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CONTENTS

EFL Exams in Britain
Looked at Comparatively
by Lois Arthur . . . . page 47

Lathophobic Aphasia
by Donald E. Bott . . . . page 50

What Do I Do on Monday?
An ESL Institute Provides the Answer
by Carolyn Kessler and Curtis W. Hayes . . . . page 56

Teaching Editing Skills
Through Student Monitoring
by Jeffrey Butler . . . . page 58

The 1980 TESOL Convention
by Lynne Hansen . . . . page 61

Writing and Combining Standard
English Sentences: A Review . . . . page 62

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EFL Exams in Britain Looked at Comparatively

by Lois Arthur

Which Exam and What does it mean?

It is now a fact of life that one must prove one's ability with a piece of paper—an examination certificate. But which one? In his own country it is not difficult for a student to know which examinations to take, for a teacher to know what to advise or for an employer to know what to demand. But what of examinations promoted by bodies in other countries—the plethora of EFL examinations for example? How can a foreigner hope to know how they relate to one another in terms of level, or what each one means in terms of achievement in English. In this brief review of some of the principal EFL examinations available, I hope to solve a few of the mysteries which may confront the foreign student, teacher or employer.

The principal bodies in Britain promoting EFL examinations at present are:

- The Association of Recognised English Language Schools (ARELS)
- The University of Cambridge Examinations Syndicate
- The Royal Society of Arts (RSA)
- The University of Oxford Examinations Delegacy.

Tables I and II provide quick reference for exactly which examinations are available from these bodies, their relationship in terms of level and student achievement and the extent of their recognition. Table III gives a fairly comprehensive breakdown of which skills are tested in each examination and how. The following additional information may also be useful.

The ARELS Examinations are perhaps less well known than they deserve to be in certain areas of education abroad. They are quite progressive and unique in their primary objective of assessing students' competence in speaking and understanding English in commonly encountered situations. Table III reflects the thoroughness with which every aspect of the oral/aural use of language is tested. The examinations are to be particularly recommended to students who experience some difficulty in writing English proficiently, but any student wishing to demonstrate his ability to respond readily to conversational stimuli and communicate effectively would be advised to take them. The standards of the examinations are high and the fact that more and more centres are offering them reflects their growing recognition.

The Cambridge Examinations are probably the best known and most widely supported of all EFL examinations, partly because they are well established and partly because of their name which is easily recognized and accepted for quality abroad. The examinations are through, particularly in testing written ability, and, in the case of Proficiency and Diploma, the student's ability to read extensively and cope with literary analysis. The style of the examinations is, however, very traditional when compared with the more practical and realistic communicative techniques employed in the Oxford Preliminary Examination and in the new RSA Exams at present being piloted, and a pass in the ARELS Certificate would certainly be a better reflection of a student's spontaneous oral ability than a pass in First Certificate. The Proficiency examination is demanding, and a pass indicates the student's all round ability in the language. It is officially regarded as equivalent to 'O' level in Britain.

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The availability of optional papers to test special skills (see Table III) is a useful and interesting aspect of First Certificate and Proficiency, especially as performance in these is not taken into account in the

TABLE I – EFL EXAMS AVAILABLE

NAME OF EXAMINING BODY	NUMBER OF COMPULSORY PAPERS	DATES EXAMS ARE SET
ARELS	*Preliminary:* Oral component only *Certificate:* Oral component only *Diploma:* Oral component only	*Preliminary:* March, July, October *Certificate:* February, May, August, November *Diploma:* June (November)
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE	*Preliminary:* Not yet generally available, in pilot form only at present *First Certificate:* 5 papers–Oral; Listening; Reading; Composition; Use of English. *Proficiency:* 5 papers–Oral; Listening; Reading; Composition; Use of English. *Diploma:* Choice of 4 out of 5 papers.	First Certificate, Proficiency, Diploma: June and December
ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS	RSA I, RSA II, RSA III: 3 papers at each level Oral, written and reading	RSA I, RSA II, RSA III: March, May, July and November
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE	Preliminary only at present: 2 papers Reading and Writing.	*Preliminary:* March only

awarding of certificates, but graded separately. The Diploma Examination is open only to those with a grade A or B pass in Proficiency and is an extremely demanding test of language which would tax some native speakers. There is, however, no oral component, but a good performance in the ARELS Diploma would reflect similar native speaker oral competence.

The **RSA Examinations** have never been as well recognised as the Cambridge Examinations. They have suffered from a too traditional approach to testing and a lack of variety in the ways in which skills are tested. The overall range of ability covered by the three stages is smaller than that covered by the Cambridge and ARELS Examinations, but a student holding Stage III should be readily able to express and discuss his own and others' ideas. All three RSA Examinations are currently under review however, and more progressive papers designed to practically test com-

PLACES EXAMS MAY BE TAKEN	STATUS AND RECOGNITION
Approved centres (schools with language laboratories) in UK and abroad. List available from: The Director, ARELS Examination Trust, 48 Russell Square, London	Varies in UK and abroad. 35 out of 90 ARELS schools in UK support it, with moves to increase this. Some British Council centres support well, others do not at all. The exam deserves more recognition
Approved centres in UK and abroad. List available from: The Secretary (Exams in English), Syndicate Buildings, 17 Harvey Road, Cambridge.	Proficiency is given 'O' level equivalence by the Cambridge Exams Syndicate. First Certificate has no equivalence. Proficiency is often accepted for University entrance abroad, for teaching purposes in some countries, and for interpreters' schools. Diploma may be accepted for University entrance in Britain.
Approved centres in UK and abroad. List available from: Assistant Secretary, Royal Society of Arts Examinations Board, Murray Road, Orpington, Kent.	Considered by many to be second best to the Cambridge Exams. In need of improvement, which is at present being undertaken. New exams being piloted look very promising. Particularly intended for learners studying in UK.
Approved centres in UK plus 2 or 3 abroad. List available from: The Secretary, Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations, Ewert Place, Summertown, Oxford.	A relatively new exam designed to test "survival" English of students learning in Britain. It is extremely practical. It is still in its infancy but is an exciting step forward in exam style and has great potential.

municative ability are being piloted and look promising.

The Oxford Preliminary Examination has been designed to fill a gap in the market for post-beginner students learning in Britain who wish to prove their ability to "survive" in English and cope with most everyday situations. The method of testing is interesting, exciting and practical. The examination has great potential and may be developed at other levels. There is no oral component but the ARELS Preliminary Examination may be accepted as the oral equivalent.

Finally, students are often bewildered as to which level of examination to enter, e.g., First Certificate or Proficiency. While it is always possible to enter examinations at more than one level (the only deterrent being cost) I personally would advise students in doubt to take the lower level examination and give themselves time to

(continued on page 53)

Lathophobic Aphasia[1]

by Donald E. Bott

"Barefoot language doctors" (Noss 1979:14) daily deal with the dread disease of lathophobic aphasia, which cripples second language learners as cruelly as polio used to maim pre-Salk sufferers. Victims are shy and timid, afraid of being laughed at, worried about embarrassing corrections, and above all concerned with grades.

Unless treatment is prompt and effective, patients can never become effective second language communicators, though some might teach grammar.[2] If the "cure" is slow and inhibitive, lathophobic aphasia can become epidemic: nobody except the teacher will communicate in the second language classroom.

"Communication" here means the exchange of real information, not just the repetition of structures without regard for meaning, as in drills which don't develop into "spin-offs" for communication (Rivers 1964: 156). Using the second language to trade ideas as soon as a command is built of some structures and vocabulary is a strong motive for further language learning.

But errors must be corrected[3], and their correction should not interfere with communication unless the error is global. Then clarification is needed promptly.

Whether mistakes are global (confusing) or local (lapses that are bothersome but not important in understanding what the communicator means) is a practical field criteria for judging discourse. Kinds of, reasons for, and frequencies of errors are of academic interest; analysis could perhaps lead to more effective correction methods.

Qualitatively, the most effective error correction in the second language classroom seems to be the least obtrusive. The idea that students should not be allowed to make mistakes--a Direct Method precept--conflicts with the notion that errors are stepping-stones to progress.

Teacher repetition of corrected utterances--a D.M. technique--is also unsound. Such repetition, by calling attention to the speaker, embarrasses him. This "negative reinforcement" is needless, for the error might be made later in the same discourse by the same or another student.

Repeating the student's mistake before correcting it (which some TEFLers have been trained not to do) is likewise neither helping nor hurting the error-maker by "activating" the error. It's just another waste of valuable classroom time.

At the opposite end of the gamut is the practice of not correcting errors at all, in "free conversation." This method (or rather, lack of one) is preferrable to inhibiting potential communication, but it allows many errors to slip into the students' phraseology.

Donald E. Bott, a lecturer in the Department of English at Srinakharinwirot University Pratumwan, Bangkok, has taught English in Thailand nine years. In America he was a secondary English teacher for seven years. His bachelor of journalism degree was earned from the University of Texas (Austin) in 1959. He was a newspaper reporter and editor before returning to college to earn post-graduate credits and a teaching certificate.

Global errors are quickly caught up by fellow communicators because they block the flow of talk, and sometimes (particularly in elementary groups) the speaker resorts to his first language to explain what is meant. This explanation then becomes a class mini-project, with students and eventually the teacher helping to express the notion in acceptable English.

Many "free conversation" instructors wait until the end of a class session to correct local errors. The method (Marks 1977:45) of noting errors and their right expressions and giving the notes to the

offending student later has the advantage of not interrupting the flow of talk.

Like most teaching methods, however, it's not viable without adaptation. Depending on the teacher's personality (Mullins 1980:3) and the level of the individual student's understanding, a written note might be incomprehensible. The correction also fails to reach other class members who might benefit from it.

By reviewing his notes of local errors during the latter part of his demonstration class at a TEFL seminar at the Asian Institute of Technology in 1978, Ted Goldenberg provided a clearer exposition of errors than a written note and helped all class members to learn from a particular mistake. The large class of 20 or more students sat in a circle, and its instructor was at a desk outside the circle, during the "free conversation."

The more the teacher keeps "to the sidelines" in this way, the more free will be conversation. This change of roles from the directive facts factorum to a non-participating appreciator is at first difficult for students to accept or for the teacher to perform, yet it eventually leads to a "free-and-easy" informality which is conducive to student participation.

The teacher must refrain from disagreements, agreements, or even physical signs that indicate approval or disapproval, such as smiles or frowns. In the demonstration class, students in "free conversation" could not easily observe their instructor.

Large "conversation" classes are usual, but some institutes--in particular, those conducting intensive second language courses increase the effectiveness of instruction by limiting class enrollment to a dozen students or less. When this is possible, conversations can be taped.

Then the tape is replayed, with pauses after every utterance. In the pauses, the teacher might ask,

--What did he say?
--Could he have said it more clearly? How?
--What are some other ways he could have said it?

Most students can provide the answers to these and other leading questions while the teacher (as in the free conversation part of the lesson) is an unobtrusive guide, neither a participant nor a know-it-all.

Correction and modification of the conversation becomes a class project, with all students participating, some zestfully. Once a student has recovered from initial "mike fright", he sometimes becomes almost too talkative. Lathophobic aphasia disappears as fellow students bring those who have been mute into the conversation.

The nature of the conversation that is recorded varies with time-limits, largely. Topics like "movies" or "the weather" may be announced just before recording; others, like "duty" or "nationalism", could be prepared a week in advance with appropriate readings (Goldenberg 1978).

Role-playing in "playlets" (Bott 1979: 51) can be even more realistic than recording one of the usual conversation topics, if the students might someday find themselves involved in such situations as those the playlets revolve around. Classes of less than advanced students are more secure with these playlets than with "open-ended" topics because the situation has been structured for them.

Levels of discourse, registers of speech, patterns of politeness, or whatever one calls the subtle toning of utterances according to situation and/or status can be taught. Most "corrections" are usually shades of speech appropriateness important to second language learners.

British or American bias (caused by birth, education, or both) may lead the teacher to condemn "alien" but acceptable modes of expression. Condemnation is to be avoided; it confuses students who have previously learned "the right way to say it."

Some phrases that are not "strange" to American ears might be "queer" in British English, and vice-versa. The instructor should point out possible variant interpretations--as, for instance, with "strange" and "queer." Consultation with a colleague of another nationality is helpful when doing this.

More often, the teacher of taped free conversation is confronted with word-for-word translations from the students' first

language to the second language. These utterances are usually non-communicative outside of a group of other speakers of the same first language, and so are global errors to be corrected after the discourse has finished.

Taped conversations of topics previously discussed and of playlets yield other mistakes, but not the same ones made previously. Students remember errors and correct themselves.

Grades may be either "a goad to learning" (Bott 1978:45) or a hindrance in maintaining that "informal non-threatening atmosphere of group activity" (Khoo 1979: 110) which is helpful to communication. Though only a few students realize that such communication practice perfects language skills, all participate for a motive much stronger than self-improvement: it's fun. The second language teacher's main responsibility is to "keep it that way." Only secondarily is he responsible for the evaluation of individual students' language performance.

A one-to-one interview is the main technique for checking if students can communicate. Though an interview is ultimately subjective,[4] experienced interviewers usually set performance criteria (Holdrich and Pergola-Arrezo 1980:129).

An objective multiple-choice test can be constructed from items in recorded free conversations to provide a "discrete point" evaluation of what has been gained in an oral skills course. Items so derived are very similar to those more formally taught with a structural syllabus. However, it is felt that no written test can effectively measure the speaking abilities of an individual student.

[1] "An unwillingness to speak for fear of making a mistake," quoted from Rogers (1979:22) who got it from Alatis (1976: 267) who cited Dr. Earl Stevick.

[2] At least two English graduates of local universities now teaching grammar show that one can gain an advanced degree in English at a native institution without having much ability in English communication.

[3] Many directors of studies have emphasized that mistakes must be corrected immediately, and it is official policy in most institutes with "intensive" courses.

[4] According to students passing an interview in order to further their studies in America, the teacher's most valuable advice was to "smile a lot."

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ENGISH TEACHING IN CHINA

A small number of positions are available for experienced ESL/EFL teachers at Chinese educational institutions. For direct employment by the Chinese government, write to:

The Employment and Accommodation Office
Foreign Experts Bureau
State Council
Beijing
People's Republic of China

Those teachers interested in applying for the small number of Fullbright grants in China, should write to:

The Council for the International Exchange of Scholars
11 Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036

EFL Exams in Britain

(continued from page 49)

build up to the higher level. The examinations are held frequently enough for this, both in Britain and abroad. However, it must be said that Cambridge Proficiency and Diploma and ARELS Diploma are difficult to prepare for without expert guidance and adequate contact with the spoken language.

It is hoped that this review has gone some way towards solving some of the dilemmas facing foreign students, teachers and employers when confronted with the vexing question, "Which exam and what does it mean?"

Ed. Note: The author has expressed her willingness to answer any further questions that might arise as a result of this article.

TABLE II – COMPARATIVE LEVELS OF EFL EXAMINATIONS

Level				
Near Native speaker competence		CAMBRIDGE DIPLOMA		
Fluent in speaking and writing	RSA III	CPE	ARELS DIPLOMA	
Communicates reasonably well	RSA II	FCE	ARELS CERTIFICATE	
Survival English	RSA I			
Post Beginners level			ARELS PRELIMINARY	OXFORD PRELIMINARY

(continued on next page)

TABLE III – SKILLS TESTED/EXAMINATION COMPONENTS

EXAM	SKILLS T																
		TESTED THROUGH										TESTED THROUGH					
	ORAL	Dialogue Reading	Prepared Talk	Social Situations	Narrative	Structural Accuracy	Persuasive clear speaking	Pronunciation	Summary	Use of Register	LISTENING	Passage and Multiple Choice	Passage and Open-ended Questions	Aural Descrimination	Dialogue/Discussion Participation	READING	Vocabulary Items
OXFORD PRELIM.	NO										NO					YES	✓
ARELS ORAL PRELIM.	YES			✓		✓		✓		✓	YES	✓				NO	
ARELS ORAL CERT.	YES	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	YES	✓		✓	✓	NO	
ARELS ORAL DIPLOMA	YES	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	YES	✓		✓	✓	NO	
F.C.E.	YES	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	YES	✓				YES	✓
C.P.E.	YES	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	YES	✓				YES	✓
CAMBRIDGE DIPLOMA	NO										NO					YES	
RSA I	YES				✓	✓		✓		✓	YES		✓			YES	✓
RSA II	YES				✓	✓		✓		✓	YES		✓			YES	✓
RSA III	YES	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	YES		✓			YES	✓

S TESTED																		SPECIAL SKILLS				
TESTED THROUGH							TESTED THROUGH												PAPERS IN			
Vocabulary Items	Passage and Multiple Choice	Open-ended Questions	Practical Application of Information	Literature	Summary	WRITING	Narrative Composition	Deccriptive Composition	Reflective Composition	Argument Presentation	Letter/note Writing	Use of Register	Structural Accuracy	Open-ended Questions	Free expression of ideas	Critical Appreciation	Knowledge of British life and institutions	OPTIONS	Translation	Business English	English for Science	Literature
✓			✓			YES	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					NO				
						NO												NO				
						NO												NO				
						NO												NO				
✓	✓		✓		✓	YES	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					YES	✓	✓	✓	
✓	✓	✓			✓	YES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				YES	✓			✓
		✓		✓		YES			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NO				
✓		✓				YES	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					NO				
✓		✓			✓	YES	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					NO				
✓		✓			✓	YES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				NO				

What Do I Do on Monday? An ESL Institute Provides the Answer

by Carolyn Kessler and Curtis W. Hayes

"What do I do on Monday when I have two students in my class of thirty who don't speak a word of English, or when I have a roomful of first-graders who don't understand a word I say?"

In response to the increasing frequency of this question, resulting from the presence of large numbers of students of limited English proficiency at all educational levels in Texas, the Division of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at The University of Texas at San Antonio in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency designed an intensive summer institute for teachers to help them answer the question of "What do I do on Monday—or anyday?" to teach English as a second language. Offered for the first time in summer 1979, the institute brought together over one hundred teachers from all grade levels for an intensive four-week program in the basic considerations for meeting the needs of students with limited English proficiency.

The pressure to meet English language development needs developed extensively during the academic year 1978-79 when all school districts in Texas were, for the first time in the state's history, required to identify all students at all grade levels who had limited English language proficiency. New state regulations required that these students participate in special programs in English as a second language. Suddenly school districts became aware of a shortage of personnel professionally prepared to design and implement ESL programs, either as distinct programs in an otherwise monolingual English school setting for grades 4-12 or within the bilingual programs of K-3.

To meet immediate demands for preparing teachers in ESL, the Division of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at UTSA designed an intensive institute around a set of three graduate courses that could prepare teachers, supervisors and administrators in the fundamentals of the field of ESL. Organized around Edward Anthony's tripartite division of language teacher considerations—approaches, methods, and techniques—the institute enabled participants to earn nine hours of graduate credit in teaching English as a second language, applicable towards the M.A. program in that concentration.

Anthony maintains that *approach* is a set of assumptions concerned with the nature of language teaching and learning. For the ESL Institute, theoretical concerns regarding the nature of second language acquisition from the standpoint of learner and teacher were presented in a course focusing on psycholinguistic considerations in second language teaching and learning. Participants examined the controversies in second language learning, examining assumptions deriving from an empiricist or behaviorist approach as opposed to those from a rationalist or cognitive approach. Institute members became familiar with current research issues in language acquisition processes and with the psychological and sociological variables that affect the process. They learned to evaluate the implications of research findings from instructional perspectives, both for young children learning a second language as well as for the adolescent or adult learner.

A *method*, Anthony maintains, is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts and all of which is based upon the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Following this definition, a course in second language teaching methods provided participants of the institute an opportunity to examine methodologies deriving from differing approaches. Participants engaged in pattern practice, mimicry and memorization exer-

cises of the audio-lingual method, deriving from an empiricist approach. Following the more current rationalist or cognitive approach, methods examined and practiced by participants included Asher's Total Physical Response, Gattegno's Silent Way, Hall's Situational Reinforcement, Curran's Community Language Learning, and Lozanov's Suggestopedia. In the methods course, students actually experienced the learning of a foreign language through demonstrations conducted in Chinese (Cantonese), Japanese, several Malay-Polynesian languages, Thai, German and Portuguese. Many students, the majority of whom were Spanish-English bilinguals, had never before experienced the occasional total frustration, the anxiety, the fear, nor even the joy of learning a second language. The experience left participants with a keen appreciation of what their own students experienced in the second language classroom.

Language teaching techniques, Anthony argues, follow upon method. *Techniques,* according to Anthony, draw on a particular strategy, designed to meet an immediate objective in the actual classroom situation. Techniques must be consistent with a method and, therefore, in harmony with an approach as well.

A course on second language teaching techniques was devoted in part to the preparation of teacher-designed materials for the language class. Students learned to use a little "razzle dazzle," following Stevick, to enliven the classroom. In part, the course on techniques focused upon language functions, or language employed for a variety of purposes. In this course, approach and method came together. Students learned to look at language in its functional aspect—its use in communicative situations with all four language skills involved.

UTSA faculty coordinating and teaching the Institute were Dr. Curtis W. Hayes and Dr. Carolyn Kessler. Integral to the Institute were visiting guest lecturers including Dr. Eugene Briere (language testing), Dr. John Fanselow (language functions), Dr. Mary Ellen Quinn (ESL in content areas), and Dr. Carole Urzua (functions and techniques). Distinguished visiting professor for the Institute Dr. Alice Pack contributed to all three courses, providing demonstrations of classroom management and design, various ways to implement a curriculum and an extensive variety of teaching techniques for the ESL class.

"What do I do on Monday?" After four weeks of classes, lost weekends, and short evenings, participants enthusiastically articulated what they planned to do in their classes on Monday and even on Tuesday. As final projects, they had designed inservice programs for their fellow teachers in order to share with them basic ideas for coping with the critical needs of the limited English proficiency—child or adult. Furthermore, many of the institute participants are currently on their way to becoming professional ESL teachers through continued work in the master's degree program.

Because of the success of the Summer 1979 program, the University of Texas at San Antonio will expand the scope of the Summer 1980 ESL Institute. From June 2 to June 20 last summer's participants will be able to continue their professionalization with courses in teaching writing, language testing, second language acquisition. Newcomers will have the opportunity to enroll in courses dealing with psycholinguistic approaches to second language teaching/learning and second language methods. The institute will again be co-sponsored by the Texas Education Agency and is open to teachers concerned with ESL/EFL at any age or grade level.

Teaching Editing Skills Through Student Monitoring

by Jeffrey Butler

A common problem for ESL writing students at BYU–HC is learning to edit, or polish, their final drafts. Year in and year out, students learn to write complicated English sentences, develop coherent paragraphs, and create well organized papers, only to flaw the final product with poor editing. In other words, they learn skills of significant linguistic sophistication but receive failing marks because they have not adequately learned paralinguistic skills of less sophistication. At BYU–HC, a school strongly committed to predetermined minimum standards of achievement for classroom credit, this means that poor editors are frequently required to repeat ESL writing classes.

Aside from the obvious individual and institutional problems associated with recycling these students, our instructors have faced the pedagogical problem of adding the teaching of editing skills to courses already overloaded with important content material. In addition, it is clear that detecting one's own writing mistakes is no small task, even for native English speakers, let alone ESL students.

How then have we solved the problem? We haven't, fully, but we're trying something called phased monitoring which demonstrates great potential.

As soon as students have been taught the essentials (found in basic grammar texts) in their writing classes, students are formed into small groups of four and asked to meet twice weekly with their teacher. Group members are each requested to write one essay per week and are required to bring the original and three copies to the small group sessions. At these meetings, individuals read their own papers aloud while other group members follow along silently by reading the copies provided them.

At this point, the first monitoring phase, self-monitoring, begins. Each reader is allowed to change or correct his essay whenever he finds something in his writing which conflicts with his intended meaning or form. These self-identified alterations may range, depending upon individual writers, from omitted words or non-English word order to misuse of punctuation to indicate partial or full stops.

Not only does the writer monitor himself while reading, but he may also ask group members for solutions to problems within the paper about which he is unsure. In many instances, the writer is a student who has hesitant command of the written form. That is, he has control over certain written constructions but uses others with inconsistency. Therefore, most of the problems he identifies include concepts about which he is not quite sure, but for which he has had partial but limited preparation.

Group members are invited to pool their knowledge to answer the writer's questions but are encouraged not to offer information beyond the scope of that which he asks. When the author has finished altering his paper and asking for group input, the self-monitoring phase is complete.

Before discussing the second phase, a few points are in order. The small group format was adopted because it affords certain advantages. First, the writer has a tangible audience for whom he writes. And like any author, he tries to tailor his writing to them. The fact that an audience is real, not imagined, and are his peers provides him with valuable perspective.

Further, the more a writer reads for his small group, the better they understand his questions and he understands their answers. The language which group members use to explain ideas to him may or may not include the grammatical labels used in the classroom, but it will be couched in terms he understands.

The meeting of small groups twice

weekly is often enough that group members can identify lingering problems which resurface in compositions by the same writer week to week. In many cases, such a realization helps a student face up to recurring problems he otherwise might not have accepted as being chronic. Once he realizes his problems, solutions are often a simple matter of instruction or review.

The second phase of monitoring, group monitoring, is the reverse of the first. One at a time group members identify problems in the paper which were not discussed earlier. The author is allowed to ask questions for the purpose of understanding information given him during this phase, but he cannot defend his choices if he disagrees with some of the feedback. From time to time, feedback given by a group member may be incorrect or simply reflect a matter of personal taste. But the pooled knowledge of the group is seldom wrong. For this reason, group members are allowed to qualify, and occasionally even contradict feedback given by others.

Frequently the information provided by the group shows the author problems in his paper which he had not even recognized as trouble spots. That is, they identify linguistic and paralinguistic blind spots. Again, recognizing these problems becomes an important step toward solving them.

After each group member has responded to the writer, the writer is allowed to defend his choices if he still feels they are viable in the face of feedback to the contrary. Group members may also respond in kind until the dialogue has run its course, at which point phase two, group monitoring, is completed.

Before discussing the final monitoring phase, two issues need to be discussed. The first concerns a writer's attitude toward himself and his work. It is generally understood that believing he has the language resources to accomplish a task is essential to a student's being able to do so. This belief in self might be called linguistic security. The question arises, does the intensive feedback of the monitoring process reduce a writer's linguistic security? The answer to this question is yes and no. Early in the monitoring process it may be uncomfortable for him to face public scrutiny of his writing. As a support, all group members, including the writer whose work is to be considered, must cite positive examples of the paper's strengths before problems are discussed. So doing creates an atmosphere of acceptance and helps the writer regard his paper as a success in spite of certain limitations it may have.

As time goes on, each group member becomes more and more comfortable with the monitoring process because he has experienced it and it has helped him. Correspondingly, group members learn to sense how much and what kinds of feedback will be received by an author. Thus, small group members become more comfortable and efficient participants over a period of time.

A second question is closely related to the first. Is focusing on problems the best way to teach writing skills? The answer here is no. It is seldom better to learn what not to do than it is to learn what to do. In writing, learning how to do something ought to precede identifying how not to do it.

Jeffrey Butler, an Assistant Professor of English at BYU–Hawaii Campus, received a Doctor of Arts in English Language and Literature from the University of Michigan. He has taught at Miami-Dade Community College, at Dade County Jail, and at two high schools during his eight-year teaching career.

In the monitoring process, it will be recalled, small groups do not meet until a specified time within their writing courses. Presumably a teacher would have taught some editing lessons before small groups are formed. Therefore, the feedback members receive reinforces concepts they have been taught. Thus, although they have not yet mastered editing skills, the monitoring feedback is not entirely foreign to them. In this way monitoring becomes an alternative method of reteaching concepts in an actual, as opposed to a theoretical, writing situation.

The final phase, teacher monitoring,

involves the course instructor who, to this point, has been a silent member of the group. Each writer rewrites his paper to his own satisfaction, integrating or ignoring group feedback as he wishes. These papers are given to the teacher who reads them and responds to each writer during short individual meetings.

A well-trained teacher will generally know what suggestions to offer about a paper even if he does not know the writer. But unless he knows something about what has been taught to a writer, he may not know how to say it. For this reason the teacher has been a silent observer of the small group. Doing so has given him a context in which to respond. Thus, the teacher will know which teaching alternative to suggest, ranging from individual study to additional class instruction. And when the teacher and student are satisfied that editing skills have been sufficiently taught, this final monitoring phase is complete.

One alternative to the use of monitoring as outlined so far occurs when students repeat the writing course. In most instances, these students need more experience with the small group and less in the classroom. Consequently, small groups composed of repeating students meet three or more times each week and require group members to write an essay for presentation at each session. This flexibility in the overall mix of classroom and small group sessions allows a teacher to personalize the teaching programs offered to his students. Not only do students avoid a certain amount of redundancy which accompanies retaking a class, but they spend their time efficiently by focusing on areas in which they are not yet fully competent.

As noted earlier, the uses of monitoring at BYU–HC are evolving gradually. And while it may not be a panacea for the task of teaching editing skills, it has been useful in making students better editors of their own writing.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
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For further information, contact ICI in Tokyo. Address all correspondance to:

Randall Jensen, Instruction Section
Sanno Grand Building
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Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo 100
Japan

The 1980 TESOL Convention

by Lynne Hansen

The 1980 Fourteenth Annual TESOL Convention was held April 4-9 in San Francisco. The cosmopolitan city by the bay formed an appropriate backdrop for a conference with a decidedly international flavor as speakers from every continent presented hundreds of offerings appealing to the broad spectrum of interests of TESOL's far flung membership. Delegations from Chile (initiators this year of a new TESOL affiliate organization) and the People's Republic of China (often in the limelight at the convention as several presentations dealt with TEFL in the PRC) mingled with those from Provo and Pittsburgh as they attended demonstrations, workshops, mini-courses, papers, displays, colloquia, panels and round-table discussions on such varied topics as teaching techniques, teacher training, curriculum and course planning, testing and second language acquisition research. Selecting from among the available sessions was not an easy task.

There were special meetings for administrators, for teachers of all levels, for members of the organization's Special Interest Groups, for officers of the affiliate organizations of TESOL and for graduate students to talk informally with leaders in the field at breakfast seminars. Book exhibits and workshops presented by publishers representatives and experienced teachers in the use of published materials as well as unpublished teacher-made materials were important offerings for those interested in curriculum development.

Among the highlights of the convention were the plenary sessions which featured prominent leaders in the field: James Alatis (Georgetown University), Virginia French Allen (Temple University), Charles A. Ferguson (Stanford University) and Shirley Brice Heath (University of Pennsylvania), Evelyn Hatch (University of California at Los Angeles), Larry Smith (The East-West Center) and Mayuri Sukwiwat (University of Hawaii) and Henry G. Widdowson (University of London).

A recurring theme in San Francisco was the strengthening of the bridge between second language teaching practice and the second language learning theory that has grown out of the phenomenal mushrooming of inquiry into the lanaguage acquisition process during the past decade. Teachers were introduced to the theoretical goals, the experimental designs and the statistical techniques which are being used in current L2 investigations. Classroom problems were demonstrated as potential starting points for research of both practical and theoretical interest.

The trends seen at this convention were away from linguistics as the basis for the organization of classroom teaching; away from teacher-centered classrooms toward student-centered ones. The considerable influence of sociolinguistics on TESOL was apparent in more than a score of convention papers dealing with pragmatics, classroom interaction and communication strategies. There was continued promotion of the Notional-Functional Syllabus, a statement of course content, sequence, and teaching techniques based on semantic notions and their functions. As emphasis for the classroom fell on the participation of second language learners in communicative interaction activities, the teacher was cast in such roles as dramatist, puppeteer and initiator of multifarious classroom games. A holistic approach to teaching seems to be the overall trend, with teachers no longer limited to a single learning theory, but rather choosing from a wide variety of procedures and methods to provide meaningful language experiences.

From what I could see, the intensive academic and social exchange afforded in San Francisco was extremely profitable and enjoyable for those in attendance. Won't you join me in making plans to participate in next year's convention in Detroit?

Ed. note: *Forthcoming will be a publication of selected papers given at the 1980 convention (On TESOL 1980) which will be available from the TESOL Central Office, 455 Nevils Building, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057*

Writing and Combining Standard English Sentences: A Review

by Jeffrey Butler

Writing and Combining Standard English Sentences has been the primary grammar textbook/workbook used in the advanced ESL writing classes at BYU–HC over the past two years. This review, therefore, will evaluate the text as a classroom tool from an experiential, rather than a hypothetical, perspective.

The grammatical approach for much of this text is sector analysis, a grammar which is construction, rather than word, oriented. Such an approach rests on the assumption that constructions (phrases and clauses) of syntactic units must be recognized and formed correctly before they can be combined into sophisticated sentences and paragraphs. Therefore, the first half of the book shows how to write simple sentences, while the second half offers numerous combining and transforming techniques designed to produce complexity and variety in sentence structure.

For teachers and students, *Writing and Combining Standard English Sentences* has four primary strengths:

First, the choice of grammatical labels has been descriptive rather than traditional. The authors have selected their grammatical terms according to how they best characterize the concepts being explained. Such terms reinforce learning by fusing the label to the concept it represents.

Second, the presentation of English verbs is particularly effective. Using the tense-aspect verb system (earlier-same-later times in both present and past tenses), the authors have presented an understandable method through which English verbs can be learned.

Third, grammatical explanations are brief and clear. Consequently, learning takes place primarily through exercises and experiences with the concepts rather than through explanations of them.

Fourth, the exercises which comprise the majority of the books are imaginative and contextual. That is, they provide a variety of learning experiences within the limits of the principles being taught. The order of these exercises leads students along the familiar linguistic path from recognition to hesitant command to fluent command.

A couple of qualifications about the use of this text seem necessary at this point.

The complexity of some exercises in *Writing and Combining Standard English Sentences* may be a little uneven. Within a few pages, assignments may range in difficulty from simple to extremely complex. This unevenness, however, is partially a result of the generous number of exercises presented in the book.

Another concern relates to the brevity of language characterizing some of the instructional explanations. Such clipped language sometimes results in a chart or diagram being only partially clarified through examples and illustrations. That is, the visual aid is assumed to be self-evident when, occasionally, further clarification would be helpful.

On balance, *Writing and Combining Standard English Sentences* has proven a most successful tool for teaching writing to advanced ESL students. Last year, in spite of the problems invariably associated with using a new text, ten percent more students were evaluated at the end of their ESL courses as being ready for freshman English than the year before. In short, the book worked.

Although previously published by the BYU–HC press, this text has been sufficiently successful that the authors have agreed to make it available internationally. Consequently, *Writing and Combining Standard English Sentences,* in two volumes, will be published by Newbury House in the fall.

Overseas Opportunities

The following format is used for entries: 1. Name of school. 2. Position available. 3. Qualifications required. 4. Address for requests for further information or to which applications should be sent. 5. Closing date for applications.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE 1. English School Aigion, Greece. 2. English Language Instructor. 3. Applicants should have a B.A. degree with a strong background in English and be qualified to teach English as a Foreign Language. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references, to Mr. Tsigris, English School, Aigion, Greece. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE 1. Schools in Germany, Italy, Spain and Japan. 2. English Language Instructors (several openings). 3. Applicants should be qualified to teach English as a Foreign Language. Appointees should be willing to take a position at short notice. 4. Applications (2) including a c.v. and the names of references, to Teacher Services, Dept. 53, P.O. Box 52, Canterbury, Kent, England. Applicants should indicate when they would be available and include an International Reply Coupon. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE 1. Casa Inglesa, Madrid, Spain. 2. English Language Instructors (several openings). 3. Applicants should have a B.A. degree with a strong background in English and be qualified to teach English as a Foreign Language. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references, to Casa Inglesa, Plaza del Marques de Salamanca 11, Madrid, 6, Spain. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH 1. King George V School, Hong Kong. 2. Secondary School Teachers (two openings). 3. Applicants should have a B.A. degree in English and be qualified to teach the subject at Secondary School level. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references, to Secretary, The English Schools Foundations, G.P.O. Box 11284, Hong Kong. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH 1. Island School, Hong Kong. 2. Secondary School Teacher. 3. Applicants should have a B.A. degree and be qualified to teach English at secondary school level. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references, to Secretary, The English Schools Foundation, G.P.O. Box 11284, Hong Kong. 5. When filled.

ENGLISH 1. Schools in Jamaica, West Indies. 2. Elementary and Secondary School Teachers (several openings). 3. Applicants should be qualified to teach English at Elementary and/or Secondary school level. 4. Applications, including a c.v. and the names of references, to Christians Abroad, 15 Tufton Street, London SW1, England. 5 When filled.

ENGLISH Schools in the Soviet Union. 2. English Language Teachers. 3. Applicants should have a B.A. degree and some teaching experience. Qualifications in teaching English Language would be an advantage. 4. Write for details to The British Council (Appointments), 65 Davies Street, London, England. 5. When filled. Write as soon as possible.

New Dean at BYU–Hawaii

Dr. Eric Shumway, Chairman of the Division of Communications and Language Arts, was recently appointed Vice President and Academic Dean of the BYU–Hawaii Campus. As Chairman of the Division of Communications and Language Arts, he was ultimately responsible for the TESL program, the English Language Institute, the development of the *English for Latter-day Saints* materials, and the publication of the *TESL Reporter.*

Dr. Shumway received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia (1973). Although his degrees have been in English Literature, he has taught ESL courses and done extensive research in Tongan oral culture. He is the author of the text *Intensive Course in Tongan* (University of Hawaii Press) which is now in its third printing. He has taught at the University of Virginia and the Provo Campus of Brigham Young University and coordinated two Tongan language training programs for the U.S. Peace Corps.

Dr. Eric B. Shumway

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