

It is odd that the author, who can be so witty, can also be so humourless. To me, and probably to many other simple souls on my intellectual level, 'granny-power' as a headline term for militant old ladies is harmless and mildly amusing. But not to Mr Spiegl. Perhaps it is the Teuton in him.

JAMES McCLURG

Braj B. Kachru (ed.) *The Other Tongue: English across Cultures*, Pergamon, 1983. 358pp. Paperback.

In his Introduction, the editor of this collection of essays claims that 'this is the first attempt to integrate and address provocative issues relevant to a deeper understanding of the forms and functions of English.' The statement is questionable. Nonetheless, the book is a useful reminder of the language problems we have been living with in South Africa since the 19th century.

Much of the terminology in these essays is heavily linguistic. For instance, Jack C. Richards surveys the code-switch of indigenization in the lect shifting of English in Singapore English. Nativization results in a continuum of verbal mechanisms that can be employed for the same communicative/functional effect among Singaporeans. A morpheme addition sees the introduction of a final sentence-particle *la*, which probably is of Hokkien origin, into constructs such as the following:

That depend on you *la*, if you want to take off one day, or your office give you, that up to you *la*.

(p. 163)

Peter Strevens discusses lectal choice, where such choice is made between acrolect, mesolect, and basilect, as resulting in a global fiction of English and pleads for a unitary fiction of the idiolect in order to isolate INTER and INTRA types of IFE usage in a more localized form. His discussion of discorsal rules would, perhaps, have been given more immediacy with *exempla*. Tacit fossilization is not restricted to the non-English speaker, after all.

In general, the essays can be divided into studies of English as a second language or as a restructuring element in Eastern and African countries. The influence of English on Japanese, which is discussed by James Stanlaw, is food for thought. The intermingling of the two languages began some 300 years ago and was accelerated

through the American occupation of Japan during World War II. 'Bamboo English' was the *lingua franca* leading to the proliferation of loanword dictionaries with the largest containing over 27,000 entries.

As an example of the spread of loan words, Stanlaw has the following to say:

The vocabulary of sports borrows from English quite readily, though often with a slight Japanese twist on the words involved, e.g. *sekando oba* (over second), *sayonara homu ran* (a game ending home run). Men's magazines also use numerous English loanwords, especially when dealing with sexual topics. For instance, in the weekly magazine *Pureboi* (a Japanese version of the American *Playboy*) one finds such items as *buwusu* (boobs), *majikku pawa* (magic power - aphrodisiacs), and *datchi waifu* (Dutch wife - an inflatable bed partner).

(p. 171)

Anyone who has visited Japan will bear witness to the eagerness with which young people there waylay the foreigner and practise their English on him or her. The figures given by Stanlaw show that there are over 50,000 English teachers in Japan, that 8% of the total Japanese vocabulary is derived from English, and that 99% of Japanese children begin the study of English in seventh grade at school. Interestingly enough, because Japanese is such a courteous language in usage, argumentation is almost impossible. So all debating societies in Japan have to conduct their contests in English!

Sinicized English, according to the survey by Chin-Chuan Cheng, is at present encouraged by the Marxist regime of mainland China and is overtly political. This is expected to change as China moves steadily into the fields of science and technology. Although the main foreign language studied, English is not used as an inter-language among the fifty-five ethnic groups in China. The political bias in the English syllabus is illustrated by Chin-Chuan Cheng:

Typical content from 'social practice' is exemplified in 'classroom practice.' An extreme interpretation of this requirement said (sic) that, if things depicted in the textbook all happened in a community unknown to the students, that text would be devoid of social reality. Hence we found the lessons in one English textbook (*English*, Volume 2, Intermediate level; Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1974) to have titles such as 'Serve the People,' 'Carry the Struggle to Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius Through to the End,' 'Tachai Marches On,' 'Recounting the Family's Revolutionary History,' etc., mainly relating to Chinese society.

(pp. 135-6)

Three essays bear specifically on the use of English in Africa; the areas discussed are West Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and East Africa. Conspicuously, there is no mention of the use of English by South African blacks. Eyamba G. Bokama, Assistant Professor of Linguistics in the Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois, examines the sociolinguistic influences on Liberian English and does so with a prescriptive/descriptive approach. What Bokama terms the lack of distinction between countable and mass nouns in the African languages of Ghana and Nigeria such as we have in English probably is responsible for the following sentences drawn from letters and published novelettes:

1. I lost my furnitures and many valuable properties.
2. There were thunderous noises of laughter and chats.
3. She walked in such paces that combined her college learnings of how to behave.

(p. 82)

The influx of Puerto Ricans into the United States is a political and social problem of considerable magnitude. There is also a reverse traffic to the island itself, and Rose Nash looks at the Pringlish spoken by 100,000 non-Puerto Rican Americans there. To say the least, Pringlish represents what Nash calls a relaxed standard of correct usage of English. Perhaps it's the heat or palm wine. Spanish words are inserted in English sentences with gay abandon. The locals delight in composing limericks that combine Spanish and English. An example:

There is a young girl from Condado
That at night walks from *lado* to *lado* (one end of the street to another)

Though she's not in a show
She makes pretty good dough
But her work is not quite so *hourrado* (honourable)

(p. 255)

As mentioned earlier, the editor of this collection of essays asserts that it is the first time any such combination of cross-cultural and bilingual studies has been published. A notable omission, in view of this claim, is any reference to the pidgin English of the New Guinea and South Pacific islanders. There are numerous books published on this variety of English across cultural frontiers. And what about the English spoken by the Pitcairn islanders? Was that mutiny on the *Bounty* all for nothing?

The use of English by non-English writers of fiction is full of entertaining gaffes that Naipaul, in particular, uses to comic effect. R.K. Narayan, whose *The Financial Expert* is a joy to read, is quoted by Ann Lowry Weir to show how skilfully this Indian novelist exploits the literary and cultural dilemmas of a transposed language. Margayya, the financier, has some difficulty

in grasping the finer points of typography:

But Lal turned up with a new poser for him: 'Shall we use ordinary ten-point Roman or another series which I use only for special works? It's also ten-point but on an eleven-point body.'

Body? Points? Ten and eleven? What was it all about? Margayya said: 'Ah, that is interesting ... I should like to see your eleven-point body.' He had a grotesque vision of a torso being brought in by four men on a stretcher.

(p. 320)

Prospective readers of this collection should not be put off by the distressing indulgence of some of the essayists in linguistic gobbledegook. The facts and figures of the world's main language as she is spoke by people of non-English culture are predominantly informative and entertaining for anyone with a feel for words.

W.D. Maxwell-Mahon
University of Pretoria

DICTIONARIES: ABB THROUGH TRA

J.G. du P. Pretorius and L.C. Eksteen. *Dictionary of Abbreviations*. Johannesburg: Perskor Publishers, 1981. Hardback R12,50

G.S. Nienaber and P.E. Raper. *Hottentot (Khoekhoen) Place Names*. Durban: Butterworth Publishers, 1983. Hardback R14,50

G. Elgie Christ (ed.). *The Academica Dictionary of English Synonyms and Antonyms*. Pretoria: Academica, 1982. Hardback R9,50

Adrian Room. *Dictionary of Trade Name Origins*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982. Hardback R23,00

A good dictionary necessarily embodies personal judgement on the part of its editor (or editors), considers textual probability - and scholarly and editorial precedent. It must also seek to gauge the needs and resources of the educated general reader of the late-twentieth century in an interpretative process that attempts to determine contemporary and relevant 'tone-values' or 'valuations'. It should aim, in short, for a rigorous designation of total