

## When all's said and gone . . .

It's not quite true that Hemingway used only 'said'. In 'The Snows of Kilimanjaro', I found 'shouted', 'almost shouted' and 'asked'. Hemingway and the little pig who went 'wee, wee, wee . . .' etc. notwithstanding, I am going to give a copy of Philip Thornhill's 'A novelist's alphabet' (ET23) to everyone who uses 'go' for 'say'.

Margaret Toth,  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada

## Joycean swifities

With reference to your Tom Swifty column, ET23, p.26: James Joyce seems to have liked this kind of word-play very much. In the 'Circe' episode (ch.15) of *Ulysses* (1922), we find the following 'stage directions':

A MILLIONAIRESS (*richly*) Isn't he simply wonderful?

A NOBLEWOMAN (*nobly*) All that man has seen!

A FEMINIST (*masculinely*) And done!

(Penguin edition 1986, p.393)

And in 'Scylla and Charybdis' (ch. 9) we find:

- A shrew, John Eglinton said *shrewdly*, is not a useful portal of discovery . . . (p.156)

- Piper! Mr Best *piped*. Is Piper back? (p.157)

- A myriadminded man, Mr Best *reminded*. (p.168)

Katie Wales,  
Royal Holloway and  
New Bedford College,  
University of London,  
Egham Hill,  
England

## Exposed to ridicule

In ET21 Geoffrey Kingscott quotes two examples of publicity

blurbs for language fairs (Expo-langues 1990 in Paris and EXPO-LINGUA in Vienna) couched in what he terms 'Foreigners' English' and asks 'How far should our tolerance extend?' He also quotes the response of the average layman: 'So what? You can work out what they are trying to say, so why worry?'

Assuming the organisers of the two offending language fairs are professional business people they have every reason to worry. It is all very well to say 'You can work out what it means', but frankly, most people nowadays are far too busy to bother. Publicity material has to be concise, idiomatic and, above all, understandable at a glance. The fact that the blurbs in question were perpetrated by people in the language *business* is nothing short of scandalous.

My own view is that so long as boffins are addressing their fellows it makes eminent economic sense to dispense with a professional translator/editor. However, material aimed at a wider audience - for publication or oral delivery - should always pass through the hands of a reputable language professional working in his mother tongue. Otherwise the publisher or speaker is, at best, squandering his money, at worst, exposing himself to ridicule.

Brian McGinley,  
Language Service,  
European Patent Office,  
Munich, West Germany

## South Africa

I have been a subscriber to ET since the first number and I'd like to compliment you on the articles and other features which I find very stimulating also for my work as English teacher and translator. I wish to follow up a letter in the ET15 issue in which

the writer asked for an article on the linguistic situation in South Africa. Being of S.A. Afrikaans-speaking origin myself I know that there is far more bilingualism among Afrikaans than English language speakers.

There are also Afrikaans authors who have written best sellers in English. An article on the co-existence between Afrikaans/English would, I am sure, be welcomed by your readers also in the light of future political developments in South Africa.

Christian Erlank,  
Translink Language Services,  
Novara, Italy

*Editor* Thank you for the reminder. We are still working on it, and are a little nearer our goal.

## Tuition in reading

A great deal is said about the many forms of deprivation that lead children to underachievement, truancy and hooliganism - deprivation of love, of family cohesion, of material well-being - but little is said about the deprivation of simple reading skills.

Since different individuals learn at different speeds, it is generally agreed that the teaching of reading skills should ideally be on a one-to-one basis and should begin as early as possible. Traditionally such early teaching has been undertaken in the home, but nowadays, when so many are out at work, the task is too easily shelved and forgotten.

The gap can provide a highly satisfying opportunity for a retired person with time, patience and love to spare. I know, because I have spent many happy and fulfilling hours teach-

ing by phonetics to the children in our road who came to me after school hours. The mother of one little girl said she had learnt more in three weeks with me than she had at school in three years. The reason is not brilliance on my part but the fact that no school-teacher, no matter how dedicated, can possibly deal with a whole class on a one-to-one basis. So the quickest come off best while the slowest are humiliated and lose what confidence they may once have had.

There are children just like that in every community, waiting for somebody with the necessary time, patience and love to give them not only reading ability but self-esteem.

Mrs Marjorie M.R. Hayden,  
Chelmsford,  
Essex, England

## Lookit

Responding to Sheldon Wise (ET23, p.60), I still think I'm right. The child perceives his parents telling him: 'Look it, Johnny, you spilled your milk.' Or: 'Look it, Johnny, you have to be more careful.' Or: 'Look it what you did, Johnny.' Or (in praise) from parents or an older brother or sister: 'Oh, Johnny, look it. Neat!' Then too, the child has had inputed into his system a familiar 'it' as a post-verbal marker or as a verbal critic such as: Blast *it*, damn *it*, quit *it*, stop *it* (the most common expression an older brother or sister uses, I can assure you from my own experience as a parent), hold *it*, kill *it*, hit *it* (= begin), etc. It is this *it* which, I believe, has the reinforcement for the English child language *lookit* (via analogy) and not the *at* posited in 'Look at that,' although the latter might serve as a further phonetic reinforcement of 'it', if one believes in theories of 'multiple causation'. Adults do often say 'Look it,' which is sort of idiomatic (cf. Quit it, stop it, kill it, etc.). I told my wife only this

## Gilded Rule

Statistics show that most smart folk  
Work hard at staying healthy,  
But when it comes to rich or broke  
One Midas well be wealthy.

Dick Hayman,  
Salinas, California

morning: 'Look it, honey, the children really need to practice their piano more. We're paying a fortune for their lessons.' She then told the kids: 'Look it you guys, you've got to play the piano more!'

Alan Kaye,  
Department of Linguistics,  
California State University,  
Fullerton, U.S.A.

## Presenting and delivering

I know that the peculiar vocabularies of professions are pretty well documented, but can any of your other readers add to my grammatical-semantic collections with regard to nursing and midwifery? All the following were used by one senior midwife at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, but I have heard them in the same general context from other speakers.

(1) 'present' as an intransitive verb

Whereas the layman might say: 'Film stars present awards at the Oscars ceremony,' the midwife asked: 'How does the foetus present?', meaning: 'On examination, at what angle is the baby's head?' I have come across this use of 'present' amongst teachers of the deaf as a synonym for 'appear', and amongst other medical people. Any comments on

how widespread this usage is, or on its origin?

(2) 'baby' a *proper* noun?

More than one midwife in my experience over the last six years in Oxford uses 'baby' without the definite article, so that in a parentcraft session prospective parents will be discussing 'What to do before baby arrives'. Is this usage cognate with the practice of some nursing staff saying: 'When doctor arrives . . .?'

(3) Deliver – transitive verb – 'wrong object'

Whereas the layman might say: 'The midwife delivered the baby', I heard a midwife teaching at the John Radcliffe talking about 'delivering a/the mother', meaning helping the mother give birth.

When I discussed this usage with the midwife she thought it derived from what she thought was an outdated midwifery textbook usage – 'delivered of a baby.'

I would be very interested to receive readers' comments on the above or similar phenomena.

Joel Kaye,  
Lecturer,  
West Oxfordshire College,  
Witney, England

## Anglo-Saxon headlines

Geoffrey Hughes ('What is register?', ET22) correctly identifies the way in which register shapes the different vocabularies used by popular and serious newspapers, but there is another unmentioned factor behind these usage patterns which has little to do with register.

While it is true that short words such as *slam*, *slate*, *blast* and *ban* have an emotive content which suits the popular newspapers, many copy editors would also praise a second virtue – brevity. The longer a word in a

headline, the smaller the type size which can be used, hence the use of archaisms such as Yule and scribe. The longer the words in the body of a story run in columns, the higher the instance of words broken by hyphens at the end of lines, scarcely an aid to the quick read which the tabloids aim to offer.

Furthermore, while the use of these short words may stand out more in the banner headlines of the tabloids, not all of them should be considered out of place in the more serious press. Indeed, the good copy editor 'should prefer the short word to the long, the simple word to the complex, the concrete word to the abstract. He should prefer Anglo-Saxon words to foreign' (Harold Evans, former editor of both *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, in his 1972 book *Newsman's English*).

It may sometimes seem that Mr Evans' words went unread by copy editors of even the serious papers, but British politicians have paid heed. In the early '80's, Mrs Thatcher could easily have promised 'short-term corrective facilities to deter habitual juvenile offenders.' Instead, she announced the 'short, sharp shock,' ditching the indigestible, technical verbosity of civil servants in favor of a register which would appeal to tabloid editors – and readers – anywhere.

Finally, Margaret M. Hendry (Post and Mail, *ET21*) could take a look at an American recipe book to find 'English' recipes – there she could find the English muffins which presumably have been squeezed out in Edinburgh by Scotch pancakes.

Howard C. Smith,  
Asia News Editor,  
Knight-Ridder Financial News,  
Tokyo, Japan

## Empathy with language

*ET23* is splendid, with those three great articles on the Ger-

## Relatively remote

**COHEN** – Sidney and Miriam lovingly welcome Peter Scott, named in memory of his great-grandfather Pinchas Solomon.

*Classified Birth Announcement.*

Pinchas Solomon, Peter Scott,  
Proper names  
resplendent!

Pinchas is the ancestor,  
Peter, the descendant.

Some day hence, in Heaven,  
Should these two kinfolk  
meet,

An angel can tell Pinchas,  
"Meet your grandson,  
Pete!"

Alma Denny,  
New York

manic, Romance, and Classical, levels of English. I like the 'Englist' too. Your glosses of medical words with Greek roots (pp.18–19) in the third article, raise an interesting matter: the ambiguity of some Greek elements; while your comments (p.20) on 'lexical gaps' make one think about linguistic subliteracy in scientists and public alike.

The public may understand (-)path(-) as connoting 'feeling' (ref. the *Shorter O.E.D.*, etc.). But (ref. the *Longman Dictionary of Word Origins*, 1983, and my abridged Liddell & Scott) the Greek *páthos* and *páthē* meant 'suffering', i.e. anything (passively) experienced: so, 'feeling' only in the sense of emotion or sensation. We have several violently conflicting uses of these morphemes; for instance:

- (1) *pathos*, *pathetic*
- (2) *pathetic fallacy* (Ruskin), i.e. colouring through violent passion
- (3) *sympathy* (Greek *sumpátheia*), *empathy*, *antipathy*

- (4) *psychopath* (from Greek *pathēs*, adjective meaning 'who suffers') as if 'diseased in soul'
- (5) *pathology* is the study of disease, and hence comes also to mean
- (6) 'morbid processes or conditions'; so
- (7) *cardiopathy* (from *-patheia*) is a disease of the heart, where *-pathy* means a medical condition, but
- (8) *osteopathy* is a system of medicine concerned with the bones, hence
- (9) *osteopath*, a back-formation, is a practitioner of osteopathy; but now we have
- (10) *naturopathy*, a system of medicine by 'natural' means, an unfortunate hybrid, whence
- (11) *naturopath*, a practitioner of naturopathy.

Unfortunately for the last, *physiopath* or *physiatrist* would be obscure for the public; and *phys-* is also highly ambiguous, since we have, for instance: *physics*, *metaphysics*, *physical*, *metaphysical*, *physique*, *physician*, *physiognomy*, *physiology*, *physiotherapist*, with totally different exploitations of the Greek word for 'nature'.

Some technical coinages are highly irregular, witness *piezoelectric(ity)* from *piezō* 'I press', and *palynologist* from *palūnō* 'I scatter' (apparently for a student of species-diversity). Even *tribology* would have been better as *tripseology*. The coiners seem to have had no respect for categories of language. We owe some courtesy to the languages we plunder.

Worse are the misnomers of science such as *gluon* for an elastic (NOT glue-like) bond on quarks, excusable since its nature was discovered late; or *photino*, *gravitino*, etc., for hypothetical supposedly massive fermions (misusing Enrico Fermi's Italian diminutive in *neutrino*), *Gluon* ought to have been an (international) *desmon*, and, in place of *-ino* there we should have had *-esco*. *Autoimmune* should have

been, perhaps, *autopolemic* (*auto-aggressive* has been used).

Then we have the O.K. *tachyon* opposed by a bastard *tardon* which should have been *bradyon*. And (to switch to pronunciation) we have Patrick Moore defending 'sharron' for *Charon*, a doctor referring to 'Scylla and sharybdis' (*sic*), and another broadcaster to 'Zee-us'. The public has blithely adopted the monstrous *polyunsaturated*, while their ignorance of or contempt for principles of word-formation produces ludicrous monsters such as *washeteria* and *aquacade*; and ignorance of original referents makes them (or journalists) totally misuse expressions such as *encapsulates* and *quantum jump*.

David I. Masson,  
Leeds, England

## Back to the future

I find it disappointing that the reactions of Louis Alexander and Philip Tredidgo (*ET22*) to my suggestion that English has no future tense (*ET20*) show little sign of understanding my reasons for making this suggestion. There are three (related) points that I hope it helps to make clear: (1) most importantly, *will* and *shall* are morphologically, syntactically, and, to a considerable degree, semantically, modal verbs, (2) they do not constitute *the* English future tense (for which the main incentive is Latin-based grammar), particularly because of the importance of *be going to*, (3) the difference between *will/shall* and *be going to*, apart from the fact that the latter is far commoner in speech, is most clearly seen in terms of probability/conditionality, versus a future to which we are 'going', one with 'present orientation', as Angus McIntosh has suggested.

Louis Alexander suggests that we might say that English has five future tenses, as R. A. Close proposed. I would object less to that, for I said that I thought *be*

## Jumblies

You probably know that in teaching English to foreigners a strange technique is sometimes used called *Jumbled Paragraphs*. The object of the exercise is to train learners to spot 'cohesive devices' and to read for coherent meaning, so that with diligence they can reconstruct the original text.

A somewhat similar technique seems to have been applied to my review (*ET24*, Oct 90) of *Collins Cobuild English Grammar*. Paragraphs 4–7 and 8–11 have been transposed. Thus, the fourth paragraph (six lines down, top right, p. 47) should read *As for examples, again . . .* and the review should continue for this and three more paragraphs (all to be found on p. 48), including my original paragraph 7,

beginning *Could you for example name . . .* and asking a lot of questions.

My original para. 8 (erroneously appearing as the fourth) then continues – coherently, I hope – *Cobuild will provide you with answers to all these questions and many more . . .*, followed by the next three paras (to . . . *Cruft's*.) With the twelfth para we are back on course.

We live in a piggledy-higgledy, turvy-topso world – but I am not quite so scarumharum as I was made to appear.

Sylvia Chalker,  
London, England

● *Editor* Sylvia Chalker has been rather kind to us. We apologize unreservedly for a slip-up at the page-making stage. The 'proper' paragraph order is 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12.

*going to* was a better candidate, but Close's definition is primarily a notion rather than a grammatical one, and the objections to notional definitions of grammatical categories are well-known and widely accepted. I also wonder how many past tenses he thinks it has! (Incidentally, I did not say that English was alone among European languages in not having a future tense; I merely argued for it in French and Italian.)

One difference between my approach and that of Philip Tredidgo is that he used a specialized written text, whereas I undertook a detailed examination of a large number of spoken texts. I should have made that clear, but in any case, quantitatively, spoken English probably exceeds written English by a factor of millions, so that my use of 'seldom' ('these verbs seldom express such notions') may not be unjustified. In my examina-

tion of the texts I asked myself why one form rather than another was used and found that in most cases of *will/shall*, but not with *be going to*, there was some sense of conditionality, or some lack of assurance, though I noted some exceptions, which I felt needed different explanations or merely showed that there was no precise rule. I also found some interesting potential contrasts, such as the one I quoted in my previous letter.

I have two comments to make on his examples. First, two of them (2 and 3) cannot in any sense be said to be predictions, but are statements of qualifications and duties for a post; no wonder he noticed there were many more in the advertisement pages! Moreover, these are the only two where *be going to* could not have replaced *will* in speech. Secondly, he says he does not see the relevance of *will/shall* being used with *if*-clauses. Well, I

found that these forms vastly outnumbered *be going to* with such clauses, or where a condition was clearly indicated by other parts of the sentence. That did not seem to be a coincidence and led me to look for a sense of condition in their other occurrences.

Philip Tredidgo says 'acade-

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

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mic reservations serve only to confuse'; I would hope that they serve to clarify and to correct misleading beliefs. His remark that students have no difficulty in understanding the concept of the future tense almost certainly shows that they have been taught Latin-based grammar for their own languages, even though it may be totally inappropriate for them. That argument is not unlike the old argument that English children should learn Latin to help them understand English grammar; of course it helped, as long as English grammar was based on Latin. I get the

feeling, too, that both writers think that my view is idiosyncratic and eccentric. (I am told that one lady's reaction to it was 'Whatever will they think of next?') Are they really unaware that the same view is expressed, and justified, both in Huddleston's excellent *Introduction to the grammar of English* and in the most prestigious work since Jespersen, Quirk et al.'s *A comprehensive grammar of the English Language*?

Frank Palmer,  
Wokingham, Berkshire,  
England

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## ROUNDUP

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# Jottings

## SYLVIA CHALKER

Robert J. Baumgardner's account of Pakistani English (*ET* 21) made fascinating reading, with its wonderful examples of the Urdu borrowings and inventive word formations that give that language its distinctive character. But it is interesting to note that the prefixes and suffixes that he singles out (*de-*, *-ee*, *-er* and *-ism*) are highly productive in modern British English too.

For some years trendy critics have been busy deconstructing and trendy clerics demythologising, while unwanted MPs have found themselves deselected, and unwanted museum property has been deaccessioned. Perhaps less well attested are *defund*, *dehistoricize*, *deiconise* and *de-liberate*:

● 'An Aids benefit art show in New York last November . . . was first funded by the Endowment, then defunded, as too political' (*The Spectator*, 14 Apr 90).

● 'Late 20th-century literary criticism, in its concentration on the text at the expense of social context, has "de-historicized" literature and become inaccessible to all except academic initiates' (*The Times*, 2 Sep 89).

● 'But there are all the signs of a de-iconisation of Lenin' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 16 Apr 90).

● 'All this leads to the thought that if this is the best girls can do when liberated, then the obvious thing to do is to de-liberate them' (*The Daily Telegraph*, date not recorded).

Newish *-ee* and *-er* people encountered in recent years include:

● *indulgees* – possibly around some time among RAF families as they are the recipients of cheap flights under an 'indulgence scheme' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 11 Aug 87).

● *shockees* – a suggested category of young offenders, to be given some sort of shock routine of early breakfasts and hard work (*The Sunday Telegraph*, 15 Feb 87).

● *spongees* – people more sponged upon than sponging (*The Sunday Telegraph*, 9 Jul 89). Along with *mean-wellers* and an *episcopographer*. An *archiepiscopographer* would be even rarer, of course.

State-of-the-art-isms range from *belly-buttonism* ('the temptation for people to escape into themselves', *The Daily Telegraph* 11 May 88), and *anti-onionism* (the motivation for a campaign against the public frying of onions in Cambridge- home of *ET* no less (*The Daily Telegraph*, 9 Dec 89) to *endism*, the thesis promulgated last year by Francis Fukuyama of the American State Depart-