Revitalizing 'Basic English' in Asia: New Directions in English as a Lingua Franca

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My central thesis concerns the need for a fundamental "rethink" regarding the practicable aims of teaching English as an international language (EIL)—especially for non-elite working-class students in East Asia and elsewhere in the developing world. The paper encourages educators in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) from primary to university level to begin exploring in depth an alternative to full, complex English: the reduced, easily learned auxiliary Basic English, developed and promoted from the early 1930s by two major pioneers in linguistic semantics, C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards. It stresses the utility of recovering an extensive and unique experiment in the pedagogy and design of English as an auxiliary language in the early years of the EFL profession, and pathways for retrofitting it to current needs, particularly in less wealthy economies in the Asia-Pacific region, what is today often termed the Global South.

Basic—and its close cousin Everyman's English, Ivor Richards' altered version of Basic expanded by some 80 words (Katagiri & Constable, 1993; Richards & Gibson, 1974)—constituted a bold venture that has largely disappeared from professional awareness. In her detailed overview of English as a lingua franca (ELF), Burt (2005) fails to note Basic; nor does Graddol (2006) in his analysis of global English and its challenges today. Can the scope and powers of this "miniature English" (Richards, 1943, p. 21), grounded on a prime vocabulary of 850 core words, be revitalized for new paradigms in EFL instruction in this century, especially for those who do not have access to elite education and the opportunity to invest many years of study in mastering English? With Basic, students can concentrate on strong control of a highly delimited vocabulary and syntax, learning how to express virtually anything they wish to say in its flexible and frugal confines.

Graddol (2006) postulates that the ongoing paradigm shift in the status and function of global English will necessitate new ways of conceptualizing English as an international language (EIL). He suggests that in many economies, knowledge of English is becoming a basic skill akin to literacy in the national language. Could proficiency in an easily learnable but powerful minimalist lingua franca emerge as one

response to the demands of the need for a world English? Basic potentially fits that bill, and needs to be experimented with in a variety of settings. Indeed, with no native speakers per se, tied to no geographical space and yet easily anchored in local life, Basic is eminently suited to becoming a lingua franca and is an effective antidote to the potential neo-imperialism embedded in the imposition of EIL.

Some scholars in English as a lingua franca (ELF) linguistics think a serious new in-depth look at Basic is on the agenda, developing empirical research on its potential utility as a lingua franca for global mass education. Commenting on Basic, Seidlhofer (2002) stresses it is imperative to re-examine the extensive work "that has gone into conceptualising, operationalising and trialling a model of English which was designed from the outset as that of an international lingua franca" (p. 297). She suggests that "current research into lingua franca communication . . . could benefit considerably from taking into account some of the quite radical ideas which informed the design of Basic" (p. 272).

Central to the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis (2005) were proposals for truly mass democratic connectivity to the Web across the developing world. It is clear that an easily understandable reduced form of English can be highly useful if youth and others are really to use the Internet and access information they can actually comprehend, in a handy lingua franca—and, where possible, in their own first and regional languages. The recent advent of the Simple English Wikipedia (Wikipedia, 2006), a version of the popular online encyclopedia written in a far simpler and more transparent form, also reflects this aim. Indeed, some would assert that it is the basic right of all on this planet, especially for the broader mass population of learners in the Global South, to fundamental literacy in an easily mastered lingua franca for cross-cultural communication and self-empowerment in the broadest sense.

Though the EFL profession will continue to concentrate on teaching some form of Standard English to many learners, ever more teachers can also begin to develop new modes for teaching a compact English lingua franca that is a full-service means of communication, increasingly needed in a vast array of contexts. After an extended overview of Basic and a history of its background, this paper sketches seven factors that warrant a renewed look at Basic. It then speculates on some paths forward, followed by a brief conclusion. An appendix provides two texts in Basic.

Basic: An Overview

It is important from the outset to understand that Basic is not stage one of Standard English for elementary learners, nor a Threshold Level English (van Ek & Alexander, 1980) geared to the models of native speakers and their colloquial idioms. A kind of

working model of the full language, Basic involves massive recycling of the core vocabulary. An all-purpose auxiliary language suited for **B**usiness, **A**dministrative, **S**cientific, **I**nstructional, and **C**ommercial uses, it is not merely a minimal lexis governed by a minimum apparatus of essential English grammar, "but a highly organized system designed throughout to be as easy as possible for a learner" (Richards, 1943, p. 21). As Richards noted, Ogden was guided by "the balancing and ordering of many rival claims—simplicity, ease of learning, scope, clarity, naturalness—all to be as far as possible satisfied and reconciled" (Katagiri & Constable, 1993, p. 50).

Basic English is English in a nutshell: A system in which 850 essential headwords do the work of 20,000, and so provide a second or international language which will take as little of the learner's time as possible to master. These words are not based on frequency of occurrence but a specific conception of semantic sequencing. "With most languages two or three years may be necessary to get a knowledge of 5,000 words. . . . In Basic English, the end of the work is in view all the time" (Ogden, 1932, p. viii), with no more words than can be put in compact form on a one-page word list, plus their combinations and expansions, especially phrasal verbs.

The classic Basic 850 word list—100 Operation Words, the 600 Things (400 General and 200 Picturable), the 100 Qualities and the 50 Opposites—put in columns on a single sheet of paper, is an emblem of that economy in learning effort, compactness of presentation, and the separation of the functional from the content words. Based on intensive research over seven years, the list was the product of the testing out of the powers of English words, how they are able to take over the work of others, a kind of applied semantic engineering. Of the 850 core words, 513 are monosyllabic, and a further 254 have penultimate stress, reducing problems with stress which have proved particularly difficult for speakers of Asian tone languages. In aural comprehension enhancement, one major benefit that Basic offers is that "the limited vocabulary gives a much smaller corpus from which to determine which words the speaker is using" (J. Manor, personal communication, February 11, 2006). This can be an advantage to learners in Thailand, Lao, Cambodia and Vietnam, for example, who often have especial difficulty in comprehending spoken English.

The original Basic has only 16 verbs or operators—*come, get, give, go, keep, let, make, put, seem, take, be, do, have, say, see, send,* along with *may* and *will*, plus 20 directives (prepositions and particles). Utilizing the suffix *-ed*, many additional verbal qualities are created, such as *I was surprised* from the noun *surprise*, or *It was covered with flowers* from the noun *cover*. Similarly, adding the suffix *-ing* or *-er* on the noun creates *swimming, swimmer,* etc. for 300 nouns in the list. Most of the operators designate simple physical acts. Syntax is pared down and made more transparent, grounded on a handful of skeletal rules. Central to Basic is the technique of paraphrase:

give thought to or *have in mind* instead of *think; give up* instead of *abandon, abdicate, resign, vacate; go down* instead of *jump; have a sleep* instead of *sleep* and so forth. The verb *know* is replaced by *have knowledge of, be certain of, be clear about.*

Ask yourself and your students: what does *forget* mean? Explain it using only one or two of the 16 operators in the Basic list: *not take into account, not keep in memory*. *Remember* is *to keep in memory* or *to get back in memory.* These are good examples of how Basic forces the learner to say things in a semantically stripped down fashion, here centering on the words *memory* and *account,* both on the list of 850. Of course, Basic relies heavily on the ability of English to form phrasal verbs, taught very systematically. Another 50 or more international words, although not included in the core 850, supplement the Basic prime vocabulary, along with the systems of numbers, months and days of the week. There are optional additional 50-word lists for specialized fields, like business and science. *The General Basic English Dictionary* (Orthological Institute, 1940/1993) gives 40,000 meanings of 20,000 words in Standard English, all defined in minimal Basic. *The Basic Dictionary of Science* (Graham, 1966) offers definitions in Basic of 25,000 terms in the sciences.

Basic can be taught at minimum cost, even in low-resourced learning environments, and to large classes, in a fraction of the time invested in most EFL curricula. Ogden contended that it would take seven years to learn Standard English, seven months for Esperanto and seven weeks for Basic English (Wikipedia, 2006). Richards (1943) stressed that for all categories of students, "a far more serviceable command of English has been gained in far less time [using Basic] than by any other plan" (p. 115). Recent experience in Japan suggests that Richard's *English Through Pictures*, Books 1 and 2, with a core vocabulary of 750 words, can be readily taught in 100 hours of instruction with Book 3 (a reader adding another 250 words) requiring an additional 50 hours (Y. Katagiri, personal communication, February 12, 2006). This version of Everyman's English reaches an expanded vocabulary of 1,000 words. Richards pressed for an intensive month at the start, which could "economize effort enormously in the long run, and release time for other subjects later on" (p. 115).

Basic's Rise and Demise

Basic was originally spread by the Orthological Institute in Cambridge and London from the late 1920s. It enjoyed a special connection with South and East Asia from its inception (Koenecke, 2004). Much of the experimentation on Basic in its period of expansion 70 years ago was in China, even after the Japanese invasion in July, 1937. It was promoted vigorously in India and Burma by Adolph Myers (1938a, 1938b; Ogden & Richards, 1938), and in Malaya by Victor Purcell (1937). In 1935, Richards published

his *Basic in Teaching: East and West*, springing largely from his work in China, where he had established an Orthological Institute in Beijing that same year, a spin-off of Ogden's institute in Cambridge. In 1937, it was relocated for the duration of the war to Kunming in Yunnan province (Koeneke, 2004). China served as a proving ground for Basic: two path-breaking textbooks and a teacher's handbook were published there even as the war raged (Winter & Tung, 1938a, 1938b, 1939). Richards devoted some four and half years to promoting Basic in China, spanning over four decades, down to the final working day in his life in May 1979, lecturing at Shantung University at age 86.

In the United States, Richards advanced Basic and his form of Everyman's English as a lingua franca beginning in the early 1940s. It was used extensively in immigrant English classes, in special programs for the elderly illiterate poor, and an array of elementary school special projects (Russo, 1989). Richards, based at Harvard University, pioneered the introduction of film strips, TV, tapes, cassettes, and other aids in a quite original multimedia approach (Russo, 1989), stressing techniques for autonomous learning. In the 1960s, he campaigned (with near success) for the adoption of Basic in Ghana, and spurred a unique three-year pilot program in Everyman's English in a number of Israeli schools (Russo, 1989). The empirical work on teaching Everyman's was very promising, especially the Israeli comparative research, which noted that "the experimental population has acquired a speaking vocabulary which is on the average twice that of the control population" (Katagiri & Constable, 1993, p. 364).

The huge interest in and broad network devoted to Basic unraveled during the post-war dismantling of the British Empire, and under the impact of the Cold War, the Chinese Revolution, and Ogden's death in 1957. Another factor may have been the diverse criticisms of Basic, often uninformed (Richards & Gibson, 1945), advanced by linguists (Johnsen, 1944), and a tendency by literature-oriented English departments to dismiss Basic as "intellectually and culturally empty" (Simpson, 1998). Ogden and Richards barely cooperated after 1945 due to an ocean of separation and a widening rift between them. A year before Ogden's death, German associates brought out an excellent version of his own standard textbook *Basic Step by Step* (1935) for the West German market (Horst & Horst, 1956). But worldwide interest flagged. The British Council also decided in the late 1940s not to promote Basic as vigorously as it had prior to and during the war. The promise held out by Basic and Everyman's English in repeated experiments and inventive applications under Richards' guidance (Russo, 1989) failed to spark broader interest, and was submerged by the newer methodologies in language teaching driven by structural linguistics (audiolingualism, the work of Fries and others) from the mid-1950s on.

Revived Interest

A revitalization of interest in this lingua franca, relevant to the challenges posed by the burgeoning of EIL, is linked to a number of factors. Seven are of special interest. The first two are specific to Basic and its reinvigoration, the next four are connected with current challenges in the further expansion of EIL that Basic can address, and the last with Basic as a potential paradigm for lingua franca English.

The BEI

Paramount to the revised interest in Basic is the emergence in cyberspace of a major new resource: the Basic English Institute (http://www.basic-english.org). The demise of Ogden's Orthological Institute (1930-1958) and Basic English Foundation (1947-1957) occurred decades ago. But a bold venture of reanimation has been launched in the US, the Basic English Institute. It was set up online in January 2003 out of Marshalltown, Iowa, after several years in the form of another online prototype. Created by a team around Jim Manor, a dedicated systems engineer, it has now made many classic text materials, inaccessible for decades, readily available once again. As a scientist, Manor is especially gifted in working out effective new applications of Basic, such as for the Simple English Wikipedia (Wikipedia, 2006).

The aim of BEI is to expand Basic in the 21st century, as a lingua franca and in terms of computer adaptations. It deserves to be brought into the TESOL research and development mainstream. Projects await facilitators. Its website has a number of online books from Basic's classic era, including the omnibus Ogden (1968), which reprints an anthology of Ogden's key works. The BEI highlights a core bibliography (http:// www. basic-english.org/learn/basicbibio.html) and numerous key texts (http:// ogden.basic-english.org/books.html).

The Japanese Connection: GDM

In language pedagogy, Richards promoted the idea of rigorous grading of material. This Graded Direct Method (GDM) is spelled out in detail in Richards and Gibson's[1] (1945/1993) *Teacher's Guide,* a handbook for their textbook *Learning the English Language, Books 1-3* (1943). GDM has developed a network of teachers in Japan, where it has been taught for several decades at the presecondary level, promoted by Yuzuru

[1]Both originally published with no author's names; attributed to English Language Research, Inc., a firm set up by Richards at Harvard in 1942.

Katagiri and his associates (http://www.gdm.pos.tol). They have been utilizing textbooks developed by Richards and Gibson (1973/2005). Lasting interest there is reflected in the volume of Richards' papers edited by Katagiri and Constable (1993). A related initiative by Ryota Iijima is a blogspot on Basic (http://ryotasan. blogspot.com/). Experience in Japan suggests that many pupils who are initially taught Basic do better on later school exams, even working with more standard ministry-prescribed textbooks (Y. Katagiri, personal communication, February 12, 2006).

Poor Achievement Levels and a Widening Gap

Renewed interest in Basic also springs from a recognition of the profession's own massive failure at the grassroots. Proficiency in an English oriented to native-speaker standards and levels tested by high-stakes exams is becoming a major educational and socioeconomic gatekeeper in many societies across the globe. Yet experience from the field suggests that great masses of EIL learners remain at levels of very weak control even after extended years of classroom study.

Many Thai learners, for example, especially from nonelite state schools, are caught in the throes of fossilization within an interlanguage frozen at a midelementary false beginner level in most skills even after 10-12 years of classroom instruction. In August 2005, the Education Minister Chaturon Chaisang called in Bangkok for a "complete overhaul of the teaching of English" (Kaewmorakot, 2005, para. 1). in Thai schools at all levels, stressing "most students' inability to communicate in English despite spending years learning the language" (Kaewmorakot, 2005, para. 1).

Middle-class learners throughout Asia increasingly have access to better teachers, private lessons, cable TV in English and other aids to learning. The socioeconomic differential between higher levels of proficiency among learners from more privileged backgrounds and great masses of less privileged learners, often small town and rural, is leading to a widening gap between EIL haves and have-nots in many localities. The phenomenon of a preschool English boom is now spreading in Japan, where some 20% of all Japanese kids aged 5 are learning English (McCurry, 2006), largely in private schools. Graddol (2006) projects a playing field of growing social inequity, where "without English you are not even in the race" (p. 122).

That gap in interlanguage is also evident elsewhere among average learners in many parts of East and Central Asia. Information from Africa (Holloway, 2005) and Latin America suggests this is but the tip of a learning malaise throughout much of the Global South, particularly outside the social geography of the middle-class elites. Basic can perhaps provide a workable and more equitable answer for the multitude of learners.

"How Do You Teach English When You Can't Speak It?"

That is a question Watts (2003) has addressed in the context of India. One identified need for teacher training, especially in more rural areas and in low resource contexts, is an efficient version of English that can be more easily taught by instructors who themselves may have a weak grounding in the standard language, especially in oral proficiency. In Thailand, for example, a large proportion of teachers of English, particularly in the elementary schools, were never trained as teachers of English. They teach the language because their school directors require them to, and it is difficult to upgrade their skills. To improve teacher development, switching to Basic for instruction at elementary levels would allow hard-pressed teachers the opportunity to fully master a compact form of English as a lingua franca that they could then teach more effectively. There has been no systematic experimentation whatsoever along these lines in Thailand, Laos, Vietnam or Malaysia.

Far Cheaper Alternative

Expenditures for learning English by governments, organizations, and individuals are a staggering sum globally, and rising (Graddol, 2006). This places a huge burden on the countries in the Global South. Basic holds out the promise of reducing these costs substantially, both for learners and for the training of teachers. Based on experience in China and many other countries, Richards (1939/1993) stated, "We are now satisfied that we can in two years give a sounder and more promising introduction to general English than has formerly been given in six" (p. 61). He stressed that if the Yunnan reform "were extended throughout China, there would be a saving—on the Ministry of Education's figures . . . —of nearly a thousand million boy-girl hours on the course" (p. 61). It never came to pass.

Simplified English for Science and EAP

My own experience in Thailand at a nonelite state university is instructive: many graduating seniors in the marine sciences cannot write even a brief abstract in understandable English of their own research. They frequently know the technical terms but lack the necessary grounding in simple syntax and control of prepositions. Thai scientists I work with find it extremely difficult to write a paper or conference presentation in English on their work.

In the commercial sphere, Controlled English and ASD Simplified Technical English are experiments by for-profit firms in language simplification for the aerospace and other industries, but access to specifications and software is costly. ASD Simplified Technical English is now required for component maintenance manuals at Airbus, Boeing, NATO and elsewhere. Their slogan is, "Failure to communicate is not an

option" (http://www.smartny.com/simplifiedenglish.htm; see also Washington State University, 2005).

I would argue that more experimentation with Basic is crucial precisely in this applied sphere of scientific English and English for Academic Purposes: A new economy in writing, oral presentation and aural comprehension, not rigidly geared to native-speaker standards of proficiency and style. Basic lends itself to a fusion of highly technical lexis and simplified syntax. Importantly, it can bolster learner confidence in their own ability to get their meaning across. As Richards and Gibson (1945) noted, "An able surgeon from Peru will ask for three weeks of Basic structure patterns so that he can present a paper on obstetrics at the medical school where he is visiting. The medical terminology he has in common with the doctors he is to address. It is the framework of simple English statement that he needs, and he finds with relief that Basic can give it to him. It does with broken English what he can do with broken bones" (p. 52).

Oral presentations at scientific conferences, especially by nonnative speakers of English for largely nonnative audiences, need to find a lean and effective medium for EAP—delivered in a simplified phonology geared to cross-cultural comprehensibility (Jenkins, 2005, 2006), especially in East Asia. In Thailand, innovative approaches to teaching effective academic English are becoming more crucial as universities shift to a requirement that doctoral dissertations in numerous fields be written and defended in English.

Basic as a Potential Model for English as a Lingua Franca

A final but key factor, central to English as a lingua franca today, is the fact that nonnative speakers of English as an international language now far outnumber native speakers, as Graddol (2006) and Essen (2004) have stressed. One response is to reinvigorate Basic as a self-contained auxiliary not controlled by native-speaker communities, their prerogatives and power to define standards and directions. That independence from native-speaker correctness criteria is also central to Jenkins' (2006) approach to ELF phonology, which foregrounds the principle of international intelligibility combined with local diversity in lingua franca communication. Graddol (2006) also repeatedly stresses the "declining reverence of 'native speakers' as the gold standard for English" (p. 66) as part of the ongoing paradigm shift. Indeed, one major critique of his book is that although it is in fact largely about ELF today (J. Jenkins, personal communication, March 7, 2006), he only discusses English as a lingua franca by name on one brief page (p. 87).

Basic satisfies Seidlhofer's (2002) three major criteria for a lingua franca model:

1. It is not oriented strictly toward native-speaker usage but *endonormative,*

which means that it can begin to provide its own norms acceptable in English as a lingua franca, both in phonology and in morphosyntax. Its differences from more complete standard English can thus be seen as part of the flexibility allowed to a lingua franca to develop new norms as it is used by large numbers of nonnative speakers. In effect, ELF develops its own standards, and own nonnative-speaker innovations, which may not be considered errors. As Jenkins (2005) points out, one aspect of lingua franca English is the tendency to overuse certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do*, *have*, *make, put, take*. These are precisely the delexicalized verbs ("operators") which constitute the verbal core of Basic.

2. Particularly significant in the context of East Asia, Basic like any English lingua franca can, by dint of its relative cultural neutrality, create space to enable teachers and learners to infuse the code with their own cultural peculiarities. It is not a medium for learning about the English-speaking cultures that privileges their natural speech, but rather a tool for practical communication and understanding, mainly among nonnative speakers. By definition, it is largely devoid of the excess cultural baggage of the English-speaking cultures, "stripped bare" (Meierkord, 2002, p. 109). Book 3 of *English Through Pictures* (Richards & Gibson, 1973/2005) exemplifies such universal cultural content. With far fewer culture-bound allusions, idioms, and slang (Grzega, 2005b), it can allow for what are in effect more culturally Asian varieties of lingua franca English to emerge, and indeed in time Asian varieties of Basic. And textbooks can readily relate to the Asian contexts of the learners, rather than attempting to project more Western-oriented settings, narratives, and culture. The content should be both more local and more global in the most general sense. Basic is well suited to that.
3. Basic also reflects key design features guided by pedagogical principles of learnability and teachability, rather than dictated solely by the intricacies, styles and registers of native-speaker language use and natural, idiomatic English (Seidlhofer, 2002). Seidlhofer stresses that these design features include criteria for selection, grading, and presentation, in an effort to scale down complexity, a major objective of the design of Basic originally. "One of the traditional problems of language pedagogy has always been how to simplify the language input for learning. This has generally involved denaturalising actually occurring language in a somewhat adhoc fashion. Basic can be said to be a systematic 'denaturalisation' which provides for such necessary simplification" (Seidlhofer, 2002. p. 295). She goes on, "Basic . . . is highly

significant as a stimulus for thought. What now needs to be done is to see how far Ogden's conceptual scheme relates to (the still very scarce) empirical findings of how people actually use English as a lingua franca" (p. 295).

Desired New Departures

In moving forward with a reinvigoration of Basic, what are some practical considerations.

* Establish a small research institute in the Global South, preferably in East Asia, that could introduce Basic/Everyman's in the field, in pilot school projects, and elsewhere, with empirical comparative investigations of its effectiveness. Some research will look at how speakers actually use Basic, as Seidlhofer (2004) is doing more generally for lingua franca usage in everyday interactions.
* Begin to liaise with the BEI online and GDM teachers in Japan. The GDM's expertise and input are crucial in any reconstitution of Basic, and they are interested in outreach (Y. Katagiri, personal communication, May 19, 2005; September 10, 2005; February, 12, 2006). Most of their own research to date has been published or presented at conferences only in Japanese (N. Iijima, personal communication, February 7, 2006).
* Basic should be brought to the awareness of the EFL profession. Begin to train teachers, scientists and others in one-day and weekend workshops, including Basic for EAP and Science. Organize workshops in Basic at TEFL conferences; introduce it in TESOL degree and certificate programs. Ogden (1968) remains a good point of departure.
* In time, create an international Basic English Association and fresh modalities for networking.
* Draft new Basic-oriented teaching materials, geared in part to a speaking and listening skills syllabus. The Basic textbook *English Through Pictures*, the foundation stone of GDM, has just been reissued. More communicative materials can be developed.
* Reexamine Basic in the light of West's *General Service List* (1953), contemporary graded readers, the 1,500-word Special English of the Voice of America (VOA) and other initiatives in lexical and grammatical simplification, such as Grzega's (2005a) proposal for Basic Global English. Explore the potential of recent work in "minimalist" syntactic theory (Chomsky, 1995; Radford, 2004) for better modeling syntax in Basic and its teaching.
* Launch a small-scale online newspaper in Basic (the VOA Special English website is one related prototype; http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/).

* Continue the broader project inherent to Basic and Everyman's English of democratizing knowledge. Writing six decades ago, Richards noted the need for a wealth of "serious, intellectually mature reading matter in linguistically simple form" (Richards, 1943, p. 37) as an instrument for writing about science and humanities in a far more compact and analytic medium. He saw Basic as a "common-sense instrument with which to work for a common-world education" (Richards, 1968, p. 240). Richards wrote a textbook on logic in Basic (1933), and later did a Basic English version of Plato's *Republic* (1942) and Homer's *Iliad* (1950), in part for distribution in China. This will entail translating various classics into Basic and writing a variety of new texts in many fields. The Simple English Wikipedia is also in this vein.

Conclusion

Basic English can of course serve as a solid foundation for the far smaller number of learners who may want and are able to advance to higher levels of proficiency in a target geared to complete English. That is not a point of dispute. Teachers at all levels will find that they can profit from the insights of Basic and Everyman's for their own classrooms and research, whether or not they wish to pursue it systematically as an option for focused instruction. Whatever the diverse guiding aims, we have to start (re)experimenting seriously with Basic at the grassroots in Asia and elsewhere now (Anderson, 1977; Templer, 2005).

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Appendix

Two Texts in Basic

Text One:

This is a version of Ogden's Basic Step by Step (1935) for Czech fighter pilots training in England in WW II. Other texts in Basic are available at: http://ogden.basic-english .org/lbe5.html and http://ogden.basic-english.org/isl.html

> Even in early times, when it was almost as common for two countries to have war as for two men to have a fight, there were some who had the feeling that this condition was not right. The love of peace has been a part of the teaching of almost every great religion, and it is clear from this that the men of the past were conscious of the value of living in harmony with one another.
>
> But til only a short time back, almost no one, not even those who had a belief in religion, had any hope that we would ever be able to put an end to war, and no serious attempt was made to take steps against it. . . . In present conditions no country gains any profit from the use of arms, though when a war has been started hate and fear will keep it going. The connection between the trade of all countries is so complex that damage to one is damage to all, and the loss to a country in this way is greater than anything it may have hope of getting by making an attack on

another. Dead men and burned towns are only a small part of the price of war today. The bad conditions which come after it seem to have no end, and it is not possible for anyone who has the experience of them not to see that the old view of war as good business is quite wrong. . . . All these things had made men conscious that war is not only bad, but against all reason. War at all times has been a shocking waste of time, of money, and of men. It is now clearly seen to be so, and that gives the greatest hope for peace which there has ever been in history (Turner, 1941, 117).

Text Two:

One may note that in this paraphrasing or vertical translation, 98 words have become 149.

Original Text:

It was found that the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade. Formulation of ideas is not an independent process, strictly rational in the old sense, but is part of a particular grammar and differs, from slightly to greatly, as between different grammars. We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native grammars (Whorf, 1940/1956, pp. 212-213).

Basic Restatement:

It became clear that a language system (that is, the grammar of a language) is much more than an instrument for voicing ideas; it is what gives form to the ideas themselves. The grammar of our language is in fact the program and guide for the workings of our minds, for the processes of selection and sorting of all that may come to us through our senses, and for the ordering of our thoughts about these things. The reasoning power of the mind is not independent, as was the old view; the effects of the grammar of a language may be seen in the idea system of its users, and systems of ideas are different from one another to the degree that the grammars of the languages are different. The selections, divisions, and sortings of his experience which anyone makes for himself are only those which his language makes possible (Richards & Gibson, 1974, pp. 43-44).