

“FROM OUT IN LEFT FIELD? THAT’S NOT CRICKET”: FINDING A FOCUS FOR THE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

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AN ANECDOTAL INTRODUCTION

Some time ago, I was attending an international seminar at a European university. Around the table were representatives of some twenty countries. There were two people from the United Kingdom, two from the United States, and one from Australia, with the others all from countries where English was either a second (official) language or a foreign language. The lingua franca of the meeting was English, and everyone seemed to be using the language competently, even the native speakers.

We were well into the discussion period following a paper which had generated a lively buzz of comment and countercomment. Someone then made a telling remark. There was a silence round the table, which was broken by one of the U.S. delegates observing, “That came from out in left field.” There was another silence, and I could see some of the delegates turning to their neighbors in a surreptitious way, as one does when one does not understand what on earth is going on, and wants to check that one is not alone. But they were not pondering the telling remark. They were asking each other what “from out in left field” meant. My neighbor asked me; as a native speaker, he felt confident that I would know. I did not know. Baseball at that time was a closed book to me—and still is, very largely.

One of the braver of the delegates spoke up: “Out where?” he asked. It took the U.S. delegate by surprise, as plainly he’d never had that idiom questioned before; but he managed to explain that it was a figure of speech from baseball, a ball coming from an unusual direction, and what he had meant was that the remark was surprising, unexpected. There were nods

of relief from around the table. Then one of the UK delegates chipped in, "You played that with a straight bat." he said. "Huh?" said the American. "Oh, I say, that's not cricket," I added, parodically. "Isn't it?" asked a delegate from Asia, now totally confused.

The next few minutes of the meeting were somewhat chaotic. The original theme was quite forgotten as people energetically debated the meaning of cricket and baseball idioms with their neighbors. Those who could added their own local version of how they said things like that in their part of the world—the sports metaphors they lived by. Eventually, the chairman called everyone back to order, and the discussion of the paper continued. But my attention was blown, and I spent the remainder of the session listening not to what delegates were saying, but to how they were saying it.

What was immediately noticeable was that the native speakers seemed to become much less colloquial. In particular, I didn't sense any further use of national idioms. Indeed, the speakers seemed to be going out of their way to avoid them. I made a small contribution towards the end, and I remember thinking while I was doing it—"don't use any cricket terms." Afterwards, in the bar, others admitted to doing the same. My British colleague said he'd consciously avoided using the word *fortnight*, replacing it by *two weeks*, as he'd "had trouble with that one before." And as the evening wore on, people began apologizing facetiously when they noticed themselves using a national idiom, or when somebody else used one. It became something of a game—the kind that linguists love to play.

There was one nice moment, I recall, when the U.S., U.K., and Australian delegates were all reduced to incoherence when they found that they had disbarred themselves from using any of their natural expressions for "the safe walking route at the side of a road"—*pavement* (U.K.), *sidewalk* (U.S.), and *footpath* (Australian). In the absence of a regionally neutral term, all they were left with was circumlocution (such as the one just given). I also remember "engine cover" being proposed as a neutral term for *bonnet* and *hood*. Somebody made a joke about the need for a linguistic United Nations. The rest is a blur.

AN INTERPRETATION

In the cold, sober light of later days, it seemed to me that what I had observed taking place at that seminar was of some significance as far as the future of the English language was concerned—and probably was taking place regularly at international gatherings all over the world. I was seeing a new kind of English being born—a variety which was intended for international spoken usage and which was thus avoiding the idiosyncrasies associated with national varieties of expression. Such a variety is

not yet with us as a living entity with standardized usage, but it still needs a name. Let us call it World Standard Spoken English (WSSE).

Although WSSE does not exist as an institutionalized variety, its written equivalent does, traditionally called Standard English, but in the present context perhaps better called World Standard Printed English (WSPE). It is sometimes forgotten that what we call Standard English is essentially a written—and primarily a printed—variety of language (Quirk and Stein 1990, chap. 9), and moreover one which has developed as a standard precisely because it guarantees mutual written intelligibility, first within individual countries, then internationally. An examination of the textbooks, documents, and newspapers published around the world (for the latter, see Crystal 1995, 300–305) shows very little linguistic differentiation: the range of grammatical constructions is virtually identical, as are most of the pragmatic conventions and most of the vocabulary. Only in spelling and punctuation are there noticeable national differences, reflecting British versus American points of origin, and it is a moot point whether these can any longer be called "national," given the way these two standards have come to be used erratically throughout the world, even appearing in "mixed" versions in several countries, such as in Canada and Australia (where there may be variation even between provinces or states) and in Britain (where the influence of U.S. spelling is widespread). On the whole, WSPE is the same wherever it is encountered. It would not be able to fulfill its role as an international (written) lingua franca if it were riddled with regional idiosyncrasies.

What the seminar example seems to be suggesting is the emergence of a spoken equivalent to WSPE in international settings where educated people come to talk to each other and choose to use English as their (spoken) lingua franca. It is not surprising that such a variety should be growing, given the way in which English developed as a genuine global language in the second half of the twentieth century (Crystal 1997). At present, the linguistic characteristics of this variety are unclear: it is not yet obvious which features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation will come to identify it. But, based on what we know about language in general, one of the first things we would expect to see in the development of an international variety would be uncertainties about usage. Chief amongst these would be intelligibility difficulties over national regional norms (as in the case of the baseball idiom) as people using English from one part of the world come into contact with those using English from another. Because most regional dialect differentiation is a matter of vocabulary, this is the domain where usage problems will be most immediately and noticeably encountered. Close behind will be differences in grammar, insofar as national variations exist at all (see the index to the grammar by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik 1985 for a checklist, specifically the index

entries at “British English” and “American English”). And the domain of pronunciation will provide a third kind of close encounter—already observable in the “midatlantic” accents which emerge when people speaking different regional Englishes accommodate to each other, or in the unique amalgam of ex-European accents which characterizes the corridors of power in the European Union.

This is an exciting time for linguist observers of the world scene. No language has ever had such global exposure as English has, so there are no precedents for what is currently taking place. We do not know what happens to a language when it becomes a genuinely world language—recognized as a prestige language in all countries and used in the aggregate by more people (especially as a second or foreign language) for more purposes than any other language. The WSSE scenario suggests that during the twenty-first century, people with an international presence who speak English as a first language will find themselves adding a third variety to their repertoire. They already have a national formal variety, or dialect (“I speak British/U.S./Australian . . . English”) and an intranational informal variety, which is often regionally biased (“I speak the colloquial English of Liverpool, Glasgow, Boston, New Orleans . . .”). Those who are bidialectal in this way slip into each of these varieties without thinking about it. In the future, the earlier examples suggest, they will become tridialectal, with the international variety offering them a further option of an English in which national usages have been replaced by regionally neutral forms—to be used, of course, only when circumstances are right.

VARIETY AND CHANGE

Several things are currently happening to English as people increasingly engage with it globally. In addition to the emergence of possible new international standards as part of the concern to preserve intelligibility, there is the growth of new national standards—the so-called new Englishes in such countries as India, Singapore, and Ghana—whose role is to preserve national identity (Schneider 1997; Bamgbose, Banjo, and Thomas 1995). To be a happy language-using individual (or community), both dimensions are essential: one needs to be able to talk to others outside one’s community and to understand them; at the same time, one needs to be able to demonstrate, through one’s speech, that one is not the same as them. The demands appear to be contradictory, and when people do see them as contradictory, there is always trouble in the form of acrimonious debates about standards in the school curriculum or in society at large, widespread anxiety about the survival of a local language or dialect, and—in the extreme cases—language marches, rioting, and deaths. Wise language planning can avoid the contradiction: it is possible to have your linguistic cake and eat it, as can be seen in such countries as Switzerland and Finland,

where policies of sensitive multilingualism recognize the strengths of individual languages and the different purposes for which they are used, and real support is given to developing a bilingual way of life. Bidialectism can likewise be sensitively promoted. However, such situations are often not easy to implement: they are bedeviled by complications arising out of individual national histories, whereby the political aspirations of minority groups come into conflict with national government policies. A bilingual or bidialectal policy can also be extremely expensive. But it is the only way in which the otherwise competing demands of intelligibility and identity can be reconciled.

These are important issues for anyone interested in language, at any age, to address; and certainly any language curriculum should give its students the opportunity to do so. The issues are important because everyone is affected by them. No one can avoid being part of the current of linguistic change or—to extend the metaphor—can avoid bathing in the sea of linguistic variety. Nor can anyone escape the variations of attitude which people express in reaction to what is happening as some try to swim against the current while others blithely let it carry them along. Everyone, at some time or other, will have their usage challenged by someone else, whether it be a parent, teacher, peer-group member, neighbor, editor, colleague, or boss. The contexts might be local, national, or global. To cope with such challenges or to respond to them coherently, people need confidence, and confidence comes from knowledge, an awareness of what is happening to language and what the issues are. A linguistically informed curriculum can provide the foundation on which such confidence can be built, because it gives people insight into principles which can make sense of the multifaceted and potentially confusing linguistic world which surrounds them.

Central to any curriculum should be the recognition of language variety and language change—topics which have traditionally been seen as separate, but which are now known to be intimately related. In 1989 appeared the first issue of a journal, *Language Variation and Change*, whose title neatly captured the desired emphasis. The "variation" referred to all kinds of linguistic variability within the speech community, whether as a result of age, sex, social class, region, occupation, or whatever. And "change" referred to any linguistic change, in any period, of any language. The underlying philosophy is that these processes are interconnected. Change does not just happen. There has to be a reason why people change their speech habits from one way of talking to another. Some of these reasons are bound up with the developmental physiology of the individual (changes in voice quality from childhood to old age, for example), but for the most part the reasons are to be found within the network of social relationships which underlie a speech community. These relationships are ever changing because society is ever changing: people are continually finding themselves subjected to new influences and pressures, and their language alters ac-

cordingly as they (consciously or unconsciously) strive to identify themselves with or distinguish themselves from others. A cross-section of society at any point in time will bring to light relatively stable clusters of distinctive linguistic features which provide the basis of what we call dialects or varieties. But no variety ever stands still. All are subject to change, though some (e.g., teenage street dialects) change more rapidly than others (e.g., the genres of institutionalized religion).

The fundamental axiom of linguistic enquiry is—or should be—that language changes; and language change, accordingly, should be at the core of any curriculum. Everything else derives from this axiom—the existence of different languages, the endangerment and death of languages, the emergence of new usages, and the promotion of stylistic idiosyncrasy. Anything which is of linguistic interest, whether in the individual or the group, comes about as a result of recent or ancient language change. And within linguistics, this notion has become increasingly centre-stage during the 1990s, with more attention being paid to ways of capturing the effects of change, modeling them, and quantifying them (see, for example, Hughes 1988; Milroy 1992; Baker and Suya 1996; Dixon 1997). The originally purely structural and textual investigation of language change, at first in the form of philology, then within historical linguistics, has come to be supplemented by an account of the dynamic psychological, social, and cultural processes involved. As a consequence, fresh kinds of explanation have emerged in such areas as comparative linguistics, pidgin and creole languages, child language acquisition, and the investigation of usage.

The topic of disputed grammatical usage is a good instance of the way traditional static accounts of language have been replaced by explanations of a dynamic kind, in which variety and change are central. The early concern, from the mid-eighteenth century, was solely to identify “incorrect” sentences, such as whether a sentence should or should not end with a preposition. Within the prescriptive tradition, sentences of the type “That is the doctor to whom I was talking” would be recommended, as opposed to those of the type “That is the doctor I was talking to.” The former would be considered “right” and the latter “wrong.” The judgments were fixed, immutable, absolute. The view of language was a monodialectal one in which the role of language education was to eliminate (through the use of sanctions) variant forms, thus maintaining the language’s imagined purity, and to impose norms of perceived linguistic excellence, thus safeguarding its future. Linguistic change of any kind was widely perceived to be deterioration. New pronunciations were castigated as careless or ugly; changes in vocabulary were regretted, because they involved the loss of essential distinctions in meaning; and changes in grammar were condemned as unnecessary and sloppy (see further Milroy and Milroy 1991).

The descriptive tradition introduced by linguistics in the mid-twentieth century attempted to replace this static and decontextualized account by a

dynamic, interactional one. Its approach to such sentence pairs as the one in the preceding paragraph emphasized the value of having both versions available in the language and the perversity of disbaring people from using one of them. The existence of the alternatives gave people the choice of expressing themselves in English in a formal or informal way, an option which added "power" to their linguistic repertoire. In much the same way as the acquisition of a foreign language opens up fresh contacts and experiences, so the mastery of both formal and informal varieties within a language was seen as giving individuals an increased range of opportunities for personal growth and progress. One of the main functions of the school curriculum, it was argued, was to give children the chance to develop bi-dialectally in this way—obtaining a confident command of formal varieties of English, but without losing the ability to operate informally. If you can control both Standard English and a local dialect, this approach concluded, you are in the best of both worlds: the former gives you the intelligibility you need to communicate with the world at large; the latter gives you the identity you need to show that you belong with your workmates, family, and friends. It is the same scenario as the one working itself out at the macro level of world English, but now encountered in the micro world of the classroom.

Linguists have spent a great deal of time and effort during the past fifty years trying to introduce this philosophy into educational thinking around the world—and with some success, as can be seen by the linguistic perspectives which are now a routine part of the British National Curriculum in English, introduced during the 1990s, or those which have been influencing curricular thinking in some states of Australia. This is not to say that the purist attitudes which have been attacked are no longer about. On the contrary, they are still powerful and pervasive in society, surfacing at regular intervals in newspaper usage columns and in items on radio and television stations. It will doubtless never be possible to eliminate them completely. Indeed, it can be argued that purism may well have an essential role to play within the network of language attitudes which constitute a modern society. But it needs to be kept in its place, for uncontrolled purism has unfortunate consequences in the many manifestations of linguistic intolerance. The linguist's frame of reference has a crucial balancing role to play, in this respect, placing at its foundation a broader conception of individual worth, identity, and self-respect than the purist tradition is capable of recognizing.

A DYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE IN THE CURRICULUM

This chapter began by focusing on some of the things that are happening to English at a global level, but it has since broadened the scope of its enquiry. This is as it should be. The phenomenon of an emerging world

English is not just something which is taking place "out there," in parts of the world that most students will never have an opportunity to visit. Students encounter the varieties of world English daily on radio and television, in the cinema, through pop music, and via the Internet. In some towns and cities, they may find themselves working alongside others, from a range of ethnic backgrounds, who speak a very different kind of English to the one(s) they use themselves. Those who are learning English as a foreign language will be faced with the question of which model to use as a target—both American and British English are available in some of the commercially published programs—and all teachers of English as a foreign language have at some point to make a decision about which variety of English is acceptable within their classrooms. World English also has an impact on everyday usage: one of the commonest complaints by purist commentators in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand is to do with the growing influence of American usage on their local speech. Nor is it entirely a one-way street: British English, for example, forces its way into U.S. consciousness from time to time, as when a British film does well in the Academy Awards. And the Internet is introducing a greater multidialectal democracy into linguistic interchange than ever before.

From a curricular point of view, what is important is the recognition that, whatever the settings and circumstances, the events which affect a language in its international or global manifestation result from the same principles and processes as those which affect it intranationally or locally. One language may manifest more change than another or respond to change very differently from another (the differences between the ways in which English and French react to loan words is a contemporary case in point; see Hausmann 1986; Schiffman 1996, chap. 4), but there are only so many ways in which languages can and do change, and even though the study of linguistic change has received but limited empirical treatment, the theoretical frame of reference which we need in order to explain the phenomenon is now fairly well established. Even if not all the relevant factors are known, enough of an explanation is in place to provide a language curriculum with more than enough content and motivation. And there is certainly no shortage of relevant technology, in the form of the various kinds of equipment for recording and analysis, to help students get to grips with the issues.

Giving students a solid grasp of the nature of language variation and change has all kinds of beneficial outcomes. To begin with, the subject has an intrinsic interest which is valued in society at large—people are always ready to talk about such matters as regional accents, dialect variations, new words and meanings, where words come from, and the similarities between languages. The subject also has a role which may be of value to society at large in that it can replace protectionist notions of "eternal vigilance" by

empowering notions of "eternal tolerance." The more people come to realize the inevitability of language change and the reasons why languages change, the more they are likely to react to it positively. The sooner this new mood is established, the better. All over the world, at the end of the twentieth century, people are slowly extricating themselves from 250 years of prescriptive linguistic history. It will take two generations, at least, for the extrication to be complete, because it takes that long for those young people who did not experience the prescriptive tradition in school to grow up into positions of influential seniority. At present, young people with an informed awareness of language variation are still likely to encounter, in their first jobs, senior people who know no other language philosophy than one of prescriptive control. When I presented the series *English Now* on BBC Radio 4 during the 1980s, I would regularly receive letters from junior people in this awkward position. One person, I recall, complained to me that he had been severely criticized by his boss for splitting an infinitive when he did not even know what an infinitive was, let alone how to split one, or why it was wrong to do so. There are serious cases on record of people who have found themselves unable to cope with irrational linguistic pressure from above, and who have left their jobs as a consequence. Faced with the linguistic intolerance of a prescriptively brainwashed society, some have even committed suicide (Crystal 1995, 298). Only a systematic approach to language awareness can successfully begin to combat such feelings of personal inferiority and insecurity. A language-aware curriculum, centered on a dynamic, variationist perspective, is the only way I know to enable students to face up to the linguistically intransigent elements in the world with greater confidence. The curriculum doesn't make the problems go away, but it does give students a means of coming to terms with them.

An appreciation of the principles of variation and change, as stimulated by reflecting on the world English situation, can have other beneficial outcomes. In particular, it forces people to think in some depth about what happens when languages come to be used globally. The major linguistic issue for the new millennium is not the emergence of English as a global language, or whether it will continue to hold this position (speculations reviewed in Graddol 1997), but what impact a global language will have on the other languages of the world. The statistics of several surveys conducted in the 1990s leave us in no doubt that during the twenty-first century a significant proportion, probably of the order of 50 percent, of the world's languages will die out (Grenoble and Whaley 1998; Crystal 2000). The process of endangerment is of course a historical one, reaching back to the early days of Western colonialism and extending well beyond English. For example, the savage reduction in the Indian languages spoken in Amazonia in recent times has been the result of economic and cultural factors that are nothing to do with the growth of English as a world language. On the other hand, the pressures which have caused Amazonian

peoples to drop their mother tongue in favor of Portuguese are not dissimilar to those seen in North America, where Amerindian languages have long been threatened by English, or in Russia and China, where the national languages have displaced the languages of many minority ethnic communities.

Here too, a linguistically informed curriculum has a valuable role to play. No amount of coaching in linguistic sensitivities is going to turn the clock back and save those languages which are most seriously endangered. On the other hand, an enlightened awareness of the values of linguistic diversity to the world community is something which can and should become part of everyone's consciousness. At present any such "green linguistics" is lacking. Only a tiny percentage of the world population is aware that so many languages are endangered, and probably only a small proportion of them care about it. A massive exercise in consciousness raising is essential if anything is to be done to save those languages which are capable of having their fortunes reversed. The founding of international organizations with the primary aim of focusing attention on the problem is an essential first step, and several of these organizations were created during the 1990s, notably the UNESCO-sponsored International Clearing House for Endangered Languages, based at Tokyo University. But if these organizations are to succeed in their aims, they need to be able to rely on a grass-roots body of sympathy among the general population—on voters, in short. And it would be no bad thing if a language curriculum were able to inspire the next generations of voters with a proper sense of linguistic responsibility towards the languages of the world. This, as Chomsky (1957) might have said, is one of those colourful, green ideas which needs to start waking, furiously.

There is a third topic, long at the centre of the English curriculum, which can benefit from a dynamic variationist focus and a world English perspective: the study of (the language of) literature. A global perspective will increasingly make itself felt in this domain in the twenty-first century. For the first time in English linguistic history, there are now more people speaking English as a second or foreign language than speak it as a first language (Crystal 1997). Already, in many of the countries where these "new Englishes" are found, a strong and vibrant body of literature has been emerging. The process has not been without controversy, for the question of whether one should write in English or in the language of one's ethnic origins is a matter of some consequence; and during the 1960s, when most of these new Englishes took a major step forward as a result of the many successful independence movements, there was considerable debate when authors took different stands on the matter. At the heart of the debate was the question of identity: how could one be true to one's ethnicity if one used the language of former oppressors? On the other hand, how could one get one's message across to the world at large if one used a language

which few others understood? Forty years on, these new Englishes, now very different in character from Standard British or American English, have given authors a fresh set of options, enabling them to communicate with a huge global audience in a language which they and their community have made their own. Novelist Salman Rushdie (1991) put it this way:

I don't think it is always necessary to take up the anti-colonial—or is it post-colonial—cudgels against English. What seems to me to be happening is that those people who were once colonized by the language are now rapidly re-making it, domesticating it, becoming more and more relaxed about the way they use it. Assisted by the English language's enormous flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its front. To take the case of India, only because it's the one in which I'm most familiar. The debate about the appropriateness of English in post-British India has been raging ever since 1947; but today, I find, it is a debate which has meaning only for the older generation. The children of independent India seem not to think of English as being irredeemably tainted by its colonial provenance. They use it as an Indian language, as one of the tools they have to hand.

If Rushdie is right—and I think he is—then the amount of quality literature in varieties of English other than traditional Standard British and American is going to significantly increase as a result of the vastly increased numbers of new writers. This in itself will necessitate a greater focus on the characteristics of the varieties of world English for students of literature. African and Caribbean literature in English have already provided many examples. In the typical case, a novel will contain an admixture of varieties. A narrative voice might use Standard British or American English, but characters are likely to use different kinds of regional English—an educated local standard, perhaps, or a creolized or pidginized variety. Their choices of words and grammatical constructions belong to the different localized varieties and carry nuances reflecting their social backgrounds in much the same way as British or American novelists, such as Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, made use of regional speech patterns in their characterizations. Whole texts might be written in the local variety, as is often seen in the poetry coming out of the Caribbean. And the longer-established national Englishes, other than British and American, are also developing increasingly confident voices, as is demonstrated by much contemporary Irish, Australian, and Canadian writing.

Although literature is a domain in which individualism is highly valued, from a linguistic point of view authors are as constrained by the principles of variation and change as much as anyone else. They may take more risks in their use of language, they may bend and break more rules, but if the end product is to be intelligible to a readership, they must keep control of the extent to which their language is idiosyncratic. As in other domains, it is the need to preserve a balance between intelligibility and identity which

gives distinctive shape to a variety. Authors are no exception when they make decisions about which language to use. However perceptive they may be about the human condition, when it comes to communicating their insights, they have to live within the same currents of language variation and change as do the rest of us. There is enormous overlap between the linguistic intuitions of the members of a speech community. This is one of the basic truths about language which linguists have convincingly demonstrated in recent decades.

In terms of the curriculum, this commonality of intuition can be put to immediate and effective use. It denies, once and for all, the existence of any fundamental qualitative barrier between the language of literature and the language of everything else. I have always found it difficult to understand how, other than in terms of pedagogical convenience, such a divide ever came to be. If literature is mimetic of all human experience, we must expect to encounter, within its domain, the whole gamut of possibilities of linguistic variation and change in society. Authors have to work with "the language of the age" as much as linguists do (Crystal 1987). And even if authors choose not to reflect the language of the age in their work, but try to cultivate a distinctive or esoteric language, any new variety which they create will inevitably be judged as a departure from previously existing norms and be interpreted in relation to those norms. Creative writers are continually and unavoidably being brought back into a relationship with a community's linguistic norms, and with the processes of variation and change which are the driving forces behind those norms. It is unavoidable, because each of us has only the one set of linguistic intuitions (per language) to invoke in the production and comprehension of everything we speak, listen to, read, and write. Some uses of language—such as comedy, advertising, literature—make more demands on our intuitions than others, but we do not switch from one set of intuitions to another as we go from one situation to another in our daily lives.

Students, therefore, have a unique advantage over other areas of the curriculum when it comes to the study of the literature written in their own language. Faced with a curriculum in history or geography or chemistry, they may have little or no prior knowledge—other than a generalized common sense—of what it is they are being expected to learn. But with literature it is different; for they already know a great deal (about the language) that the author knows. They already have an intuitive sense of what is possible (acceptable) and what is not, and what is in between (problems of usage). If they have followed a language course, they will already have developed some degree of ability to articulate that knowledge to others. All of this is an immense potential advantage, but it is an advantage only if the curriculum gives them the opportunity to make use of this knowledge. If the lang/lit divide is unyielding, such cross-fertilization cannot happen. If students are banned from making linguistic observations about nonliter-

ary usage in their literature class or are not motivated to take into account literary texts in their linguistic work, they are being treated as if they had two types of linguistic intuition. So much is lost when this happens.

A curriculum based on the principles of variation and change would never allow such a separation to take place. Literary uses of language would be seen as a community's most highly valued varieties, partly because of their aesthetic properties, partly because of their role as expressions of special insight into the human condition. At the same time, such a curriculum would draw attention to the way in which these varieties depend for their effect on the norms of the language as a whole. Illuminating contrasts could then be drawn. The critic who first said that playwright Harold Pinter had a tape recorder for an ear was making a rhetorical point; but a lot can be learned about Pinter's dramatic art by comparing his tightly controlled dialogue with the loosely structured clause sequences which form much of everyday conversational interaction (Crystal 1995, 413; Burton 1980, chap. 1). It is just such an integrated view of language which was assumed by Robert Graves when he once remarked in a letter to a newspaper that "a poet should master the rules of grammar before he attempts to bend or break them"—a point which applies equally to all who encounter literature, whether literary critics or just plain readers (*The Times*, 21 October 1961). And it is the same spirit of integration which must have moved Dylan Thomas to once observe in a review: "Traditional criticism has regarded the aesthetic approach towards literature as apart from the functional approach towards the way of words; languages themselves intensify the differences which appear in literature, but languages and literatures are not two different phenomena, but the same phenomenon" (Thomas 1935).

CONCLUSION

A curriculum needs an underlying philosophy, if it is to be coherent, realistic, and viable. In the case of the English language, this philosophy can be driven by any number of principles. Some might see a philological principle to be appropriate, because their concern is to enable students to engage in the historical study of texts. Some might prefer an observational principle, thus facilitating analyses of a sociological or anthropological kind. Some might support a regional principle, allowing them to focus just on the usage of their own speech community. There are clearly many possibilities. The argument of this chapter, however, is that the most meaningful English-language curricula for the twenty-first century will need to be all-inclusive, recognizing first and foremost the existence of global trends as a perspective for understanding regional or national realities and then using the principles of language variation and change to incorporate accounts of a historical, social, psychological, literary, or other kind. It would

be a shame if, as we enter the new millennium, university departments would still think of these arguments as coming from out in left field.

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SYLLABUS SUGGESTION

The series produced by the Open University in the United Kingdom, supported by radio and television material, consists in its published form of four books, all published by Routledge (London and New York) in 1996.

- Goodman, Sharon, and David Graddol, eds. *Redesigning English: New texts, new identities*.
- Graddol, David, Dick Leith, and Joan Swann, eds. *English: History, diversity, and change*.
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