

MY MEETING WITH PROFESSOR PAULO FREIRE

by Jane Zion


It was an ordinary Monday morning in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The sun was shining, the taxi cab drivers were out in full force, and the store owners were hosing off their front sidewalks. There I was in the midst of it all, thousands of miles from home. As I checked into the Residence Trianon Hotel on Alameda Casa Branca, I realized that this would be no ordinary day for me. I secretly smiled with glee about the meeting which was about to take place.

I was about to meet Paulo Freire, a man whose books and philosophy of life had a great deal of influence on my choice of a career in Bilingual Education. Here was a man who gave up a law practice to set up literacy classes in Brazilian factories. These classes later led to the National Literacy Program which Freire coordinated. The program brought basic education to tens of thousands throughout Brazil resulting in the right to vote. Freire's main objective in his teaching was to challenge his students to believe in themselves as agents of change. Even after he was exiled from Brazil in 1964, he continued to work for the virtues he believed in and continues to do so today with an amazing amount of energy. Freire's challenge became my challenge both in the classroom and on a personal level.

Professor Freire's apartment was on the top floor. He answered the door and in a very warm and friendly fashion welcomed me into his home. In wonderment, I entered into what I can only describe as what a scholarly person's home should look like. I could feel and smell air thick with knowledge and intellect.

"E um grande honra conhecer a voce," I told him as I shook his hand. I pulled out my 13-year old copy of his world famous book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and I told him that his thoughts had influenced me greatly on both a professional and a personal level. I felt we shared a common bond and wanted to meet him, if for no other reason, than just to let him know that here, indeed, was another of his followers who respected his purposes and ideals.


What followed was a wonderful hour and a half of a sumptuous lunch which we



MATSOL 1985




Fall Conference

Responses to Cultural Diversity



October 26, 1985

Roxbury Community College

shared with his son, his chauffeur and of all people, a colleague of mine, Donaldo Macedo, from the University of Massachusetts. What a small world! Donaldo was working on a translation of one of Professor Freire's latest books.

During lunch the conversation ebbed and flowed. We spoke of the rights of all people to receive an equal education. We



Jane Zion is a Bilingual school teacher and author of the Open Sesame series for children learning ESL.

reinforced our belief that education was the most potent option for people in a lower social strata. Education would bring them to a place where they could compete on equal footing with those more financially fortunate than they. There were questions concerning best teaching techniques. Professor Freire gave me the names of some outstanding professionals in the field of Bilingual Education who had done very interesting work with children. We all agreed that students must begin speaking about their own experiences. Relating education to one's personal experience seems to carry with it a great deal of power. Students become immersed quite rapidly when they are given a link to their own lives.

As we parted, he asked his chauffeur to take me back to my hotel. We said goodbye with a look which told us of a connection from our hearts. As I retraced the busy streets back to my hotel, I had two profound feelings. The first feeling came from my body and mind. It was one of renewed energy to continue the fight, not to give in. The second feeling came from my heart. I felt connected through Professor Freire with colleagues known and unknown throughout the world. We were all one, working toward the beautiful yet laborious goal of harmony, equality and peace in the world. From mentor to student — word gets passed and action takes place.

**MASSACHUSETTS
ASSOCIATION FOR
TEACHERS OF SPEAKERS
OF OTHER LANGUAGES**

Executive Board, 1985-86

PRESIDENT

Paul Abraham
Bradford College

VICE-PRESIDENT

Judy DeFillipo
Northeastern University

SECRETARY

Jennifer Bixby
Addison-Wesley

TREASURER

Mary Christie
Pine Manor College

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Carla Meskill
University of Massachusetts

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Carol Houser Pineiro
CELOP

PAST PRESIDENT

Jacklyn Clayton
Needham Public Schools

REPRESENTATIVES

Kenny Vorspan
Oficina Hispana
Judy Friedland
Framingham Public Schools

Susan Vik

CELOP

Cindy Gimbert
CACA

Suzanne Irujo
Boston University

**THE MATSOL
Newsletter**

Editor.....Carla Meskill
Associate.....Carol Houser Pineiro
Teaching Ideas.....Ralph Radell
Book Reviews.....Cathy Sadow
Mark Stepner
Recreational Grammar.....Gregg Singer
Database.....Tom Garza
Foreign Correspondence..Jennifer Bixby

This is a quarterly publication for the members of MATSOL. Subscription costs are included in annual dues. Letters, articles, black and white photos and other contributions are welcome. They may be sent to:

Carla Meskill
23 Lawrence, Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Articles should be typed, double-spaced, set to 40 characters.

Next deadline: October 2, 1985.

**LETTER FROM THE
PRESIDENT**

During the annual TESOL Conference, the incoming President of MATSOL represents the membership at the leadership workshop and the Affiliate Council Meeting. This year, in New York, when the First Vice-President, Jean Hanscombe asked us to introduce ourselves, representatives from the national and international affiliates of TESOL gave their names, positions and state or country. I have to admit that I felt a sense of pride as the size and power of the organization rippled through the room. I saw MATSOL as a cog in this immense international machine, which, in spite of diversity, turns rather smoothly. A variety of issues faced the affiliate group, from publishers to plenary speakers for Conferences, but for me the sense of the numbers of Affiliate Representatives, each sent by a sizable constituency, was the lasting impression.

One important issue discussed at this meeting was the publication of the "Statement of Core Standards for Language and Professional Preparation Programs," a document written by the TESOL committee chaired by Carol J. Kreidler. This booklet outlines "... the TESOL standards for programs designed to teach English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and for programs designed to prepare professionals in the field." This statement is "... part of an ongoing process of self study to be conducted by the staff of a program with the support and assistance of the TESOL organization." As Affiliate Representative, I have been asked to distribute these booklets to ESL program directors and coordinators in Massachusetts. The booklets, with a program data sheet, are being sent to ESL Program Administrators to clarify the standards which TESOL upholds for ESL professionals. I would ask you as members of MATSOL to be sure that the Administrators, Coordinators and supervisors of your programs have read the statement, and written a letter of support to TESOL. I see this statement as a part of a process of self-definition. I will have copies available at the fall conference for your perusal.

In talking about professional issues with Susan Bayley, coordinator at TESOL Central in Washington, I was pleasantly surprised by her glowing praise of MATSOL. As President of Washington TESOL, Susan said that Washington has often looked to

MATSOL for leadership ideas and new insights; that MATSOL has taken the lead in creating the job bank, the employment directory and even in instituting practical solutions: setting up day-care at conferences and arranging for a bus for a conference outside of Boston. Well-deserved and unexpected praise is the best sort.

Please remember that if there are any issues which you would like me to address during my term of office, I would appreciate a phone call or note. Paul Abraham, Bradford College, Bradford, MA (617) 372-7161.)

Paul Abraham

VIDEO

The following videotapes (¾", VHS) are available for use by MATSOL members:

"Consumerism in ESL Learning and Teaching" Carlos Yorico (spring, 1984)

"Writing in ESL" Vivian Zamel (fall, 1984)

"Meaning and Coherence" John Oller (spring, 1985)

"Jazz Chants" Carolyn Graham (spring, 1985)

Contact Paul Abraham, English Language Institute, Bradford College, Bradford, MA 01830

As colleagues and friends, we have all been touched by Rick's special dedication and sensitivity to the enrichment of the learning process. We would like to sustain and nurture Rick's spirit through a scholarship fund that would support professionals who want to further explore those areas that were closest to his heart - communication and active listening.

The scholarship fund, in Rick Smith's name, will be used to sponsor the professional development of individuals working in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) in public education. Harvard, Northeastern and the Wellesley Public Schools will be coordinating these efforts.

Please send donations to:

Rich Smith Memorial Scholarship Fund

Matsol
Matsol Treasurer
c/o Mary Christie
25½ Grant Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER RECOGNIZED BY CIEP

The Consortium of Intensive English Programs (CIEP) accepted Northeastern's English Language Center as a member at its Spring meeting in Baltimore. CIEP, which operates under the aegis of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, numbers among its members the oldest and most highly respected intensive English programs in the country such as those at Georgetown, Columbia, the University of Michigan and the University of Southern California, among others. According to English Language Center director, Dean Paul Krueger, there is no official accrediting agency for ESL programs and therefore acceptance into the CIEP membership is recognized as the indication of a high quality program throughout the ESL profession. Membership in CIEP involves a formal evaluation of written documentation concerning the program, a visitation by a CIEP steering committee member and a vote by the CIEP membership accepting the recommendation of the steering committee. Krueger said that prior to Northeastern's acceptance into CIEP, Boston University was the only other member in New England.

Copies of *Connections: A Journal of Adult Literacy* are available to interested ESL/ABE practitioners. This first volume of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute's journal consists of nine articles by Greater Boston teachers on such diverse subjects as a radical approach to teaching math to adults, organizing a competency-based GED curriculum, using holistic approaches to teaching language, providing clear information to students about the External Diploma Program process, and other topics of interest to teachers of adults. *Connections* is intended to provide a means for Boston-area adult educators to communicate with their colleagues, both locally and nationwide. Readers' comments and suggestions would be most appreciated. You can receive free copies of *Connections* while supplies last by writing to Adult Literacy Resource Institute, Roxbury Community College, 625 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115.

If you would like to be placed on the 1986 TESOL Summer Institute mailing list and receive additional information as it becomes available, please write to: Pamela Pine, Assistant Director, TESOL Summer Institute; Department of English as a Second Language; University of Hawaii; 1890 East-West Road, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822.



Listening Tasks

Sandra Schecter, adapter

Based on *Task Listening* by Lesley Blundell and Jackie Stokes Cambridge University Press, 1984 (41 pages).

Reviewed by Daphne Mackey

Effective listening programs must interest language learners, require students to perform normal and useful listening tasks (e.g., deciphering the doctor's instructions rather than the patient's complaints), and use natural-sounding language spoken at normal speed. *Listening Tasks*, the American English adaptation of *Task Listening* by Blundell and Stokes, fits the bill on all three counts.

Listening Tasks contains twenty short lessons dealing with common activities such as making travel plans, talking about television, and listening to a weather forecast. As its title suggests, the book involves students in active, directed listening. Each listening passage is supported by well-designed diagrams or illustrations and simple instructions that enable low-level students to complete the required listening tasks successfully.

The best lessons in the text involve listening to a phone message, loudspeaker announcements in an airport, and a mechanic describing what is wrong with a car. Not quite so realistic a listening task is having to show where two people decide to put the furniture in their apartment (students indicate on layout diagram) or indicating on a map the buildings a tour guide is supposedly pointing out to the listener. However, even in cases where the listening context may not be totally realistic, the listening task is generally valuable for students.

An interesting feature of the text is the short reading and writing activity following each listening exercise. A sample of some of the activities include:

- reading a train schedule and completing a postcard telling a friend which train to meet
- reading check-out and emergency procedures at a hotel
- filling in order forms for catalogue purchases and ticket orders
- reading instructions on a copy machine

In an adult education environment, this listening program would be suitable for intermediate level students as the publisher suggests. However, beginning students in an intensive English program would be able to handle this material after a few weeks of study. A teacher's manual with tapescripts and answers is available, making the program appropriate for class or individual work.

A common criticism of low level listening books is that they do not teach students listening strategies. This book is no exception. With no preparation or build-up in any of the lessons, and with only one listening activity devoted to any one topic, *Listening Tasks* is best used as a supplementary text for classes covering the practical topics included in this book.

Daphne Mackey, coauthor of *Contact USA, Get Ready and Get Set*, teaches at CELOP, Boston University.

Please send book reviews for the Fall issue to C. Sadow, ELC, Northeastern U., Boston, MA before October 2, 1985.

"Language exists only on the surface of our consciousness. The great human struggles are played out in silence and in the inability to express oneself."

-Franz Xavier Kroetz

Yoshi Goes to New York

by John Battaglia and Marilyn Fisher
Pergamon Press

Reviewed by Donna Lee Kennedy

Along with Toyotas and Nikons, Yoshi Yamamoto, the hero of *Yoshi Goes to New York*, stands as one of the most impressive export products Japan has produced to date.

Yoshi is an ESL teacher's dream. Encouraged by his parents to study English from the age of five, Yoshi speaks the language perfectly . . . and with a strong Bronx accent! Yoshi has not only mastered English, he has conquered the culture as well. From the first to last phases of his journey from Tokyo to New York, where he has been admitted to graduate school at Columbia, Yoshi knows exactly how to handle airline personnel, hotel clerks, hostile landlords, AND establish a friendship with a high-powered New York entrepreneur named Carol. Faced with situations that would cause a native American's blood pressure to soar, Yoshi never falters.

Yoshi Goes to New York is a useful, comprehensive and entertaining listening package. It is concise: a cassette and a workbook of twelve lessons. Each lesson takes thirty to forty minutes to complete.

(Continued on page 7)

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP MEETS AT BABSON

The idea of having a special interest conference devoted to the use of computers in teaching ESL grew out of a MATSOL round table luncheon at the spring conference.

The first "MATSOL on CALL" symposium took place at the American Language Academy at Babson College on June first. The major theme was educational software, commercial and teacher-made. In the plenary talk, "Creating Your Own Software: Is there an easy way?", Laura Savely discussed available authoring systems and the problems involved in making courseware. Six workshops followed. Sandra Fotinos demonstrated work she had done using the PASS authoring system. Carla Meskill went further into the fundamentals of courseware design. George McFadden demonstrated the ALA/Regents series and Sari Follansbee presented the psycholinguistic guessing game, *Missing Links*. Software from related fields which present similar technical as well as pedagogical problems was introduced by Jane Tchaicha (*En ville and Les sport*) and Carl Cedargren (the Gutenberg foreign language word processor).

After lunch there was an informal exchange of software and ideas in the computer laboratory.

A second conference is being planned for November 16 at Babson. If you are interested in presenting, know of interesting work being done, or would just like some more information, please call Michael Oudyn at 237-0320.



Laura Savely at MATSOL on CALL.



SOFTWARE FAIR

The Voice-Based Learning System (VBLS) was introduced by the Scott Instruments Corporation in 1982 to allow educators to create computer courseware which enables the student to review and learn given material solely by means of voice input. In a significant departure from most computer-assisted language programs, VBLS users need not have any prior computer experience or even familiarity with the keyboard. To secure a place for the VBLS in education – and especially in foreign language instruction – the Corporation established a grant program which provided system packages to various language programs all over the U.S. Through the efforts of Dr. Karen Price, the ESL Department of Harvard University received a unit for trial application in pronunciation training in the summer of 1984.

The essential software of the Scott VBLS comprises an Authoring System that allows nonspecialists to write teaching materials for students, and a Study Session which is used by the students in reviewing and activizing the material. Necessary hardware to run the software includes a voice entry terminal and card, both of which fit the Apple II series of personal computers.

There are two basic steps involved in creating pronunciation material with the Authoring System: 1) designing the text-frames which will appear on the monitor screen and prompt the student to produce the correct utterance, and 2) creating the native pronunciation templates against which the learner's utterances will be compared. Simply stated, the VBLS "hears" and "learns" the native pronunciation and stores it for comparison with the student's attempts during the Study Session. This comparison is the basis for the immediate pronunciation feedback of the VBLS.

Although the VBLS provides several options both for authoring and training several types of material, the most useful mode of operation to train pronunciation is the Word Drill. The Word Drill mode of the VBLS is a visual feedback device which plots the student's pronunciation of a given utterance against that of a native speaker. The result of this comparison is

shown on the monitor in the form of a bar graph, measuring the student's accuracy on a scale of 0 – 1000. The student may continue to practice the same item for as long as s/he wishes, before continuing to the next item or exiting from the program.

Results of the Harvard testing of the VBLS using the Word Drill mode for ESL pronunciation training showed dramatic increases in motivation of student on all levels. Beginners could see, literally, a marked increase in their scores within a very short time by working with pre-recorded or live speech models; advanced students reveled in experimenting with different alternative pronunciations of the target utterance to increase their scores even a couple of points. In all cases, students reported experiencing a feeling of control of the material and the way it was presented.

With modest modifications for pronunciation instruction, the VBLS proved to be most reliable in training and testing consonantal sounds, and stress and intonation. It was weakest – though not useless – in distinguishing vowel sounds. In general, it was better to place the sounds in question in medial or final position in the word rather than initial, and never in utterance-initial position since the system is apparently unable to discern the first sound in an entry. Based on the test data gathered in the last year, there is no doubt that the VBLS could be adapted to be fully and effectively utilized in an ESL pronunciation course.

Thomas J. Garza is a Teaching Fellow in Slavic and teaches in the Intensive Summer Program in ESL at Harvard University.



A THEORIST AND THREE PRAGMATISTS: Review of LINGUISTICS, COMPUTERS AND THE LANGUAGE TEACHER and USING COMPUTERS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

by Karen C. Kossuth, Pomona College

The Regional National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) TESL Committee would like to invite interested presenters to submit proposals for the regional conference to be held this fall (November) in Rhode Island. Preliminary planning is underway and those interested in participation should contact TESL Committee Chair Greg Kallian at 202 Comm. Ave., Boston, MA 02115 (617) 266-1904 or Former Chair, Dean Paul Krueger at Northeastern University's English Language Center at 360 Huntington Ave., Boston, MA 02115 (617) 437-2455. The Selection Committee will then contact interested presenters with additional details concerning the conference and their sessions.

ESL/EFL INSTRUCTORS for ELSI/Korea in Seoul and Busan. *Salary: \$13,200/yr for 2 yrs. (Average savings rate approx. \$5,000/yr; 70% of salary remittable to U.S.)* Benefits include round-trip airfare, \$300 shipping allowance each way, one week orientation/training on-site. Furnished apt. or 125,000 won/mo. housing allowance, 10 vacation days (1st yr), 20 vacation days (2nd yr), \$1000 bonus for completion of 2 yrs. *Required: BA/BS, 6 mos. full-time ESL exp. or degree in TESL/TEFL Preferred: MA TESOL, overseas exp., 2 yrs. full-time ESL exp. On-going recruitment through next yr. Send resume to ELSI/Korea, c/o Greg Harruff, ELS International Inc., 5761 Buckingham Parkway, Culver City, CA 90230*

The decision to review these two books together and to entitle the review "A Theorist and Three Pragmatists" is based on their difference in instructional focus, which is also mirrored in the teaching public at large. Hope, Taylor & Pusack do not specify their pedagogical orientation, but their general approach is a "four skills" one. Their courseware chapter is called "Skills Applications" and the programs they discuss focus on the learning and applications of rules as embodied in drill and practice programs, answer processing and record keeping. The pragmatists' definition of good lessons is those which "are broken down into small frames that require students to make choices and apply principles." Missed items must be "recycled until mastered." And the fundamentals of answer processing depend on right vs. wrong, not whether the user has understood the situation and given a comprehensible response. Though both books attack the "drill and kill" mentality of computerized pattern drills, Hope, Taylor and Pusack maintain, quoting Holmes & Kidd, that "there are no grammatical constructions that do not lend themselves readily to effective treatment by the computer via multiple choice or constructed formats." Their distrust of Underwood's approach is made clear on the opening page of the presentation of CALL for vocabulary learning:

In the face of grand theories of contextual and communicative language learning, practical considerations lead most teachers, sooner or later, to teach words out of context, even using the native language, in order to give their students a boost into some area of grammar or culture. The example of vocabulary reflects the uneasy relationship between theory and practice that plagues our field, especially when we try to adapt a flexible teaching strategy to a machine-based interaction.

As an advocate of those "grand theories", Underwood maintains that if communicative approaches are correct in banning drills from the classroom, then they are equally correct in banning them from the computer. Quoting two earlier articles by Pusack (1981, 1983), he attacks the drill tutorial approach as a fossilized remnant of programmed instruction, a failed methodology from the sixties. He states the purpose of his book is "to provide reasons and

directions for pursuing alternatives." With that, the battle lines are drawn. For the computer, they are really no different from the ongoing controversy in textbooks or classroom procedure. Hope, Taylor & Pusack represent the established teaching practice as well as most of the software currently available. Yet almost all of the current software would be unacceptable to Underwood. That is beginning to change, however, as Underwood and others with a communicative bent produce their own commercial software.

Given Underwood's bias against certain kinds of software, it is reasonable to ask what he would like instead. His answer is outlined in "Premises for Communicative CALL" which boil down to:

- A. Let Communicative CALL (CCALL) focus on subject matter (#10) and serve as one source of comprehensible input (#11).
- B. Let grammar be the vehicle rather than the goal of the exercise (#1,2).
- C. Let the language on the screen be the target language exclusively (#8).
- D. Let the student's language be original responses to the content of the CCALL program (#3).
- E. Let CCALL be flexible (#9) and self-motivating (#13).
- F. Let CCALL be free of rewards (#6), cuteness (#7), record keeping (#4) and the evaluation of responses as right vs. wrong (#5).
- G. Let CCALL employ those capabilities idiomatic to the computer which are not available from books.

As examples of CCALL, Underwood offers simulations, games (particularly adventure games), text manipulation programs (some kinds of manipulation seem acceptable), text generation programs and conversational programs employing artificial intelligence.

Is the schism beyond reconciliation? Hardly. Both sides know a good program when they see one and Hope, Taylor & Pusack will welcome some of the new communicative software, thus earning the pragmatist's label, though they are still unlikely to renounce drills all together. Meanwhile, Underwood is building an error detection routine into his software so that it insists on grammatical input. The reconciliation, when it comes, will likely be of this sort, with small accommodations on both sides.





The ESL course most likely to inspire a wide range of expectations from students and teachers alike is conversation class. Particularly at high-intermediate and advanced levels, frustration can mount if each student envisions a different path to improving his/her ability to communicate in spoken English.

The needs of individual classes require reformation of conversation class goals, but there are certain types of activities that teachers can consider in seeking a balanced approach. Not in order of importance, one might:

1) Assign one brief prepared talk by each student every week. This insures that all students will participate, even if shyness causes some to speak less in spontaneous class activities. Example topics: reporting on interviews done outside class with Americans, student-designed ESL operations. Student talks can be spread throughout the week so that listeners will not suffer fatigue. Every talk should be addressed individually in terms of content, and students should have time to ask the speaker questions. Grammatical errors might be addressed by the instructor at the end of a batch of talks when s/he can zero in on common types of errors made rather than on who made the error.

2) Use small group exercises frequently – they foster cooperation between students and lively discussion, particularly when groups have to come to a consensus. Activities are available in many books, including *The Non-Stop Conversation Workbook* by Rooks (Newbury House), *The Idea Bank* by Sadow (Newbury House), *Action Plans* by MacDonald and Rogers-Gordon (Newbury House), and *Springboards* by Yorkey (Addison-Wesley). As a rule, small groups should select a representative to report their conclusions to the whole class.

3) Include listening and note-taking exercises to facilitate comprehension of formal, academic lectures if students have plans to continue in higher education. One resource: *Listening Focus* by Kisslinger and Rost, (Lingual House). Also, students respond well to non-canned listening material such as a brief recording taken from a talk radio program.

4) Spend some time on vocabulary building, particularly on idiomatic expressions. Students are generally very eager to accumulate vocabulary, but varied activities are still key in maintaining momentum. Vocabulary items might be: presented in the context of a brief story so that students may guess at meaning, assigned to students to ask an American acquaintance about and then report back to class, or taught by the students themselves from what they've acquired in their daily lives.

5) Review functional/notional English by using "whole" activities, rather than by using formal information expressions of functions in brief role plays. By "whole" activities, I mean the extended type found in texts such as *Action Plans* and *Gambits* (Public Service Commission of Canada). An example activity is #72 from the former book, *Request a Service*. In this exercise each student at a cocktail party plays the double role of requester and professional – i.e., a dentist who needs her car fixed. Each must find the professional who might perform a service, introduce him/herself to that person, and request the needed service. In this way, more than one function can be reviewed in a challenging context.

When meeting new classes, instructors will want to learn about students' future plans, their strengths and weaknesses, and some possible topics of interest for class discussions. They should then find the above outline useful for creating a set of class activities that meets students needs.

Wendy Schoener
Bunker Hill Community College

This column discusses techniques and approaches in ESL teaching. Please send your ideas to: Ralph Radell, Bunker Hill Community College, Boston, MA 02129.

I ♥ English

NEW

A new, four-level ESL/EFL series for beginning through intermediate students in middle and secondary schools

- Imaginative, high-interest activities that encourage even the most reluctant students to participate in class
- Appealing, up-to-date artwork and photos that really motivate teenagers
- Simple teaching and learning techniques for teachers with large classes and little time for preparation
- Extensive reading and writing activities to aid mainstreaming

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Jack Ross
25 London Terrace, New City, NY 10956 (914) 634-8260

 REGENTS PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.
TWO PARK AVE. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016

The ESL/EFL Specialists





To Split or To Not

Poverty and social disdain notwithstanding, teaching English is fraught with pleasures. Chief among these, for me at least, is the abundance of opportunities to lord over others my impeccable grammar. In every bit of language I hear or see, there lurks a possible smirk; and, in my own language, I do not merely utter sentences but rather construct verbal edifices so complex and encrusted with embeddments that my listeners fear that the verb will never come.

The joys of linguistic pedantry are bought at a price, however. Aside from the fact that nobody listens to me any more, I have lost the ability to comfortably split infinitives. I like splitting infinitives. I would split gerunds if I could.

But, alas, there is a rule. A foolish rule it is, though. It was first propounded by 18th century grammarians who believed English and other modern languages to be degenerate forms of their more perfect classical antecedents, Latin and Greek, in which infinitives are clearly single words. Subsequent prescriptive grammarians have taught us to regard the infinitive as a single, indissoluble unit.

This, however, is absurd. We can prove that the infinitive consists of more than one part by showing that in some contexts one part can or must stand without its partner. Consider:

1. I don't have to go if I don't want to.
- 1a. I just want to stay home and *drink*.

in which parallel structure rules dictate the deletion of either the first or second parts of the infinitive. This, though, is trivial because the deletions are not obligatory.

Separating the parts of the infinitive, however, serves an important grammatical function in English. Not much remains to us of our old subjunctive; whereas Shakespeare could say:

If music be the food of love, play on.

and Patrick Henry:

If this be treason, make the most of it.

we cannot. We can, however, and do make sentences like:

2. It is essential that public officials be able to make their own bail.
- 2a. The president demanded that his adviser find Grenada for him on the map.

in which the "to" is abandoned in order to mark the subjunctive mood.

Some might quibble that what has been deleted in 2. and 2a. is not "to" at all, but rather is some deep modal such as "should." Even granted this, though, other examples of denuded infinitives exist. A familiar example can be seen in these sentences:

3. I saw him die.
- 3a. I saw him dying.

in which choosing a stripped infinitive with a sense verb seems to indicate the stative or completed nature of the main verb.

A more interesting class of examples involves the use of the dummy verb "do." In this sentence:

4. He never wants to do anything but swim.

we are quite sure that "swim" is an infinitive. Parallel structure applies. Consider this sentence, though:

- 4a. He never does anything

}	except
	but swim.
	besides

What is swim? It cannot be a verb in the ordinary sense because if it were, it would be "swims." The only possibilities for a tenseless and personless verb are that it is either a sundered infinitive or a verb whose auxiliaries have been deleted. We remember that some early transformational grammarians proposed that all English verbs had deep "do"s in them which are retained in questions, negatives, or emphasized sentences. They would analyze 4a. as being:

- 4b. He never does anything but he does swim.

in which "he does" is deleted by parallel structure.

I doubt this analysis, though. Consider this sentence (courtesy of Shelley Fishman):

- 4c. Parents can't understand why their children cannot think of other things to do besides watch television.

Please note that without qualms most native speakers could say either "watch television" or "watching television" in this context. Thus, the contrast is between a gerund and "watch". It seems to me that the only thing that can stand in direct contrast with a gerund is an infinitive. Therefore, "watch" must be an infinitive stripped of its "to".

It might be argued that because the dictionary allows that "besides" can function as either a conjunction or a preposition with this meaning (exclusion) that "... besides watch" and "... besides watching" are entirely different structures. We note, though, that "but" could be

substituted for "besides" in this sentence. We are quite loth to consider "but" as a preposition, but will gladly entertain all counter claims.

In any case, it seems manifestly clear that the infinitive consists of at least two parts and that we have license to recklessly split it whenever we wish to. It is important, though, that we not do this in the presence of our somewhat learned friends. Everyone has heard that infinitives are to not be split and shall cast a somewhat jaded eye upon our future wise pronouncements if we do so.

If we slip, though, and happen to accidentally split an infinitive, the best strategy is to recount the foregoing (how many of your friends know that there is a difference between "forgo" and "forego"?) ersatz erudition in hopes of inducing a forgetful trance. A good grammarian, remember, can be a veritable Lethe in any social setting.

If any sentences, words, or structures have delighted or perplexed you, please send them to:

Gregg Singer
CELOP/Boston University
730 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA

Yoshi

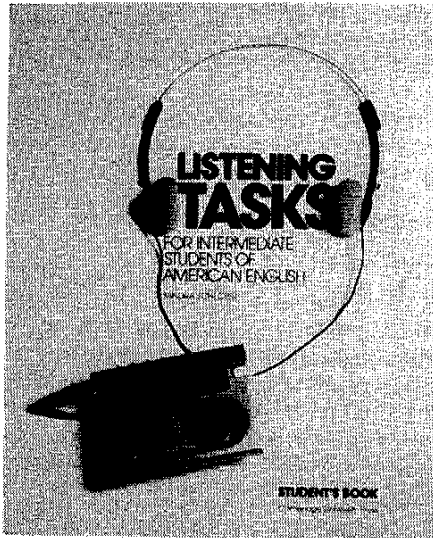
(Continued from page 3)

The topics covered are vital to a non-English speaker's initial survival in the U.S.: making hotel accommodations, finding apartments, using public transportation, and meeting new people. A cooking lesson, dinner at Mama Leone's, and a weekend excursion to the Delaware Water Gap hold the listener's (and teacher's) interest.

The cassette sounds authentic and realistic. For example, in Chapter 2, *Kennedy Airport*, Yoshi must comprehend complicated information on Manhattan hotels while jets take off in the background and airline representatives make announcements over the P.A. system.

The listening exercises are divided into multiple choice and true/false exercises for general comprehension. An intensive listening completion exercise focuses the listener's attention on complete sentences. Each chapter contains a subtopic highlighting a language function such as starting a conversation, making requests, discussing possibilities, and extending an invitation. The Focus on Words and Expressions and Optional Role Play exercises provide useful classroom resource material. The supplementary visual materials include sample leases, classified ads, hotel guides, and city maps. These are particularly useful for teachers working with newly arrived students who need orientation to American cities. I recommend trying it.

Cambridge ESL



ESL Teachers: Have you heard?

Listening Tasks helps low-intermediate and intermediate students understand American English spoken at normal speed in everyday situations.

- *Cassette*, with dialogues, telephone conversations, public address announcements.
- *Student's Book*, with practical listening exercises, such as labeling a picture or filling in a chart. Follow-up reading and writing task.
- *Teacher's Manual*, with tapescript, detailed teaching notes, and Student's Book pages with answers filled in.

Cassette: 0-521-26258-5

Student's Book: 0-521-27898-8

Teacher's Manual: 0-521-27897-X

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 EAST 57TH STREET/NEW YORK, NY 10022/212 688-8885

**MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES**

English Language Center
Northeastern University
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

**NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BOSTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 57641**

