revision where contents are concerned, although there have been additions and revisions throughout (but as I did not have a copy of the paperback version, making comparison was less easy in this case). One major difference with *CIDE* (1995) is that different uses of a the same word are marked off much more clearly in the entry – making the dictionary more accessible to less proficient users.
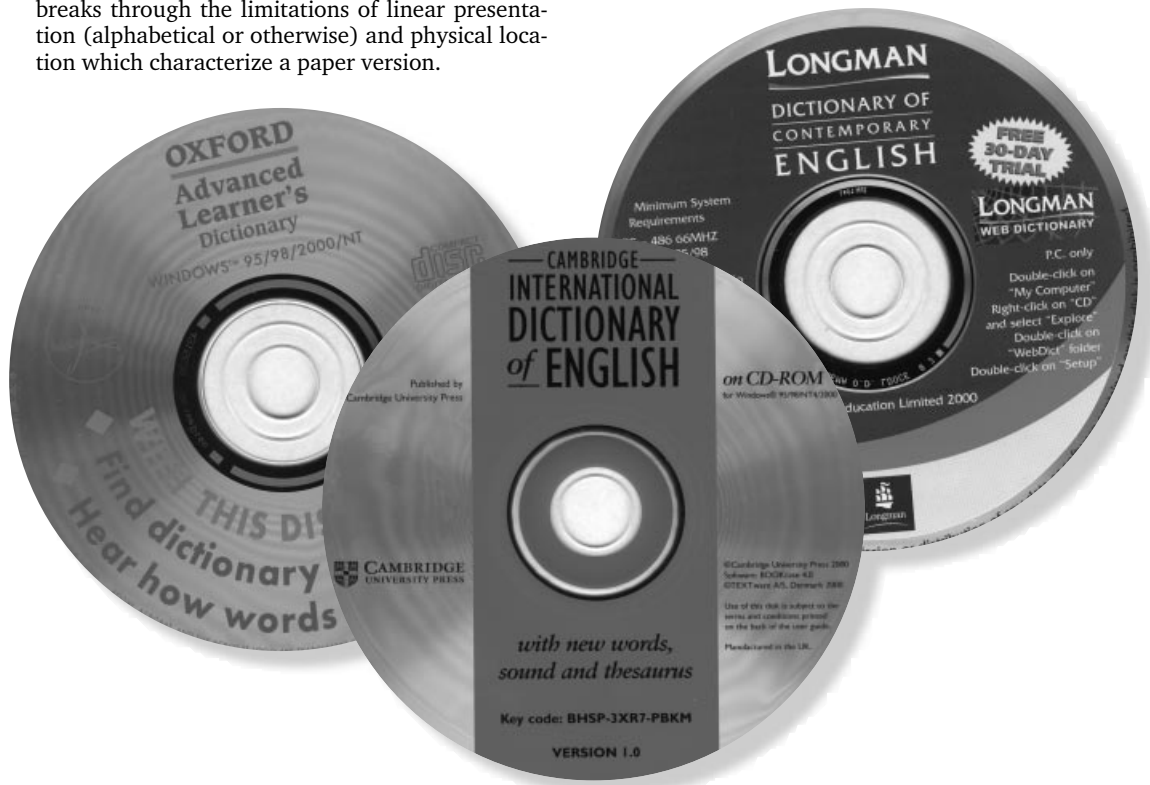
The use of the additional content features of sound and moving image is on the whole fairly limited. All three CD-ROMs provide pronunciation. In *LDOCE*, a single (BrE) rendering is provided as soon as the requested entry pops up on the screen. In *OALDCE* and *CIDE* the user can click on an icon. In the case of *OALDCE*, a second (AmE) pronunciation is provided with selected items; *CIDE* provides BrE and AmE much more systematically, for all headwords. *OALDCE* also provides for the possibility to record, and play back, your own pronunciation. However, since it is the learner who will have to evaluate himself, this extra feature is of limited use. *OALDCE* is the only of the three to use moving image, but as this is restricted to one lexical field only (facial expressions) it is again of limited use. Moreover, the readers' panel collectively raised their eyebrows when they saw *take off* (*one's glasses*) included in this set.

Where CD-ROM design is concerned, there is a clear difference between the bigger two (size-wise) and *LDOCE*. While *CIDE* and *OALDCE* have strong search engines linking different entries and other information from the database, *LDOCE* has a much more limited capacity. Basically, the latter still operates like an alphabetical paper dictionary – but you do not have to turn the pages. It is also slower than the other two. It is strong on pictures, though, and the picture link is put immediately onscreen whenever relevant. I had the impression – but you can never really check this – that *LDOCE* actually has the largest 'picture library' of the three. And it should be pointed out that this CD-ROM comes for free with the paper dictionary.

In what follows, we will have a closer look at the search engines and the links, the accessibility of the picture library, and all kinds of extras.

Search

All three dictionaries have a basic search function where you type the word you need, which results in a list of possible 'hits' and a first suggestion matching your search item. The nature of these lists differs considerably. For *CIDE* and *OALDCE*, the lists consists of all the entries in which the item occurs, i.e. as headword, as part of the headword, or as part of the entry itself. With *LDOCE*, you simply get the alphabetical list of entries surrounding your search item. For example, looking at *park LDOCE*'s list will guide you to either the N or the V, and with the selection of the V entry a picture for 'parking the car' will pop up next to the entry, but you will get no extra links. Only at the end of the N entry will you find a list of possible cross-references to *amusement park*, *ballpark* etc., which can be clicked to reveal the entries. Clicking on an icon above the entry will provide a list of all the morphologically related items containing the string *park*. Both *CIDE* and *OALDCE,* on the other hand,

will put up such further cross-references in their search list, together with references to other entries including *park* in their definitions or their example sentences.

Looking for a multi-word expression in *OALDCE* or *CIDE* is a doddle: any lexical word from the string will lead you to the desired result. In *kick the bucket* either *kick* or *bucket* will do, as will the full expression. With *LDOCE* you are faced with the same problem as in the traditional dictionary: hit and miss.

Both *CIDE* and *OALDCE* have additional (advanced) search options. In *CIDE*, simple and advanced search are accessed in the same framework. You enter your search word – *listen*, for example – and you get the results of the search: headwords, related headwords, entries including the word in definition or examples – in this case three headwords, and 162 further entries (*CIDE* lists the exact number). You can then select from this list and the entry will be retrieved. Alternatively, you can modify the search panel in two ways – you can hit the button 'words' which gives you a list of morphologically related items (like *LDOCE*), or you can hit the button 'filters' which gives you six possible choices (part of speech, label, grammar, category, frequency, related words) to narrow down your choice. The 'related words' filter is also accessible from the entries, and in the case of *listen*, it will direct you to a group of words involving *'using the ears'* which pops up in the search panel, verbs first. In *OALDCE*, the story is slightly more complex. The first search results in a list like *CIDE*'s, with an additional indication of references to the picture dictionary and *OALDCE*'s advanced '3D-search'. When you use this '3D search' you will get a visual word-web with the search item in the centre and all related items containing the search item mapped out around it. You can click different nodes on the word-web to explore these items. Finally, *OALDCE* has an 'advanced search' function, which allows you to define a number of parameters (like *CIDE*'s 'related words') or work from a description using 'boolean' operators (AND, OR…). For example, *move AND quick* gives a list of words including *jiggle*, *flick*, *fast,* etc., where this combination of words is in the definition. In some cases the results are rather slim, though, as with *wet AND windy*, which only yields *weather*.

Pictures

All three dictionaries have used the visual information from the paper versions for the CD-ROM. They have of course made different selections, but on the whole all three dictionaries do well here. The way in which pictorial information is accessed is again different.

With *CIDE*, you can open the picture dictionary, which consists of a list of available pictures (mostly sets of) which can be scrolled and clicked to reveal

the pictures. Moving the mouse around the picture you can make vocabulary pop up. When you click on an item in a picture you get the corresponding entry from the A–Z dictionary. When you are using the A–Z dictionary, *CIDE* provides clickable references to available pictures at the end of subentries. Clicking the reference with, for example, *triangle* puts up the available set of pictures – *shapes*, while the search item is briefly highlighted.

LDOCE's picture dictionary is organized in a slightly different way. Its list does not refer to the sets of pictures, but to the individual items for which there is an illustration. Clicking a word on the list, for example, *briefcase*, first gives a miniature version of the complete picture at the bottom of the list, a further click reveals this picture – in this case of *the office*. Clicking on an icon above the picture gives a survey of all the links to the A–Z dictionary (*desk*, *inkjet*, etc.). For the remainder, the dictionary works in the same way as *CIDE*: moving about makes words pop up, clicking on these words gives information from the A–Z dictionary. The link from A–Z to picture dictionary is more obvious with *LDOCE*: whenever you enter a word which is also present in the picture dictionary, the search will automatically put up the picture next to the dictionary entry (cf. before – *park*).

The main difference with *OALDCE* is that it reveals small pictures of individual items inside the A–Z dictionary, which are clickable for further detail and expandable towards the sets in the picture dictionary. The entry *tiger*, for example, is accompanied by a small picture on which you can move about for further detail of the body parts of the animal (like *whiskers*). These items are also listed in the 'advanced search' and can be accessed directly.

Extras

- All three dictionaries have incorporated some of the extra features from the paper versions like lists of irregular verbs, letter-writing advice, nationality words, numbers, punctuation, military ranks, maps, etc. In *CIDE* and *OALDCE*, such more encyclopaedic or reference sections are completely isolated from the remainder of the dictionary. *LDOCE*'s much more limited set (about 10 sections) does have links to the dictionary proper so that items in these sections can be clicked to call up the relevant dictionary entry. *CIDE*'s elaborate study section is also fairly slow.
- All three dictionaries provide the possibility of cutting and pasting and printing, so that they can be used by the teacher in preparing materials for students. *OALDCE* and *CIDE* further provide the possibility of annotating or bookmarking.
- Both *OALDCE* and *CIDE* have an exercise section. The *OALDCE* effort is a fairly limited affair:

an 'exercise' consists of a number of gapped sentences which are from the same alphabetical section in the dictionary – there is no 'intelligent' selection principle at work. The *CIDE* exercises are much more varied and are the result of a principled selection. A first subgroup focuses on specific areas like 'verb patterns' or 'adverbs', a second subgroup are matching exercises in which vocabulary items should be matched to pictures.
- *OALDCE* has a games section with crossword puzzles and other games which are OK for fun.
- *CIDE* allows you to use 'wildcards' in order to look up words you do not really know how to spell. For example *respons?bility* will lead you to *responsibility* and *rec??ve* will give you *receive*.
- *LDOCE* has an integrated 'conjugation' function which will give you the full forms for any verb.

Conclusion

Playing around with these CD-ROM dictionaries was an interesting experience. Most of the panel were convinced of the usefulness of *CIDE* and *OALDCE*, both from the point of view of the teacher and from the point of view of the learner. Learning to use the dictionary to the full takes some time though, and a clear manual of the type provided by *CIDE* is a handy tool – while *OALDCE* and *LDOCE* only provide online help. In comparison with the other two, *LDOCE* was much less attractive. *OALDCE* and *CIDE* are much more elaborate efforts – but then again they are also sold as separate products, while *LDOCE* comes for free with the paper dictionary.

Maintaining a link with the paper dictionary is maybe not such a bad thing for the user: it was by looking at the paper version of *OALDCE* that my attention was drawn to the 'Which Word'-usage note following the entry for *entrance*. Looking at the CD-ROM I had managed to overlook this feature, for the simple reason that it is located at the end of a longer entry and consequently outside the screen when the entry pops up. Or maybe this shows CD-ROM makers too are still learning, and sometimes forget that the user will only look for these things if he knows they are there – maybe an extra reference or icon inside a longer entry would do the trick.

In sum, I like *CIDE* for its accessibility, its 'related words' function, the systematic incorporation of BrE and AmE pronunciation and the good exercise section. I like *OALDCE* for the way it incorporates the picture dictionary, for its 3D-search and, why not, for the games. *LDOCE* has much to recommend it to younger or less proficient learners – it is easier to use, and everything on the CD-ROM is fully incorporated with links between A–Z, pictures, verb list and study sections. □

The same distance from Fowler

From: Andrew Dalby
 akdalby@hotmail.com

In my column in *The Linguist,* from which an extract was reprinted in *ET*66, I gave Professor Richard W. Bailey (as he really is) the same middle initial as Bryan A. Garner. I apologise for the dittography.

Bailey, in a letter in *ET*67, complains that I ascribed to him 'anti-Texan innuendo', and helpfully quotes the very statement I had in mind. 'A Texan shouldn't ... have tried' to mimic the opinions and style of H. W. Fowler, so Bailey had asserted in a critical review of Garner's *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*.

If Bailey meant that no one at all should ever try to write a usage guide to modern written English in Fowler's style (as he may quite reasonably believe!) then the Texan has no need to be in the sentence. But, yes, he is in the sentence, which implies to a reader that some other people would be better than the Texan at imitating Fowler. In his letter in *ET*, Bailey adds the explanation that 'Garner is a Texan, and he ought to be proud of using English like a Texan.' That sounds a tiny bit prescriptive. Readers of *ET* have had the opportunity to see that Garner, a Texan and a professional lawyer and author, writes English that is as free of local and regional colour as he chooses. It is very much the same English, in fact, that Bailey writes as a Michigander (and that I write as a Liverpudlian). In our written language we probably all three stand at about the same distance from Fowler. No one that I can think of stands closer. Garner, as Texan, is as well qualified as anyone else to imitate the master.

Maybe I have taken Bailey's statement more seriously than he intended. Serious or tongue-in-cheek, it really did appear to be anti-Texan innuendo.

On English and Chinese: not convinced

From Peter K. W. Tan
National University of Singapore

As someone who has always been sceptical about the notion of 'Asian values' (a term frequently used in this part of the world), I was interested to find out if Zuo Biao's article (*ET*67) would be the one that would finally convince me about the essential differences between East and West. Singapore bills itself as being at the crossroads of East and West but no one has been able to explain very clearly what the East or the West meant (apart from the obvious labels of geographical direction).

I was disappointed. The features of English that he described (cohesive connectors signalling temporal, logical, etc., relationships; hypotactic structure) would certainly be true of *academic* or *scientific* English, but surely not informal or conversational English! And as Halliday and others have pointed out, scientific discourse is a later development in English. Old English, for example, is largely paratactic in nature. I wonder if Professor Zuo is more familiar with the kind of English used in writing or used by academics. It certainly does not square with my own experience of English outside of the university context (and also outside of the South East Asian context, I hasten to add).

In or *On*

From: Dr Julian Ogilvie
Assistant Editor
Trends in Cognitive Sciences, UK

In the usage article 'IN and ON revisited' (*ET*66, Apr 01), Tim Connell notes the arrouncement to Underground customers, reminding them that smoking is not permitted on any part of the Underground. This was supposedly heard at Surbiton station.

Quite apart from the difficulty of deciding whether one is *on*, *in* or indeed, *under*, the Underground system, Prof. Connell's geography is rather suspect. There is no Underground at Surbiton, the farthest West the network goes on that line being Wimbledon.

More irritating for us overground train users is the apparently irrepressible use 'due' when 'owing' is the correct word. I notice that Railtrack now have printed notices that are headed: 'Due to engineering works, the following services will be disrupted.' There is then a space beneath for the rail operatives to fill in the appropriate details.

Should we be concerned about this, or do we simply accept that the use of 'due' is changing and the above will be acceptable to all in a few years' time?

Editor There was a time, years back, when *Post & Mail* almost teemed with letters as interesting and concise as these three. It would be rewarding indeed if we had more of them. Each represents valuable feedback and indeed 'feed-forward'. They all deal in usage and there is more to be said on each topic. Let it be said. □