The Development of British TEFL

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Introduction

Between 1 billion and 1½ billion people have a good command of English, which is to say perhaps as many a quarter of the world's population (Crystal 2003). English is the mother tongue for only a minority of this large number of people. Therefore, many English speakers, particularly those for whom it is a foreign language, gained their proficiency in school or university or other classes.

This article is about the history, from a British standpoint, of the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL). It is a perspective that continues to have international impact, through Britain's numerous English language schools for overseas students and the large number of Britons employed in TEFL abroad, as well as from British TEFL publishing, teacher training and research. The extent of outreach can be judged from the size and scope of the main UK-centred professional association, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language 〈 http://www.iatefl.org/ 〉. Founded in 1967, IATEFL has over 3,500 members in more than one hundred countries.[1]

A short account will be given of how a language that originated in a not-very-big group of islands at the north-western extremity of Europe came to be so widely used and learnt by people elsewhere. The origins and growth of TEFL will be briefly set out too. However, the main topic is the succession of changing goals and approaches that have characterised TEFL. At the end of the paper some points of possible relevance to the teaching of English at Beppu University are noted.

Some 1,600 years ago Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Friesians invaded Britain. Coming from parts of the countries now known as Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, they were taking advantage of a power vacuum left by the Roman withdrawal from Britain. The dialects that they spoke are referred to as *West Germanic* by linguists interested in the history of English. Around 35% of the familiar, non-technical words of present-day English can be traced back to this West Germanic source (Gramley 2001: 19). These are words such as *you, I, she, he, the, and, in, on, from, eye, ear, mouth, nose, home, dog, wood, fish* and *go* (Bragg 2003: 8). The invaders killed many of the Celtic inhabitants of Britain and drove others into the mountains of Scotland and Wales, and across the sea into Ireland. Very little of Celtic was taken into the language that we now call English: only place names, for example London, and a few other words, among them *crag* and *flannel.*

Fairly soon — perhaps a century later — distinctive British Island ways of talking were called *Englisc*. This is the source of the word *English*. It meant 'language of the Angles'. Languages mutate almost imperceptibly, which means that the notion of a language's birth is not well-defined. It is nonetheless fairly reasonable — given the 35% mentioned above and the application of the label *English* — to say that English dates back roughly 1,500 years. But there have been enough changes over the intervening centuries to make Old English largely unintelligible to users of present-day English, at least when texts are seen for the first time, though (as McArthur 1992: 722) notes "even after modest exposure they can begin to make progress".

Major factors in changing the language were: Christian missionaries, who brought Latin words, of which some descendants are *angel, candle, shrine, belt, cedar, cypress, pine* and *parsley*; later invasions, by North-

Germanic-speaking Vikings, the source of about 900 of our words, and French-speaking Normans, whose lifestyle as rulers brought in an elite level of vocabulary for literature, fashion, the law, the military and education, including the words *study* and *grammar* (Gramley 2001: 20); a huge volume of new learned words based on Greek and Latin entering the language in the 16th century as a consequence of the renewed enthusiasm for classical learning known as the *Renaissance*; and much subsequent interaction with the rest of the world.

From 1100 onwards, Britons traded across the water with the Netherlands. This would have been a stimulus for some Netherlanders to learn English as a foreign language, and they were thus perhaps the first identifiable group of EFL learners (learners of English as a foreign language). In return, the English language got many words from Dutch, e.g. *deck, dock, pump, cork, clock* (Gramley 2001: 22; Horobin and Smith 2002: 75). Later there was trade with Spain and Portugal, and from these two countries came ideas of the wealth (gold) and wonders (for example potatoes, tomatoes and corn) to be had from colonies abroad.

Before the story of Britain's contacts with the wider world is taken further, the concepts behind a*cronyms such as TEFL should be outlined.*

Different settings in which the English language is learnt and used

In a widely-cited paper Kachru (1985) provided a framework for thinking about the global distribution of English, in terms of the uses to which the language is put. He sorted countries into three types, with labels derived from an image of ripples spreading outward across the surface of a body of water:

(1)   the 'inner circle': UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, where English is used for all aspects of public life and a

majority of each population is monolingual in English.

(2) the 'outer circle': countries such as India, Nigeria, South Africa, Malaysia, Ghana, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Zambia and numerous other former British colonies, where English is used for important domains of national life, in at least some spheres of administration and for some levels of education, though a majority of the population, in each case, does not have English as the home language. ESL (English as a Second Language) is the term used in applied linguistics to characterise the usual role of English in these countries.

(3) the 'expanding circle': China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Russia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Egypt and many others. In these countries, English is for the most part used only in trade, tourism and international relations. The role of English in these countries is principally as a foreign language, EFL.

Of course, people from countries in categories (1) and (2) also use English for tourism, external relations and trade with other countries.

An initial *T* added to *ESL* or *EFL* stands for *teaching*; so *TESL* abbreviates the Teaching of English as a Second Language, the occupation of most teachers of English in 'outer circle' countries, and *TEFL* is what English language teachers in 'expanding circle' countries usually engage in. The distinction is important because of the differential opportunities for extracurricular English language practice. On average, ESL students can be expected to hear and read more English outside of English language classes. They also need to use it in some of their communications with fellow citizens, as when Malaysians study mathematics through the medium of English, or when Indians, Nigerians and Ghanaians interact with people from different regions of their multilingual countries. On the other hand, real occasions demanding the use of English arise for most EFL students only when they travel abroad

or meet visiting foreigners.

There are around 200 countries in the world so the ones mentioned above are only a sample. The classification is fairly coarse too: under (1) ignoring French Canada's bilingualism and the 30 million Hispanics in the USA; under (2) shirking such questions as whether the Netherlands, where English is widely used in university education, should be included; under (3) overlooking the fact that Egypt was at one time effectively a British colony; and so on. Siegel (2003) presents a more satisfactory five-way classification. It will not be recounted here, except to mention that he makes an important distinction within ESL between students who have migrated to an 'inner circle' country and thus have to live in environments with monolingual English majorities and those in 'outer circle' countries, as described above, who live in substantially bilingual or multilingual environments.

As noted earlier, among the world's competent users of English, the majority — 600 million to 1 billion people — do not have English as their first language. In an increasingly globalised world, very many occasions for using English will arise between people from different countries and may not involve any 'inner circle' English speakers at all, as when English was used for some of the negotiations between Thais and Japanese in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami. In this type of context, the role of English is as an International Language, EIL, and there are now specialist teachers of this genre. McArthur (1992:1028) characterises their work as follows:

> TEIL stresses that a good command of English is helpful for international communication but is not enough, because information and argument are structured differently in different nations, and topics of conversation, speech acts, expressions of politeness and respect, irony, understatement and overstatement,

and even uses of silence are different in different nations.

TEIL instructors aim to provide information and to encourage sensitivity on such matters (see Kramsch 2001, McKay 2002).

The British Empire

Partly by conquest and partly through royal inheritance, England's Celtic neighbours were brought into a union. "From 1536 the laws of England were imposed on Wales and the English language was made compulsory for all legal and official purposes." (Home Office 2004: 20). Of course, an edict does not confer competence in another language. A great deal of study had to take place and Wales was thus perhaps the first ESL-learning country. During the sixteenth century, English also spread through the populations of Scotland and Ireland (Bragg 2003: 118). That these Celtic countries eventually joined the 'inner circle' is testified to by the outstanding practitioners of English that they nurtured. A few examples, out of many that could be offered, are: in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, James Murray, a Scot, directed the construction of the Oxford English Dictionary (see Winchester 2003 for a fascinating account of this great project); the Irish authors W.B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde were important writers in the English canon. Dylan Thomas, a great but wayward poet in English, was a Welshman.

In 1588 Britain became a power that could operate beyond its own shores and the English Channel. Agile tactics in small ships and the fortuitous help of a storm, enabled the navy of Elizabeth I to defeat a massive Spanish fleet that had come to conquer her country. (There are echoes here of the typhoon that saved Japan from Kublai Khan's fleet in 1281 and Japan's accession to world power status by defeating a Russian fleet in the Tsushima Straits in 1905 (Wikipedia 2005).) Britain soon had colonies in America. The colonies fed into the development of a money

economy, leading to the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694. The widespread use of money was a motivation for people to make things to sell to others. In the 18th century James Watt's practical harnessing of steam to run factories, together with the invention of machines for agriculture and the production of cotton and woollen fabrics produced the industrial revolution that made an island country into a world dominator. By 1840 Britain was responsible for 45% of the world's industrial production (Bayly 2004: 173).

The core American colonies fought for and won their independence (1776−83), but Britain expanded in other directions. After defeating the French at sea in 1805, Britain became the world's naval superpower. The British Empire was at its most expansive throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. At that time it spanned the globe and encompassed around a quarter of the world's population and territory (Columbia Encyclopedia 2004).

The prize possession was the Indian subcontinent. In 1813, William Wilberforce, the British Foreign Secretary of the time, recommended for India "the genial influence of Christian light and truth". Missionaries flocked to the task and mission schools taught English to substantial numbers of Indians (Bragg 2003: 256). In India today the number of people fluent in English is large enough for *The Times* of India to have a print run three times the size of *The Times* of London (Bragg 2003: 264). Missionaries were also among the main teachers of English throughout the continent of Africa, to Pacific Islanders and to Maoris in New Zealand. There will be more to say later, under the heading *Approaches to TEFL*, below, about the implications of missionary involvement.

Writers from India are now among the foremost authors in English: Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Rohinton Mistry, for instance. The rest of the Commonwealth − the voluntary

association of mainly 'outer circle' countries that the Empire mutated into — has also produced an impressive and still vital literature in the English language.

The British Empire spread the mother country's language around the world. It has been argued that English was and is a tool for economic domination (Pennycook 1994). Mahatma Gandhi said "To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. ... Is it not a sad commentary that we should speak of Home Rule in a foreign tongue?" (Bragg 2003: 263). Others aver that writers from the former colonies have exercised their own influence on English as they adapted it to serve their ends (Bisong 1995). Certainly English took in many words from the world, such as *Curry* from Tamil and *chutney* from Hindi. English got *dungarees, pyjamas* and *jungle* from India too (Bragg 2003: 251). To list just a few more out of many: *sofa* came from Arabic, *tsunami* from Japanese, *balcony* and *violin* from Italian, *yoghurt* from Turkish, *yacht* from Dutch, *ketchup* from Cantonese, *dachshund* from German and *boomerang* from a language of Australia (Winchester 2003: 16 & 18). Bisong (1995) says that, in the communities to which ESL writers belong, English has been added to the repertoire of local languages, taking over some functions, but not ousting the native languages, thereby enhancing people's linguistic versatility. His is a rather sanguine view, but the international reach and utility of English is now a fact, whether or not we might wish that history had followed a different course.

English joined the established literary languages with the printing, by William Caxton in the late 14th century, of Geoffrey Chaucer's masterpiece, the *Canterbury Tales*. An admired literature gives people confidence in the worth of their language and a publishing industry is an important foundation for educational enterprises. McArthur (1992: 346) dates the organised teaching of English to foreign language learners in England back to the 16th century. Two later landmarks are the

commencement of formal training of EFL teachers at London University's Institute of Education in 1932 and the founding of the British Council in 1934−5 (McArthur 1992: 346). The Council has stimulated the spread of TEFL and has supported training and research in the subject. It participated in the huge expansion of TEFL after World War II, some of it driven by the goal of preparing a trained generation of professionals to take over the government of British Empire countries as they were readied for independence, and in the provision of English for Specific Purposes courses (ESP) that were set up in the Arab oil-producing countries after the exponential post-1973 increase in the latter's wealth.

Approaches to TEFL

MacArthur's account of ELT and of language teaching more generally (1992: 346−7 & 580−5) provided the basic information for what appears in this section.[2] I am responsible for the interpretations and connections suggested. Over time there have been big changes of emphasis in the guiding philosophies of language teaching, but old ideas tend to resurface in new guises. All language teaching methods need to provide ways for the learners to gain knowledge of the target language, to remember all this information, to develop skill in its use and to practise extracting and/or putting information into messages, i.e. to communicate.

The Literary Method

High prestige literary or religious texts were a long-standing focus of language teaching. There was often no intention that students should learn to speak the language, aside from reciting passages in the process of memorising them. The language might well be one with no living native speakers, like Latin for the past millennium. Becoming familiar with the great texts and wise interpretations of them were the aims. Many of the missionaries who taught English in India and elsewhere in

the British Empire in the 19th century would have employed the literary method, using Christian texts — the bible and other books regarded as worthy, such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). But for making sense of the instruction given by their teachers and for transactional purposes — the daily running of classes, the canteen and, in many cases boarding establishments, the students also experienced a process of submersion in English, in which they had to swim if they were not to sink.

The Grammar-Translation Method

This arose in Germany towards the end of the 18th century and was soon adopted elsewhere. One of the main innovations was that translation was practised not only from the target language into the students' first language, but also in the reverse direction, enabling the student to produce text in the target language, rather than merely to understand what had been written in the great books. Another feature was a willingness to invent examples, beyond those that were attested in hallowed texts: "Through translation of specially constructed sentences that were keyed to lessons on particular grammatical points, learners could be exposed to the grammatical and stylistic range of the target language" (McArthur 1992: 581).

The Direct Method

Henry Sweet — a brilliant linguist who never quite gained the professorship at Oxford University that he and others thought he should have been given — was responsible for the first accurate phonetic descriptions of spoken English: *A Handbook of Phonetics* (1877) and *Elementarbuch des gesprochenen Englisch* (1885). The latter was written for Germans wishing to learn English, clearly an EFL book. (In 1890 an English version was published as *A Primer of Spoken English.*) These

books, for the first time, gave a sound descriptive foundation to the teaching of spoken English. In concert with movements for the modernisation of language teaching on the European continent, they fed into what has been called 'the Reform Movement' and spawned a speech-centred method of language teaching. There was dissatisfaction at the failure of the grammar-translation method to impart oral skills and an alternative was wanted.

In his (1880) publication *The Art of Learning and Studying Foreign Languages,* Francois Gouin, a Frenchman, ruefully recounted his inability to converse in German despite spending many diligent hours memorising German words, irregular verb forms and grammatical rules and having put a lot of effort into translating passages from Goethe and Schiller. By contrast his little nephew had in the first three years of life become a fluent young speaker of French. Gouin thought that language teaching ought to learn from the way infants got going in their first language (Brown 1994). Paul Passy — a French phonetician and EFL teacher — gave the name *Direct Method*[3] to an approach modelled on the way young children acquired their first language:

* The grammar of the target language should be acquired inductively, i.e. not explicitly taught, but picked up from experience with the language.
* The main foci were speaking and listening, with attention paid to fluency and pronunciation accuracy, under the guidance of phonetically trained teachers.
* Classroom talk was to be about everyday things and activities, using only the target language, avoiding translation as much as possible. Meaning was conveyed through pictures, pointing and demonstrating.
* Syllabi were sequenced according to a grammatical analysis of the target language and estimates of how frequently different

structures are used.

Very many — probably in the millions — of EFL students are nowadays taught by monolingual English speakers. They are perforce getting their instruction through a version of the direct method. Caution should be exercised before applauding this state of affairs. At primary and secondary school level, distinct advantages accrue when students' home languages are given a fair role in education alongside another language that it may be important for them to learn. Siegel (2003: 195) concludes on the basis of a literature survey that "bilingual programs are clearly better than monolingual programs with regard to [achievement of proficiency in the target language]". It may be that judicious use of the first language in EFL classes reduces anxiety and enhances comprehension. Nation (2001: 85−6) presents arguments against the overzealous avoidance of translation in language teaching classrooms.

Between the 1920s and 1950s three British TEFL specialists did much to advance the systematic structuring of syllabi. Michael West who was employed in the Indian Educational Service, supervised the production of graded reading books with vocabulary chosen on the basis of frequency of use, a forerunner of the computer corpus studies that are now prominent in TEFL methodology. Harold E. Palmer and A.S. Hornby both worked in Tokyo at the Institute for Research in English Teaching. They used West's vocabulary lists and concentrated on oral language. Palmer sought to ground grammatical instruction on the facts of oral usage, rather than on prescriptive literary recommendations. Hornby's English dictionary for learners provided a wealth of information on grammar and idiomatic usage, besides meanings.

The Audiolingual Method

This was an American development that grew out of World War II efforts

to train members of the American military in the languages of their allies and their enemies. However, it was enthusiastically taken up in the 1950s and 1960s by the UK and Commonwealth TEFL community, so it should be summarised here. The invention of reasonably portable means of recording voices was an important contributory factor, since it facilitated work in the spoken medium. Language laboratories were first used within this framework too, though they can be adapted to other approaches. The psychological underpinning was Behaviourist learning theory: get people repeatedly to perform an activity, reward them (usually with verbal approval) and they will learn the actions as habits. The main characteristics of the audiolingual method were:

* use of tapes and pictures
* concentration on pronunciation
* drills involve repetition for the inductive learning of patterns, as 'habits'
* sequence determined by grading of structures
* sedulous avoidance of mistakes lest they become established habits
* memorisation of useful expressions
* no explicit teaching of grammar
* learning of vocabulary in the context of mini dialogues (e.g.'on the bus')

The concentration on accurate pronunciation and the graded syllabi could be thought of as inherited from the Direct Method.

Cross-linguistic transfer — called *interference* when it leads to errors — was an assumed basis, later developed as a full-blown theory (see Gass and Selinker 1983). 'Habits' from the language(s) that the learner already has were argued to be the barrier to learning another language as well as the starting points for what the learner will do in a new

language. If you already had suitable habits from an earlier-learnt language then related aspects of the new language would be easy, but where different habits are needed the language learner is going to have difficulties. Here are two examples, (a) of **interference** and (b) of **positive transfer.**

(a) English has mid-central vowels [3:] in *person, girl* etc., [∂] in *about, letter* etc. and an open-mid-central vowel [ʌ] in *bus, up* etc. Japanese has no mid or open-mid-central vowels, but its open vowels [a] and [aː] are somewhat centralised, so the prediction is that Japanese learners of English will tend to substitute [a] or [aː] for the vowels underlined in the words above, and they generally do.

(b) The English close front vowels [I] [iː], in *bit* and *beat* for instance, are matched by two Japanese vowels, [i] and [iː], differing only slightly in quality; so easy learning of this contrast of English is predicted, and the prediction is largely borne out.

Robert Lado (1957) proposed the detailed comparison of the languages involved in learning situations — the target language and the students' first languages — looking for similarities and differences at all levels: vowels, consonants, grammar, meaning, word-building, writing and so on. The aim was that prediction of the points of interference and positive transfer would make it possible for syllabus designers and teachers to concentrate on the predicted sources of interference as areas of difficulty. However, interference is far from being the only source of difficulty for a language learner. Contrastive analysis is a fairly good idea, but too much was initially claimed for it. People thought it could explain everything that goes on in foreign language learning, but it does not. Some predicted interferences are manifested, others not; students also manage to make unpredicted errors.

In the 1970s and 1980s the Council of Europe supported language teaching projects under the direction of a Cambridge University applied linguist, John L. Trim. A new approach grew out of their notional and functional analyses of the communicative needs of adult language learners. Examples of **notions** encoded in language are time, place and quantity. Examples of **functions** for which language is used are asking, describing and justifying. In 1975, using this scheme, J.A. Van Ek produced an influential description of English language needs.

In the 1980s an approach arose in Europe and North-America which gave primary attention to the nature of the learning interactions that take place in classrooms. It was felt that activities must engage students' minds in meaningful communication. This approach still enjoys centre stage in TEFL. It was not directed at syllabus planning and has tended simply to be an approach to implementing notional-functional syllabi. Its principal features are:

* the meaningful use of language is key for learning, whether in the spoken or the written medium
* linguistic interaction is the goal of language learning, so that is what is practised
* learners must get some of their experience in situations that they have not rehearsed
* authentic materials are used in instruction
* mistakes are to be expected as fluency increases

The goal of inculcating resourcefulness in students by sometimes making them operate in unrehearsed situations is reminiscent of the grammar-translation method's introduction of sentences not sanctified by prior appearance in valued texts.

The dual pressures that prompted the advent of communicative TEFL were student-centred learning — when students are given a choice they tend to prefer meaningful activity over memorisation — and the huge expansion of foreign travel made possible by jumbo jet aircraft. People who had spent years studying English felt a similar disappointment to Gouin's (described earlier, under the heading *The Direct Method*) when they found themselves unable to make themselves understood overseas; and some of them complained when they returned home.

Sociolinguistic studies of communicative competence (see Silberstein 2001) supplied the theoretical foundation for communicative language teaching (analogously to the way that the direct method rested on phonetic studies). A crucial concept is that of **interlanguage,** learners' organised knowledge of the target language. It is partly correct and partly wrong. Interlanguage knowledge changes as the learners learn more. When they speak, understand, read and write in the foreign language they have to make guesses. The guesses come from what they understand so far about how the language works. Interlanguage knowledge can yield forms that are in neither the first language of learners, nor in the target language, as when Japanese learners of English pluralise non-count nouns or write *He must to go.* In the latter case the person has apparently induced a rule: 'when there are two verbs in English, mark the second one with *to*'. This is correct for *He has to go, He wants to go, He likes to go,* but it is wrong with modal auxiliaries: *He must/will/can go.*

Instead of doing contrastive analyses of pairs of languages, in the manner of Lado (1957), the communicative approach to TEFL recommends analyses of the systematic errors made by learners. (Some of the errors can indeed be explained as arising from interference, but not the two cited in the previous paragraph.) Thompson (1987) gives an interesting catalogue of characteristic features of the English of Japanese

learners not yet proficient in the language.

A significant consequence of using an assessment of the notions and functions needed by the learners as the first step in syllabus design is that there are many different syllabi. A coach taking a team of athletes to the Olympic Games needs to control a different set of English notions and functions from an academic historian who wants to be able to read English language historical records, and a different set of needs come to the fore for medical staff giving support in natural disasters around the world. With a structural syllabus of the kind devised in the direct method and audiolingual frameworks, one could just about argue that there is one English language and therefore it ought to be possible to devise a single optimal syllabus suitable for all learners. The communicative approach opened the door to many different kinds of TEFL course: EAP (English for Academic Purposes), BE (Business English), EST (English for Science and Technology) and others.

The requirement that authentic materials be used in communicative classes is a modern incarnation of the Literary Method's reliance on respected texts. Computing power has greatly facilitated the understanding of authentic usage, through the quantification of features in vast collections of text written and recorded in real situations. A good example is the comparison of recurring prefabricated sequences of words in academic classroom talk and textbooks conducted by Biber, Conrad and Cortes (2004). Recurring sequences, such as *if you see what I mean, do you want to, take a look at, does that make sense, the fact that the* and *the extent to which,* were termed **lexical bundles** by Biber et al (1999). "there are many lexical bundles used with high frequency in texts, and it further turns out that different registers tend to rely on different sets of lexical bundles. ... lexical bundles have identifiable discourse functions, suggesting that they are an important part of the communicative repertoire of speakers and writers ..." (Biber, Conrad and Cortes 2004:

377).

Two Extensions to the Communicative Approach

Task-based teaching (see Willis and Willis 2001) is a modern motivational ploy comparable to the urge to master highly-valued writings that kept students at work in the literary method. An example would be requiring students to visit James Berardinelli's cinema review website 〈 http://movie-reviews.colossus.net/top100/toc.html 〉, asking each student to choose two of Berardinelli's top 20 films and to read his short reviews of them before the next meeting, when they would come back and tell the rest of a group of four or five students about their two choices, before the group has a discussion to agree on the top five, which they would then write out as a list with brief notes giving reasons for their choices. The teacher would have to comment seriously on each list and draw comparisons across groups. If possible, a video or DVD of the overall favourite would later be shown to the class.

Under the communicative approach, errors are downplayed; keeping going as a communicator is more important. A well-run communicative TEFL course often enables students to become communicators, but there is a risk of them being less accurate than some judges in the world expect them to be. The remedy to this is called **focus-on-form**. Doughty (2003: 289) explains it as follows: "Focus-on-form interventions draw learners' attention to these persistent problems when they arise incidentally during language use in the classroom that is otherwise meaning oriented ..." This would appear to be a present-day reflex of the grammar-translation method's anchor in grammar.

Of possible relevance to the teaching of English at Beppu University

Here I put forward some tentative thoughts on the content of our English

language classes and the methods to use in them. These are more in the nature of memoranda to myself than advice to my colleagues, though I would be delighted if what I say now were to lead to discussion with colleagues.

Those Beppu University English Language and Literature Department students who spend an academic year at a university in Britain would clearly benefit from an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course element in preparation for going overseas. A sizeable proportion of students who pass through the Department will become EFL teachers themselves. For them it is important to raise consciousness about the different possibilities there are for content organisation and presentation of the material. Given the increasing extent of interaction across international boundaries and the Japanese Government's plan to double the number of tourists who visit Japan annually, it is likely that **EIL** (English as an International Language) will be of at least some value to almost all of our students, and essential for some of them.

Siegel (2003) points out that different settings for the learning and use of English call for control of different ensembles of registers of the language. A monolingual speaker of English has to do everything through English. Someone who uses English as a foreign language has another language − or other languages − for some purposes; so the necessary range of situations in which English might have to be used is smaller. This is an important consideration. Some registers should be chosen for concerted attention, to save our students from needlessly aiming at control of all registers.

My impression from English grammar and English phonetics classes that I have conducted at Beppu University is that our students have a good grounding in the grammatical description of English and at least a basis for learning more about phonetics. In this respect they have an edge over

the average British student, at least in my experience of UK university teaching. Our students already have a grasp of the descriptive linguistic terms that a teacher doing focus-on-form interventions could use to explain the nature of errors.

Smith (2001) writes about learner autonomy, but his report is incidental testimony to the benefits of task-based language learning (in the sense explained earlier as one of the two extensions to the communicative approach). In one of my courses, students appeared to get involved in a worthwhile way when I gave each a topic and a few questions and required them to interview four other students in the class and write journalist notes about the responses. Other small and medium-sized tasks have worked quite well too. My only attempt to engage students in a bigger task failed. I tried to get them to compile the information for an English Department student web page on facilities near campus and in Oita City, and so on. Nobody seemed willing to put any effort into gathering information. Perhaps the task was too demanding. Perhaps it stood no chance of being interesting to them. My hunch is the students simply had too little acquaintance with the internet to be able to imagine what could be done. Maybe I should put more effort into preparation on a task of that kind.

If our students could gain more familiarity with computers it would enhance their language learning opportunities. For instance Tom Cobb's interesting vocabulary learning website 〈 http://www.lextutor.ca 〉 could help them develop basic EAP vocabulary. Syntactic patterns, idioms and meaning can be learnt from using online dictionaries that give concordances for words. Text analysis programs such as the freeware offered by Nation (2001) have a self-instructional function, but would be particularly useful for students aiming to make a career in TEFL.

Notes

1 TESOL, the US-centred organisation that approximately corresponds, is larger: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Inc. ⟨ http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp ⟩ has more than 13,000 members in more than 120 countries.

2 To avoid chopping up the text too much I am not going to put in the half dozen detailed references to McArthur that should by rights appear in this section. This is in no way intended to play down my debt to his encyclopedic efforts.

3 This has some similarities to, but is not the same as the 'direct method' of the German-American Berlitz Schools. For instance, the Berlitz schools did not make use of phonetics (McArthur 1992: 116).

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