Word-Plays in the Headlines of the British Press
- and a mix’n’match game for advanced learners of English as a foreign language

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ABSTRACT

Playing with words is such a common and natural pastime in natively English-speaking societies that English-speakers can easily take it for granted and thus fail to register its omnipresence as something worthy of particular attention. When one does become conscious of its extent, however, one begins to realise that the Anglo-Saxon (and French) preoccupation with word-play is probably rather exceptional. Furthermore, it becomes evident that word-play is inseparable from culture. In particular, even the reading of the British press, which indulges constantly in word-play, can be seen to present formidable obstacles to the foreign learner of English, unless that learner is culturally-aware and informed of significant events in Britain. Here, an attempt is made to explain the mechanisms of certain types of word-plays, and to problem-solving, consciousness-raising ‘game’ for advanced students, based on word-plays in the headlines of British newspapers, is described. The paper opens with a corrective examination of the pun, the term ‘pun’ being frequently used too broadly by English-speakers to designate any and all form of word-play.

KEY WORDS: Headlines (in British newspapers), Word-Play, Culture, Foreign Learner of English, Game (matching headlines with texts)

RESUMEN

Los juegos de palabras son un pasatiempo muy común en las sociedades angloparlantes, tanto así que se los toma por sentado sin siquiera notarlos el que los usa o darles ningún tipo de importancia. Cuando se adquiere conciencia de su presencia se tiene que admitir que la preocupación anglosajona (y francesa) con los juegos de palabras es probablemente algo excepcional. Aun más, se hace evidente que los juegos de palabras son inseparables de la cultura. En particular, aun en la prensa inglesa, que hace un uso constante de los juegos de palabras, se puede ver que representan un obstáculo tremendo para el que aprende inglés como lengua extranjera, a menos que éste esté concientizado e informado de los sucesos importantes en Gran Bretaña. Aquí, intentaré explicar los mecanismos de ciertos tipos de juegos de palabras, y describiré un juego para estudiantes avanzados basado en juegos de palabras encontrados en los titulares de algunos periódicos ingleses, como una forma de resolver el problema y elevar la conciencia del estudiante. Mi presentación comienza con un examen
de lo que es un juego de palabra, y del término mismo que usan los angloparlantes en forma demasiado amplia para designar todas y cualquiera forma de esta expresión.

PARABLAS CLAVE: Títulares (de algunos periódicos ingleses), Juegos de Palabras, Cultura, El que aprende inglés como lengua extranjera, Juego para estudiantes avanzados basado en juegos de palabras.

I. PUNS AND OTHER WORD-PLAYS

The title first conceived for this paper began Puns in the Headlines of the British Press, but has since been modified because, on reflection, not least inspired by Walter Redfern', the phenomena referred to here, of which 50 examples are given in Appendix II, cannot justifiably all be labelled puns; indeed, only a minority amongst them deserve this designation. The trap fallen into was to use the term eponymously rather than hyponymously. If there is an excuse for this, it is that many native speakers of English employ the word pun in an all-embracing manner. But once more careful consideration is required, it becomes evident that pun is in fact more meaningful as a hyponym, and that the lexical hierarchy to which it belongs is better headed by a broader term such as word-play, or, possibly, paranomasia, though the latter means more narrowly for Lecercle (1990 - quoted in Redfern 1996:193) a "near-missing pun".

This distinction now being made here - and which would appear to be in keeping with that drawn by Freud (1976:83) - is that while a word-play can be any witty use or manipulation of words for humorous or other effect, a pun proper, following Lecercle, is, in the best case, an example of antanaclasis, or perfect pun. What looks like an instance of this may be found among the entries in Appendix 1, Some lexical orientation with regard to the pun: the Collins Cobuild example "My dog's a champion boxer". This satisfies the technical requirement we will now make of a pun: that it be a word with more than one meaning or a given chain of words containing at least one lexical item having more than one meaning, such that more than one coherent interpretation may be put upon the chain as a whole. While it would seem that the term double entendre is often used as a synonym for 'pun', the phrase 'more than one meaning' is chosen here because, as Redfern shows (1996:190), puns may offer more than two meanings, and he even quotes a case of "septuple entendre". Our example is less complex:

Chain of words: My dog's a champion boxer.

Meaning 1: I own a dog belonging to a breed called 'boxers'. Among this breed, my dog is a champion, ie, entered at some time into a canine competition, adjudged a fine example of it.

Meaning 2: I am the owner of a dog which engages in the sport of pugilism and which has been deemed a 'champion' by virtue of having thus far beaten all or most of those challenging it in the ring.

However, there can still be degrees and degrees of perfection in punning. Since language can be realised both phonically and graphically, what one might like to propose is that "the perfect pun" should satisfy the ctenon of being a word with more than one meaning.
or a given chain of words containing at least one lexical item having more than one meaning, with the same phonic and graphic realisation triggering the two or more meanings. The 'boxer pun' satisfies this homophone/homograph criterion exactly. By contrast, one might take the pun quoted by Disraeli in The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: "Great praise to God, and little Laud to the devil", but here noting that Disraeli has had to make a choice in transcribing a spoken pun between laud and Laud, both realised phonically as [loːd], and has chosen arbitrarily to transcribe the proper rather than the common noun.

Chain of words: Great praise to God, and little L/laud to the devil.

Meaning 1: Great praise to God, and little laud (praise) to the devil.

Meaning 2: Great praise to God, and may Laud (the diminutive archbishop of the time) go to the devil.

Thus, here we do not have the pun at its highest pinnacle of technical perfection as with the "My dog's a champion" example, but, considering that it was a pun made in speech and never intended to be written down, one which is perfect within the medium in which it was uttered. It is also, arguably, a much wittier, in the sense of amusingly absurd, pun than "My dog's...", since it seeks to associate a proper noun with an abstraction, whereas "My dog's..." only associates one common concrete noun with another.

An example of a near-miss, or in Lecerle's taxonomy, paronomasia, might be one of those cited by Field (Endnote 15): "Mr Richard Ingrams (I think), in a radio discussion years ago which involved Laurence of Arabia's alleged taste for flagellation, suddenly exclaimed: 'The Desert Thong'".

Chain of words: The desert thong.

Meaning 1: A whip or whiplash used in the desert.

Meaning 2: The title of the Romberg/Hammerstein operetta (and later film musicals) about swashbuckling adventure in the desert.

This chain does not, in fact, contain a word having more than one meaning, but more than one meaning can be recovered from 'thong' because it is characteristic of people who lisp that they produce [θ] when aiming at [s], so that these two sounds may easily be related to each other. A rather 'forced' pun, then, though witty enough as a quip.

One might now compare with these puns one of the items in Appendix II: "I'm going to wash that hair right out of my man". Assuming this order of words is intentional, as a newspaper headline it announces to the Anglo-Saxon reader, well, perhaps the rather older one, that it introduces some sort of hilarious story, since it is a variation on the title of the musical hit "I'm going to wash that man right out of my hair", i.e "I've been in love with that man who's let me down but now I'm disillusioned, I'm going to indulge in cathartic things feminine and expunge his memory". However, there is no ambiguity here. The mechanism

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is one of echo and association. It may be that at first sight the headline even looks like a slip, but it soon emerges from the article that it is "accidental-but-on-purpose", as Chiaro puts it (1992:24). It is really quite ingenious in its context, and it is certainly a word-play, but not a pun.

The dictionary definitions quoted in Appendix I treat the pun as though it always resided in individual words. As Redfern (1984:9f.) points out, however, in criticising Kelly (1971), a sub-branch of the pun is the AMPHIBOLOGY (or AMPHIBOLY), in which a sentence as a whole has a double meaning or the punning spans across grammatical categories. He offers "the anodyne example: the boxes are free (the seats are empty, the containers cost nothing). The Collins English Dictionary offers save rags and waste paper, in which rags and waste paper may be construed as a double object of save, or waste may be read as a further imperative form, contrasting with save - to appreciate such amphibologies, the reader has, of course, to be aware of the structural possibilities.

Collins does not give a source for save rags and waste paper, but this particular amphibology sounds like a British-government injunction dating from the Second World War. Is it intentional? Almost certainly. Firstly, it is in perfect keeping with another wartime punning slogan which cannot but have been intentional: Careless talk costs lives - be like dad and keep mum. Here the careless talk costs lives refers to the fact that there could be spies about, to whom talk about, say, one's job or the location of this or that factory or the membership of the Home Guard could constitute useful information for the enemy and could result in an offensive action, while the be like dad and keep mum can be construed either as: 'be like your father and provide for your mother' or 'be like your father and keep your mouth shut'. Secondly, as a quotation from Redfern, below, suggests, in connection with advertising, puns capture the attention - they take a moment to work out, they make one smile, if not laugh, and they are therefore memorable. Less certainly intentional (though there is always the chance that some wag might be involved in such matters) are the puns which may be encountered by travellers on the London Underground. The instruction greeting those about to use an escalator is particularly priceless: Dogs must be carried (If you are travelling with a dog, it must be carried up or down the escalator, a condition of your using the escalator is that you carry a dog or dogs). A more recent contribution is the recorded message played at destination on the Bank-Waterloo link: Please leave the train (please alight from the train, please do not take the train with you). To be aware that amphibologies and puns can arise unintentionally is to be on one's guard against them as a writer or speaker at times when they would be inappropriate and counterproductive to effect. That they should occur unintentionally in suasive 'official and public language' is no doubt partly a result of the frenzied, modern search for concision identified by von Polenz (1988:passim) whose remarks, though confined by him to German, may easily be generalised to other languages. On the other hand, to be aware that puns can be applied intentionally with arresting effect is to increase one's rhetorical armoury.

The dictionary definitions quoted again suggest that the major object of the pun is to amuse. This is only part of its purpose, however, and the semantic adjacencies found in the extracts from Roget under supply a more complete picture. While the main point of a pun may be to amuse, it may also be intended, at the one extreme, to gently lampoon a party or parties encompassed by it, or, at the other, to subject the party or parties to the bitter sarcasm.
and ridicule alluded to in Roget. *Le calembour-massue*, the 'cudgel pun', as Redfem translates it (1984:141), *is at the heart* of what the British tend to *think* of as 'cruel French humour'. On the *whole*, it *is probably true* that the British in general and the British press in particular confine themselves to lampooning, but among the headlines noted in the composing of the 'Mix 'n' Match Game', described in Section III, was at least one presumed attempt at a pun aiming at *vitification* and provocation: FRENCH MEDDLERS HAVE SOME GAUL (*The Sun*, Friday, May 9, 1997). The following article *complained* of a French lorry-drivers' blockade of the French ports and suggested that the French were interfering with the British by hampering their exports. The play *here* is, of course, on the phrase 'to have *impudence*, to...'. but 'gall* is deliberately *mis-written* as 'Gaul' to extract a cheap laugh at the expense of the French. But if this intended as a pun as such, it fails, *because the chain of words* does not possess at least two coherent interpretations - to say that someone 'has *some Gaul* is in itself about as meaningful as saying that someone "has *some England" or "has some Spain"."

Though it *is* likely that most people, on *hearing* the word 'pun', *think* of linguistic puns, there *is also* the phenomenon often referred to as the 'visual pun'. We would have much difficulty in *trying to place* on this the sort of *requirements* made of a linguistic pun, and might *have to accept* that the term 'visual pun' has a broad generic application to pictures or other visual media, or to a combination of linguistic and visual media, in which ambiguity resides. But we can perhaps give an example of what *is* being alluded to, and one which *contains several* layers of meaning:

The cover *illustration* on Redfem (1984) *is* of a young, *turbaned* woman* sitting in full foreground, back* to the viewer, her *arms* not *seen*, but, so it would appear from the position of her shoulders, folded across her chest. She is visible from the top of her head, turned to her left and *almost in profile* for the viewer, down to where her buttocks *make* contact with her seat (or, to put, where her seat *makes* contact with her seat). Apart from the turban, she is *almost entirely* naked behind, just a fold of cloth emerging from in front over both her *hips*, and *passing underneath* her. In the renal *area* she *is* adorned with the curlicue F-shaped sound-holes of *certain stringed instruments*, and with the aid of this prompt, one perceives, if one *had* not perceived it before, how closely the form of her body in posterior view, from the neck down to the buttocks, resembles that of a violin or *cello*. *Here*, then, there are already two levels of meaning, recoverable purely *visually*: If you *see* young women from behind, naked, with their *arms* folded across in front of them, aren't their *bodies* violin or cello-like?... *And, oh yes, violins and cellos are for playing on"*. There are, however, *further* layers in this particular *instance*. The *illustration* referred to is a 1924 photograph by *Man Ray* and bears the title *Vio|lon d'Ingres*. The *meaning* of this French term is a pursuit engaged in outside one's *professional activities*, a hobby or *pastime*. It stems from the *painter* Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), who, *when* not painting, was dedicated to violin-playing. Thus, once one takes *cognizance* of the title, and if one *knows* French, there might emerge the more sophisticated *implication*: 'Never *mind* Ingres himself, *this* is actually the artist's *photographer's* real *v|iolon d'Ingres* - and looks like it, too". Yet a *further* layer is accessible to those who *know something* of the works of Ingres, who was fond of, even obsessed with, the *painting* of female bathers, *some* of whom *Man Ray's* photograph readily.
Brings to mind. For example, Ingres' 1808 painting La baigneuse de Valpinçon (The Valpinçon Bather) depicts, again from behind, a young woman in a turban and a fold of cloth, this time over her left arm, (her bath, still pouring, just visible in the left lower middle-ground) and his Le bain turc (The Turkish Bath) of 1862 contains in the left foreground a young turbaned but otherwise naked woman, yet again with back to viewer, but this time affording a glimpse of a copious left breast and nursing a stringed-instrument, its broad end resting, we imagine, in her lap, the iconography here not passing unnoticed. She is surrounded by a large bevy of equally naked young women. three or four presenting full-frontal views, and portraying a sinuousness which some might even judge to be grotesque. Does Man Ray's Violon d'Ingres suggest, then, anachronistically, that Ingres' violon d'Ingres was in truth less violin-playing than painting nude bathers? Is Man Ray also implying that Ingres was, his neo-classical conservatism notwithstanding, in essence a voyeur? Finally, since violon serves as a French slang word for 'prison cells', is there a hint that Ingres' obsession with bathers was his own prison? No doubt art cognoscenti could find several points of interest here. However, we are not quite finished. We must now return to the cover of Redfem's book, and note what a clever, but outrageous, verbal-cum-visual play it in itself perpetrates. The nature of the cover may be evoked roughly (a phrase advisedly chosen) as follows:

Presumably, what is presented visually most prominently will escape no-one. However, the linguistically aware will also note that the word 'puns' contains two elements which are both orthographically and phonetically closely related to others. The 'P' is separated from its orthographic cousin only by the absence of a loop, and, interpreted as the sound [p], from its homorganic cousin only by the absence of voice. The 'N' is separated from its orthographic cousin only by the absence of one diagonal stroke, and, interpreted as a sound, is not so far distant from its bilabial counterpart. Did Redfem mean this? Given his theme, it is hardly a serious question.
Word-Plays

The immediately foregoing remarks are not totally divorced from newspapers, since these can use the visual medium or the visual medium combined with language for punning or 'playing'. It will almost certainly be rare to find in an organ of the press anything as rich as Man Ray's photograph, though word-play within the advertisements in newspapers can be quite complex (and is often self-referential, and therefore lost on anyone who has not been 'following the adverts'). Redfern (1984:130f.) reports that his enquiries of twenty international advertising agencies as to the status of the pun in advertising elicited most commonly the reply that the pun was "out of date". However, as he goes on to say: 'Advertising space is costly. Economy is essential, and puns are highly economical (two meanings) for the price of one word or phrase, and in fact much more of a labour-saving device than many of the products they seek to promote. The mode of advertising is telegraphic, lapidary, as in journalism"... and: "Puns are undeniably used as attention-grabbers, e.g. 'population down 30 per cent!' in an advert for Kellogg's 30 per cent Bran Flakes. We are caught and led to read on". The simple fact is that puns and other word-plays are at present so common in advertising, at least expensive advertising, in the British press that readers not seeing them must pause to ask themselves what it is that they have missed. We will give here one example - not the most subtle - of an advertising 'play' which combines linguistic with visual effect, and which appeared in the Independent on Sunday on 21 April 1996, but also elsewhere at around the same time. This is an advertisement for Barclays Bank. Printed large in white on a sky-blue background (the 'Barclays colour') is the two-line slogan: 48 HOUR OVERDRAFT. NO STINGS ATTACHED. Depicted below is a very large brown scorpion, its tail curving upwards in bracket-shape and its sting clearly visible. The informed reader will immediately spot that 'no stings attached' is a variation on the cliché 'no strings attached', meaning that there are no conditions attached. At the same time, however, one is being informed that the offer of a 48 hour overdraft does not come with a 'sting in the tail', ie, metaphorically, an unpleasant or likely unpleasant consequence of accepting or enjoying something advantageous or pleasurable, and that one will not be 'stung' for it, ie charged exorbitantly. The cultural knowledge one needs to piece together is that in Britain, while overdrafts are very expensive, unauthorised overdrafts, ie overdrafts for which the prior permission of the bank has not been sought, are crippling so. Confirmation that one has put the right information together is found in the smaller print at the bottom of the advertisement: 'You've just found out you're overdrawn. And with some banks, once you're in the red it's all they can see [here another pun in itself]. The last thing you need is a bank waiting to strike with intimidating letters and overdraft charges. That's why at Barclays if you go overdrawn for two working days a month without notice, you'll only pay interest - no usage charges. What's more, it's simple to move your account to Barclays with our Account Transfer Service. And the sting? There isn't one'. This excursion into advertising takes us away from our focus on headlines, but as a closing remark on the subject, there is no reason why advertisements should not also provide material for a Mix 'n' Match game, as Monnot & Kite (1974) suggest (see Endnote 2).

It is difficult to generalise about the extent to which word-plays and puns can be isolated from a cultural context (and within that broader context, a more narrow context), that is to say, to what extent they are 'straightforwardly linguistic' such that they may be appreciated by someone who has some systemic knowledge of the language in which they are made, but little or no knowledge either of the culture surrounding that language (conversely,
the culture which that language has played a part in creating) or the immediate context of a 'play'. Perhaps more towards the 'straightforwardly linguistic' end is a headline such as IDOL SPECULATION (The Sunday Times, Style, 11 June 1995), which might announce itself as a pun to someone who knows the cliché ‘idle speculation’, but whose full effect is still lost unless one is aware that in the culture in question the word ‘idol’ does not apply simply to graven images but also, metaphorically, to public personages (typically pop-stars) perceived as glamorous and ‘worshipped’ by a following of fans - in fact, the article beneath the punning headline was about the male model Albert Delegue, ‘le mec le plus ultra’, who had reputedly, but not with acknowledged certainty, died of an Aids-related disease, leaving many a tear-filled eye and riven heart behind. Contrast with this, however: TANKER OP WAS SUCH A WOK-UP (Daily Mirror, Woman, February 28, 1996). First, ‘straightforwardly linguistically’, one has to know (as well as understanding ‘tanker’, of course) that ‘op’ is short for ‘operation’. But what of ‘wok-up’? To appreciate this, two different types of knowledge are required: the linguistic, more specifically, idiomatic, knowledge that ‘wok-up’ is evocative of ‘cock-up’, a vulgar term for a fiasco, a botched or failed task, something done really badly, and then the cultural knowledge that ‘wok’ symbolises the Chinese and things Chinese. 'Wok' is in fact for the British reader not at all a remote term or symbol, since there is something of an interest in Britain for ‘stir-fry’ cooking, and woks, which may be characterised as 'Chinese bowl-shaped frying pans', can be purchased in almost every large supermarket. Thus, the headline: TANKER OP WAS SUCH A WOK-UP immediately suggests to the informed British reader that there was a tanker operation or manoeuvre which turned out to be a failure, and moreover, that someone Chinese, perhaps the crew, was involved in the fiasco. The article (to the extent that its truth-value can be accepted) confirms an interpretation along these lines: A tanker became grounded on rocks, a salvage team (English-speaking / non-Chinese speaking) was called in and sent for a tug, crewed by Cantonese (Chinese-speaking / non-English-speaking). Communication between salvage team and tug crew proved impossible. Tug sailed away, and tanker was left grounded on rocks.

If cultural knowledge is needed in the understanding and appreciation of word-plays, and if this type of knowledge is particularly needed where it comes to English, this is not a surprise. English is the most widely-spoken, ie most widely distributed, language in the world, followed by Spanish, and British and American imperialism have both, on the one hand, spread the culture of English-speaking societies broadly around the globe, but, on the other, had the effect that Britain and America have become aware of, and have in some cases entered into symbiosis with, the cultures of other peoples. Consequently (and here an apology is due for failure to remember the title of the sci-fi novel from which the following is essentially a quotation) 'the culture is very dense'. If word-plays and culture are inextricably bound up with each other, and if word-plays in English are often very 'dense', then perhaps the reason lies herein.

How may one summarise the signals contained in headlining word-plays that they are such? The following main devices emerged from an analysis of the headlines collected for the 'Mix 'n' Match Game':

a) Substitution of a non-homographichomophone for a word expected in a given collocation or context: One of the headlines quoted above furnishes an example of this: IDOL SPECULATION. In this particular case, there is, of course, a change of grammatical category...
involved from Adjective + Noun (‘idie speculation’) to Compound (‘ido1 speculation’), but a compound which accords with the structure Determiner + Head, and which is in itself perfectly ‘feasible’. An example in which there is no change of category would be: WRONG DAY FOR A GOVERNMENT LEAK (Independent, 28 February 1996), where the informed reader would have expected GOVERNMENT LEAK. The article following implies that the Secretary of State for Wales may think that St David’s Day (celebrating the Patron Saint of Wales) occurs on 26 February, rather than on 1 March. However, nowhere in the article is either ‘leek’ or ‘leak’ mentioned, so that appreciation of this word-play depends also on the cultural knowledge that the leek is a symbol of Wales. These examples could perhaps be categorised as ‘near-missing’ puns, in that, if uttered in certain dialects of English, they are puns proper. In the written medium considered alone, however, they are not puns, since the graphs at issue are not ambiguous, but merely evoke the intended homophone. A variant of this type, though not qualifying even as a ‘near-miss’ pun, is represented in LORE AND DISORDER (Independent on Sunday, Sunday Review, 4 February 1996), where the first word, ‘lore’, is a homophone (in British English) of ‘law’ but the ‘order’ expected in the ‘echoed’ phrase ‘law and order’ is turned into its antonym.

b) Substitution of a word which rhymes with a word expected in a given collocation or context (but which by virtue of ‘rhyming with it’ deviates from it in at least one orthographic/phonetic segment): Examples of this type would be: SHOOTING TO THRILL (The Times, Vision [cover], February 10 1996) (‘shooting to kill’), THERE’S NO BUSINESS LIKE DOUGH BUSINESS (The Sunday Times, Style, 26 February 1995) (‘there’s no business like show-business’), CLUB’S PUTTING ON BLAIRS AND GRACES (The Sun, February 27, 1996) (‘to put on airs and graces’).

c) Substitution of an unexpected word or words for one or some expected in a given collocation or context, of which there are still sufficient original words left to facilitate its recognition: Examples: HEINEKEN KILLS THE CARPS OTHER BEERS CAN’T REACH (The Sun, February 28, 1996) (Heineken refreshes the parts other beers can’t reach) TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO TOY HAS GONE BEFORE (Independent on Sunday, 29 November 1992) (‘to boldly go where no man has gone before’).

d) Orthographic manipulation which amounts to the creation of an ad hoc ‘echoic’ neologism: Again a headline quoted above serves as an example: TANKER OP WAS SUCH A WOK-UP. The ‘neologism’ ‘wok-up’, having served its purpose, can safely be predicted to have been ‘once up’ and ephemeral, and never to raise its head again.

e) The rearrangement of words in a commonly known collocation but without addition or subtraction: we return to: I’M GOING TO WASH THAT HAIR RIGHT OUT OF MY MAN (Daily Mirror, Woman, February 28, 1996) (‘I’m going to wash that man right out of my hair’). This was the only absolutely ‘pure’ example found among the headlines selected for the ‘Mix n’ Match Game’, but opportunities for such minimalistic manipulation to witty effect are probably very rare. As already remarked, this has the feel of an “accidental-but-on-purpose” slip about it.

Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
f) The use of a register not consistent with the image of a given newspaper: PET PIG CAUSES STINK BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS (The Guardian, February 28 1996), NEIGHBOURS KICK UP STINK IN COURT OVER POT-BELLED PIG CALLED FLOSSY (The Times, February 28 1996). The thoughts of the copywriters for both these 'quality' newspapers have drifted in the same direction on the same day. A pet pig has become the source of litigation between neighbours by reason of its alleged malodourousness, or, to put this colloquially, in language unusual for the newspapers in question when they are being serious, its alleged stink. The pig thus causes a stink (itself stinks, provokes an altercation) and the neighbours of the pig's owners kick up a stink (complain vehemently). The Guardian example qualifies as a pun by virtue of the ambiguity of 'causes stink', but the Times example does not because 'kick up a stink' has only one meaning.

Even word-plays which are witty just as headlines have to be referenced to the texts appearing beneath them for their full dimensions to be appreciated, but there are also headlines which appear to be perfectly 'straight' until one begins to read the articles they refer to. Examples of these 'unannounced word-plays' (and in this case also puns) would be: DISPENSING JUSTICE (The Sunday Times, Style, 11 February 1996) - one can indeed dispense, that is, mete out, justice, and the pun only emerges when one has grasped that the article is about 'hole in the wall divorce machines' which work on the principles of cash dispensers. GNAWING QUESTIONS (The Sunday Times, The Culture, 4 February 1996). Cliché though it is, 'gnawing questions' (questions which worry and with which one becomes obsessed) is a perfectly serious phrase. But the article heralded by it turns out to entertain doubts about the artistic merits of making sculptures from such edible substances as lard or chocolate. HAMMER HORROR (Daily Mirror, February 28, 1996). That there is 'something going on here' is probably apparent to the informed British reader, who knows the phrase as the title of a company making horror films, and who might then wonder why there should be an article on this company. Anticipation of some witticism is possibly, but only weakly, created. What is, strangely, not immediately obvious is the obvious: that the article is about the bludgeoning to death of a young woman with a hammer. In short, this is a sick one, bad taste even by the standards of the newspaper responsible for it.

II. WORD-PLAYS AND THE FOREIGN READER

The frequency with which word-plays and puns are used in the British press, particularly in headlines, is striking - at least, once one becomes aware of the fact, since playing with words is so much part of British culture that it is easy for someone imbued in that culture to take it for granted and not particularly to notice it - to have it before one's very nose and not see it - cf Redfern (1984:192): "The English are notorious among peoples for their punning propensity, and their home was long called Perfidious Albion" and Chiaro (1992:122): "...in British society, verbal play tends to be ubiquitous". However, once the ubiquity of the word-play in the British press is apparent, one begins to ask oneself at least two questions: 1. Is the word-play so much a feature of the press in other countries, such that its application in the British press is readily understood as a feature of the press of any country? 2. Is it possible for the foreign learner of English to recognise word-plays, to recover the
cultural echoes contained in them, to extract meaning from them, to see their appropriateness and to appreciate them in the same way as the British reader? - cf Chiaro (1992:122) again: "It seems to be acceptable to play with words in a myriad of situations in which it would be considered out of place in many other cultures. Thus a foreigner could be confused by the occurrence of a joke...".

With regard to the first question, to supply any greatly generalising answer might be dangerous, but enquiry amongst immediate European neighbours would suggest that word-play as such is not so much in the foreground in the press of their countries as in the British newspaper and magazine. Spanish colleagues in particular are quite adamant that their press is bereft of them, and partly because Spanish orthography hardly allows variant spellings of homophones. Personal observation would also indicate that the word-play is much less evident in, for example, the German press, except in Glossen, which are expressly meant to be witty and ironic commentaries upon various situations and events. And while the French share with the British the enjoyment of the jeu de mots, the play-on-words as a journalistic device on a large scale again seems to be reserved more for specialised manifestations of the press, such as Le canard enchaîné. There may, of course, be at least three factors of relevance here: firstly, the potential for word-plays allowed by the system and conventions of the language; secondly, the attachment to and the rôle and status of the word-play in particular cultures; thirdly, expectations as to what the press should deliver (in terms of 'straight news' as against tongue-in-cheek vignettes and commentaries), how seriously it (the press itself) should be taken, and the extent to which some of its reports upon events, and the events themselves, are intended to be read with a straight face rather than, at the least, a wry smile.

As to the second question, personal experience again suggests that reading of the French and German press, and even the far less 'fluent' reading of Spanish, Italian or Dutch newspapers, can most of the time proceed on the basis of linguistic resources already possessed, or on the basis of information provided by a dictionary, without major mystifying obstacle. This is not to say that pragmatic, cultural knowledge is never required - for example, if one meets in the German press, in the context of a contemporary discussion or report relating to women and their status, the term Quote, one must know that there is probably specific reference here to the quota of women officially required to be present in the workforce. This word Quote, then, is in the given context in some sense the tip of an iceberg, the mere representation and symbol of that iceberg, or an ellipsis, and unless one is aware of this, a whole cultural dimension and debate is lost. But such allusions, requiring as they do a certain knowledge of the culture in question, are qualitatively different from the word-play. This difference resides in the distinction between 'straight shorthand' or, again, ellipsis, and 'oblique reference', the latter taking two major forms: 1. apparent reference to X, when in fact reference to Y is intended, and 2. deliberate ambiguity which can only be resolved on the basis of study of the text, recognition of the context, and pragmatic and cultural knowledge. The 'shorthand' form, such as Quote, does not directly challenge the reader, but simply assumes that this reader, as a member of the immediate culture to which a particular organ of the press is addressed, will be familiar with the issue represented in the 'shorthand'. The word-play, on the other hand, does challenge. We may summarise some aspects (but probably only some) of this challenge in the following way: "If you are a member of the culture to which we address ourselves, work out, on the basis of your knowledge of our shared language, on the basis of our shared knowledge of our literature and of our cultural history and values and on the basis...".

Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
of your knowledge of how word-plays work, why we are supplying you with an indirect or ambiguous allusion. Moreover, we invite you to share the cleverness of our ‘play’, the irony and/or the humour and/or the wit entailed in it, and our light or irreverent, alternatively, sarcastic and even bitter or deservedly cruel, treatment of one or all of the parties involved in the issue at hand, and/or our light or irreverent, alternatively, sarcastic and even bitter or deservedly cruel, treatment of the issue itself. Read as you will into our ‘play’ whether we are joking or whether we are being more deadly serious than we could have been had we attempted to be “straight”. Thus, a preliminary conclusion, at any rate, must be that a press which has regular recourse to the word-play as against a press which merely uses ellipsis is likely to pose a greater problem to the foreign reader not thoroughly versed in the culture in question, and the more so the ‘denser’ the culture is.

III. THE GAME

English, spoken natively at the beginning of the eighteenth century by barely 15,000,000 people, has, of course, long since ceased to be essentially its native-speakers’ property, but is commonly referred to as a ‘world language’. It is certainly one in which people not sharing each other’s native languages communicate routinely. One accepts, then, as one must accept since there is no choice in the matter, that in some EFL and ESL situations, the culture of the natively English-speaking societies is at most of marginal interest to teachers and learners, and will not loom large in the English syllabus.

Not that escape from the culture can be absolute, even if one is theoretically immune to it, since things as trivial as learning when to utter such formulae as ‘good morning’, ‘good afternoon’, ‘good evening’ and ‘good night’ imply assimilation of the basis on which a particular society or particular societies have chosen to divide up the day and to devise ritualistic greetings or parting pleasantries associated with the divisions. And once one steps into the realm of idiom, the culture inevitably seeps through - “That’s not my cup of tea”, ‘That isn’t quite cricket” , “You need to keep your eye on the ball”, “It was Hobson’s choice”, “That was the icing on the cake”, “We’re not exactly living high off the hog’s back”, “It was a Hail-Mary-pass”, and so on. Indeed, even the verbs existing within a language and the complements (or arguments) which they allow are not devoid of cultural ramifications - the concept ‘X owns land’, for example, is not universal, but for Western society has its beginnings in the Ten Commandments, if not before.

Let us settle for the fact that, if total escape is not possible, then at least deliberate foregrounding of cultural aspects of native-speaker language, in this case, native-speaker English, can be avoided in school and university situations in which this is desired in the light of a possibly conflicting value-system and the purposes for which English is taught and learnt. It was not, however, for such situations that the Game under discussion here was conceived, but specifically for university students studying English ‘philologically’ and with an eye to Britain as at least one major ‘target society’, students, then, highly motivated to gain cultural information relating to Britain. Such students, future English teachers and scholars, should, it was supposed, receive at least some exposure to so salient a device as the word-play, especially if the assumptions made above that word-play and culture are inextricably bound up with each other, were correct. The idea started out simply from noticing the omnipresence of

Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
the word-play in headlines, then considering the questions asked in the first paragraph of Section II, above, and then wondering how the word-play, especially in relation to the press, in which its extensiveness had suddenly come into conscious awareness, might best be treated pedagogically. A lecture, perhaps? But that would probably dissect the word-play to pieces. Why not let the pun be fun? Why not let the whole thing be a game? The solution was very simple: Take newspaper articles with 'plays' in their headlines, separate the headlines from the texts to which they related, put them in random order and let the students work out which headlines belonged to which texts and explain why they belonged to these texts.

The conception goes back several years, but the path to Hell being paved with good intentions, nothing followed from the conception until an invitation came to contribute to a course at the University of Murcia, Spain, in March 1996, on Foreign Language, Culture and Society. Even then, nothing followed until about three days before the contribution was due and the adrenaline began to flow in earnest. And now it did, triggered by the anxiety that preparation had been left far too late. A frantic search of the house led to the assembling of back copies of some Sunday and some specialist newspapers (the only ones regularly taken), together with the odd daily bought to read in train or plane, and these were supplemented by the proceeds from one visit to the local newsagent's to buy copies of all the newspapers for that weekday (stopping short only of the real 'gutter', in which, if one may use such phraseology in the present context, titillation is hardly provided in the form of brain-teasing). On the score of finding material to suit the purpose, panic proved superfluous. There was more than enough. The panic now was whether there would be enough time to copy-type the headlines and texts - copy-type and not photocopy because one did not want the format and fonts used by particular newspapers to give too much away. This panic prompted the decision - which might otherwise have been taken on more principled grounds - to use only excerpts from the texts, excerpts which contained the clues necessary to match them with headlines, but nothing which reduced the matching-up to child's play. Fifty headlines and fifty excerpts were selected, on the basis that too few puzzles make the Game too easy, especially as in any game of this sort, the chances of hitting upon the right answer by elimination increase as one goes along.

The Game was duly presented to some 90 third and fourth year Licenciatura students, who were invited to divide themselves into groups, to work with each other on possible solutions to the puzzles provided and left to their own devices for some 40 minutes. In a second 50-minute session they were then asked how they had fared. It was presented again in May 1997, but with a 'refreshed' set of headlines and with an apology for having, in the previous year, used the term 'pun' too widely.

No notes were made on either occasion with a view to gathering statistics, but it was registered impressionistically that the students had found the Game very difficult. In some cases, of course, they had been able to match headlines with articles on the basis of both adequate linguistic and cultural knowledge, but in others on the basis of logic, so that they knew they were right, but not in any great detail why they were right. For example, the headline GAME, DATASET AND MATCH (Times Higher, Multimedia Features, July 14 1994) betrayed to the initiated by virtue of the data and the source article that it probably had something to do with computing, as it did, but did not produce for most of them the full echo of 'Game, set and match to X', originally, and still, the formula used in announcing the final result in a game of tennis, but now probably

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Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
occurring more frequently as a metaphorically expressed verdict upon the outcome of some other form of competition or tussle, including verbal debates and wrangles. Fifty minutes proved scant time to fill in the gaps left by intelligent guessing, to say nothing of the gaps left by failure to solve many of the puzzles at all.

One can only hope that some of the guinea-pigs for the Game were alerted to the rôle of the word-play in the British press, had their linguistic horizons extended even if only by a fraction and gained some further insight into what must surely be the greatest of all puzzles for anyone trying to study the British - the capacity for being at the same time serious and trivial, for being seriously trivial and trivially serious.

If the Game were repeated under conditions allowing more time, but again, specifically with specialist students of English, then one might envisage taking it a little further - not by any means by depriving it of the fun element, but nonetheless using it to lead into 'serious work'. The aims and procedures could be summarised thus:

1. To clarify the meaning of 'word-play'.
2. To raise awareness of the place and function of the word-play, in the first place in the press, but, more widely, in English-speaking culture and society. 
3. To provide a problem-solving activity through the matching of headlines with texts. 
4. To afford an opportunity for group-work and discussion among students. 
5. To discuss the solutions to the matching of the headlines to the texts. 
6. To elicit the mechanisms by which word-plays draw attention to themselves (or not). 
7. To follow up at least some of the cultural and topical issues to which the word-plays have given rise, or to which they relate, where appropriate, on a contrastive basis. 
8. To discuss the extent to which word-plays in the press, in the light of the manner in which they treat people and issues, betray such matters as political allegiances. 
9. To compare the rôle and status of the word-play in British society with its rôle and status in the home society. 
10. To lead to group projects or individual essays either on the word-play itself, or on some seam of English-speaking culture uncovered in the process of reading the (excerpts from) texts to be matched with headlines.

One could, then, easily imagine a week's fairly intensive work. Would it be worth it? One can only say that a phenomenon which is so salient that any one visit to any one newsagent's on any one day produces almost enough material for a game involving fifty headlines and fifty texts must figure somewhere in the study of the culture in which it is rife. It would, of course, seem true that there is no wonderfully symmetric system underlying the word-play, no recipe-book for perfect paronomasy of which we can inform students, and only the beginnings of a taxonomy of word-plays. Word-plays depend upon happenstance of all sorts, and their deciphering depends upon possession of appropriate linguistic resources, adequate cultural knowledge and happiness with ambiguity, perhaps even preparedness to develop a 'warped' mind. But we can at least arrange for cultivation of awareness of the word-play by providing exposure to it, even if we cannot communicate through teaching that capacity most of all needed to appreciate it- a sense of humour, combined with a sense of irony.
As a last point, little comment has been made here on the aesthetics of word-play, but in the context of broad philological studies, a study of this aspect might not be inappropriate, though it is unlikely to be in the British press that the best gems are to be found, such as Donne's:

I am unable, yonder beggar cries,
To stand or move; if he say true, he lies.
(Smith 1973:150)

Where reading of the everyday press is concerned, however, the first hurdle on the way to comprehension is recognition of a word-play, whether it be 'good' or 'bad'.

In Appendix II will be found (in jumbled order) the headlines and in Appendix III the texts used in Murcia in 1997. They serve as illustrations. If one wishes to take up with students current issues and topics, one needs to prepare each instance of the Game afresh. Here, perhaps, there is a perfectly legitimate reason for leaving preparation to the last minute (which we probably all do anyway, but do not normally admit to).

NOTES

1 Personal correspondence, for which I am grateful. "Though Pun is slack re taxonomy and so I am; the last one to talk, I felt some of your examples were not really puns. They're twisted, recycled clichés/catchphrases, of course with some echoic element. It's really the (extremely fascinating) area of allusion - that enormous pan of interpersonal discourse that involves the crucial question of what you can take for granted - shared areas of reference."

2 I am indebted to Alan Cardew for having drawn my attention to this publication.

3 Amphibologies correspond with what Monnot & Kite (1974:66) identify as word-plays "created by syntactic ambiguity". I am grateful to Phil Schofield for putting me on to their paper, which concentrates primarily on exploiting for pedagogic purposes word-plays in advertising material.

4 I do not agree with Monnot & Kite (1974:66), as my further remarks will make clear, that word-plays are necessarily intentional - they can arise on the same basis as "he was a poet, but didn't know it".

5 I am again indebted to Alan Cardew in this specific connection for reminding me of Hamlet, Act III, Scene 2, in which Hamlet utters to Ophelia what we might call with some reason the mortally offensive pun: "Do you think I mean country matters?". Again, I cannot agree with Monnot & Kite (1974:71) that "word-plays are essentially frivolous". Yes, they are sometimes, even most of the time, but we must not overgeneralise.

6 The figure is, in fact, that of Kiki de Montpamasse, née illegitimately on 2 October 1901 as Alice Prin (Baldwin:1988:105 and Klüver & Martin:1988:119), a model, gamine, courtisane and minor artist, but in her heyday the darling of the Dadaists and Surrealists of Montpamasse. She entered with Man Ray into "a liaison that lasted six years, exactly the length of my first marriage" (Man Ray:1988:120).

7 As Baldwin points out (1988:110): "... in Ingres's Baigneuse de Vaipinson the model looks to the right, whereas in the photograph Kiki looks to the left".

Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
1 Geogina Roberts informs me that I should not assume that because people are neo-classicists they cannot also be voyeurs. I take her point, and wish to capture, in my adversative return of phrase, what I think Man Ray may have been after: that neo-classicists seem to be "squeaky clean" on the surface, whereas its practitioners could, in private, be subject to (natural) sexual prurience. Indeed, Man Ray himself (1988:119), describing the anticipation of seeing Kiki de Montparnasse nude for the first time, reports difficulty with keeping his "wits calm". I must be held personally responsible for what might be a quaint interpretation from an art historian's perspective. However, I am not an art-historian but a mere 'lay viewer' of pictures, and no doubt the account of the motivation for the photograph furnished by Baldwin (1988:110), which suggests that Man Ray more or less hero-worshipped Ingres and reproached him for 'fiddling about', if one may so put it, is likely to be nearer to the truth. Man Ray was, of course, an English-speaking American, and various accounts suggest that his French was not very good. Therefore, if my reasoning can be followed, it is very likely that the idea of 'fiddling about' was present to his mind when taking the immortal photograph, even though neither the idea nor the phrase are directly paralleled in French.

2 I am grateful to John Nash, Deborah Povey and Georgina Roberts for their scholarly (when not ribald) advice as to how one might interpret Man Ray here. They are not to blame for the fact that the interpretation does remain a rather personal one.

3 There is even, at first blush, a greater plausibility about:

4 Readers would be right in thinking that some explanation is due as to how the concept of 'cultural knowledge' and that of 'culture itself' are to be interpreted here. Unfortunately, the only previous reference to culture occurs in the abstract and the list of key words, and it seemed inappropriate to promote material which intended to allow rapid assessment of the scope of the paper and its potential interest. We will therefore meet the requirement at this point, the next opportunity to present itself.

'Culture' is to be understood in the sociological and anthropological sense, that is, as including the modus vivendi of a particular society or closely related societies, the cast of thought of the people living in those societies, their mores and behaviour, their value systems, their rituals, their traditions, their view of themselves in relation to the world, their history and their artistic and intellectual patrimony. (More succinctly, "Culture, is the entire complex pattern of behavior and material achievements which are produced, learned, and shared by the members of a community" (Politzer:1961:130)). I was tempted to add without further ado to my own exemplificative inventory 'their language', but, of course, an obvious objection to this is that there are many societies in which at some level people share a culture, but not a language, or not a language in the sense that not all members of the society speak it as mother tongue or home language. The scope for diversity here is obviously enormous. Firstly, there is the question of the number of languages evidenced in a society, and perhaps Indian would provide a good example of extreme plurilingualism. Secondly, there is the question as to the extent to which individuals in a bilingual, trilingual, quadrilingual or plurilingual society
speak the other languages present in the environment, and how well. Thirdly, there is the question as to whether what may be considered the ‘native language’ is or is not an official language (Luxembourg). Fourthly, there is the question as to whether there is a dominant language, defined either as the language spoken natively by most people or as the official language (France). One imagines, then, that a detailed sociolinguistic discussion of links between language and culture on a universal scale would have to be extremely managed, and would lead to the identification of many sub-cultures within a culture. Generalisations about the link between language and culture would prove exceedingly difficult.

With regard to this paper, there are perhaps three major factors which permit generalisations. The first is that it focuses upon Britain (even if peripherally also on other ‘Anglo-Saxon’ societies), in which English is without doubt (and here no disrespect whatever is intended towards speakers of minority languages in the British Isles) by far the dominant language. Both on the count that it is the language spoken natively by the vast majority of Britons, and on the count that it is the official language (at least by default) of Britain. The second is that British history, in matters political, artistic and intellectual, has been forged for many on the last millennium principally by the native English-speaking of Britain. The third is that this paper is not written from a sociolinguistic standpoint, but from the perspective of an applied linguist. For this latter, it is not often the case that the culture is the point of departure leading to the consideration of language or language implied in it, but rather a particular language, which is then associated with a culture or sub-culture. We start here, then, with the headlines of the British press, written with few exceptions (not treated in this context), in English, and make a natural logical connection between English and British (again, more widely, Anglo-Saxon) culture. It is beyond the scope of this paper to establish causality between language and culture, or culture and language. We rest our case, without further analysis, upon the observable facts that British cultural values are reflected in the English language as spoken in Britain, and that British cultural values are transmitted via the English language to Anglo-Saxon children born in Britain. It is on this basis that we permit ourselves, within the context of this paper, to establish a connection between language and culture, in our understanding of this latter term. Similar remarks, however, which are not intended to be in any way judgmental, as opposed to descriptive, would apply to many other societies and countries.

Within the domain of language learning and teaching, the connection between language and culture was considered important by the founders of the Direct Method, who desired that a “willing sympathy” for the target society and its values be implanted in learners, but it is in relation to the elaboration of the Audio-Lingual Method that the language/culture link is most clearly and unambiguously articulated: Politeizer (1961:130): “Unless we understand the cultural situation in which an utterance is made, we may miss its full implication or meaning. The tie of language study with culture is not an option to be discussed in terms of the preferences of individual teachers, but actually a practical necessity.” Rivers (1964:22), summarizing many comments in this vein, “The language have for the native speaker the value of a matrix of allusions to the culture of the people who speak that language”. Actually, it is no doubt quite possible to learn the system of a language without reference to the culture, but if one wished to do this, as a theoretical linguist might, it would not be for the purposes of communication with native speakers.

The Audio-Lingual Method has, of course, long since been discredited, but that does not of itself invalidate the Politeizer/Rivers position stated above (by far the least dubious of the four major assumptions subsuming Audiolingualism). It emerges as a clear extrapolation from Hymes’s (1971) seminal work that in addition to linguistic competence, anyone wishing to ‘communicate’ with native speakers of a language must acquire an appropriate “theory of speech acts”. While we may suppose that such a theory will in part be founded upon universal pragmatic knowledge, we are also led to the conclusion that it will, in addition, be informed by the values and practices of particular societies and cultures. This will be most immediately apparent with regard to what Di Pietro has termed ‘sociocultural competence’ (discussed and expanded upon in Roberts, 1986). Even the way the sky is divided up and the rituals accompanying the divisions vary considerably from culture to culture. Thus, a Spanish speaker simply translates into English the ‘divisions’ of the day and the accompanying verbal politeness. In English, and going around in Britain greeting people with “Good evening” at two o’clock in the afternoon will happily, occasion, no problem, but will certainly be thought of as ‘foreign’ and maybe ‘odd’. To take another example, however, which has to do with politeness protocols, a German who merely translates into English the verbiage associated with asking for things in shops and ordering things in restaurants in Germany will, through omission of the absolutely obligatory ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, be very likely to be considered a ‘rude pig’. Much the same applies to British tourists in France, who, asking in English at waiters, and then asking themselves why they are not better served, do not realize that their path would be
Eased by a minimal command of French ‘sweeteners’, such as: ‘si‘l vous plait’, ‘merci’, ‘pardon’, ‘Excusez-moi, je ne parle pas bien le français. Parlez-vous anglais?’? But, of course, things can be much more complex than such superficial examples convey. If we take as another instance the British predilection for understatement, this is a much more difficult field, indeed, a minefield for not those not imbibed in the culture. When, let us say, a British person states: ‘I’d rather you didn’t (smoke/drink/bring) your dog into my house...wear your boots while walking on my carpets...try to kiss me)’, it is advisable to listen carefully to the intonation, since, in many cases, it is less likely to mean: ‘But go ahead if you wish’ than: ‘I absolutely forbid you to do that. You will forfeit my friendship if you do’.

This may seem to have digressed a long way from the subject of word-plays, but, in fact, it has not. There is a compulsion on the learner of any foreign language to aim at the communicative competence of the native speaker. Much less than that will suffice to ‘get around’. But if the learner of a language does feel the internal drive to ‘integrate’, then the ‘culture’ must loom large in that learner’s mind, as must the acquisition of ‘cultural knowledge’, that is, the knowledge which the person permanently possesses of it, and which it reflected in the language. Let us take, as a final example, the innocuous, clichéd question: ‘Have you had your tea yet?’. Why ‘your’? There is an answer. But the immediate point, for the moment, is that anyone wishing to master the English language for use in an Anglo-Saxon country must, among other things, become accustomed to word-play, which is deeply ingrained in the culture – or otherwise attune to just being left out of things for much of the time. River’s statement of the case cannot be improved upon.

With apologies to speakers of Cantonese, this is here subsumed, as a language, under ‘Chinese’, as the average British newspaper reader would not be aware of the difference.

This category and the next, b), are subsumed by Monnot & Kite (1974:67) under the heading ‘phonological ambiguity’, even though they cite examples which are written rather than spoken. I prefer, referring strictly to writing, an analysis which starts off from the fact that the first clue to the reader will be morphological, even though reconstruction of the phonology would seem to be inevitable in the understanding of written word-plays such as ‘government leak’ and ‘shooting to thrill’. But the mechanisms here, though similar, are not the same and should not be conflated: ‘leek’, orthographically out of collocation, invites the reader to seek an exact homophone and to reconstruct the different, but ‘equally plausible’, orthography of that homophone, whereas ‘thrill’, cited under b), invites the reader to think of a rhyming word spelt differently by at least one segment which collocates more conventionally with what one might call the ‘head word’. Monnot & Kite (1974:67) come somewhat near to this second mechanism when talking of ‘phonemic changes’, but, in general, their manner of categorizing is muddled, since they do not respect a sufficiently strict division between word-plays conveyed through speech and word-plays conveyed through writing.

Speakers of Standard British English, like certain New Yorkers, do not ‘sound their r’s’, ie r’s in word-final position. Thus, both ‘law’ and ‘lore’ are pronounced [lɔː]. Even in a context in which the r of ‘lore’ becomes to all intents and purposes intervocalic (‘lore and order’), there is still no distinction in most cases between the pronunciation of ‘law and order’ and ‘lore and order’ by reason of the so-called ‘intrusive r’", a co-articulatory phenomenon, so that both phrases are articulated as [lɔːr ‘nɔːd].

As noted, at the very point of putting the finishing touches to the ‘Game’ in 1996, that Frank Johnson, editor of The Spectator, felt moved to devote one third of his editorial of 1 June 1996 to the defence of his decision to allow not one, but two, word-plays on the cover of the issue of that date. He expressed the hope that “...this does not inflame anti-pun sentiment, always latent among the British, whose traditional response to a pun is a long groan”. Non-English-speaking readers may be excused for not understanding that he means the opposite of what he is saying and that he is talking about a ‘groan’ to which the British are addicted. He pursued his topic further in the The Daily Telegraph of 8 June 1996, in which he stated: “I like word-plays so much that I tend to think of the pun first, and then find the article to put under it. For example, I am still looking for an article about the exile of the Athenian lawgiver Solon (c.640 or 638-c.559BC), so that I can put on it the headline: “Solon, it’s been good to know yah”. But at least, in the absence of such an article, I’ve now got the headline into print...Some us few Friends of the Pun tend to remember the pun long after whatever it was that occasioned it. My Richard Langan (I think), in a radio discussion years ago which involved Lawrence of Arabia’s alleged...
taste for flagellation, suddenly exclaimed: “The Desert Thong”. Or perhaps I just imagined it, or have just made it up. Anyway, I’m sure we all groaned”.

16 Exodus, Chapter 20, 12: Honour thy father and thy mother: that the days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. [My emphasis - JTR]

17 I was extremely grateful for the presence and willing helpfulness of Rebecca Clift at the first presentation of the game. She turned out to be the ‘native speaker’s native speaker’ - with no prompting whatsoever, she came up spontaneously with all the ‘right answers’ where they were needed. Furthermore, her wonderfully clear explanations to often perplexed students revealed her as an exceptionally gifted teacher. I was again grateful for her presence and that of David Britain at the second presentation. The uncontrollable mirth of the latter at the headline SQUAWK DIRTY TO ME and its accompanying text (Appendices Ii & Iii) certainly demonstrated the British sense of humour in action.
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Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
APPENDIX I: Some lexical orientation with regard to the pun

pun /pʌn/, word-plays, punning, punned.

1. A pun is a use of words that have one meaning, or words that have the same sound but different meanings, so that what you say has two different meanings and makes people laugh. An example of a pun is "My dog's a champion boxer".

2. If you pun, you try to amuse people by making a pun.

Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary.

Pun (pon), n. 1662. [prob. one of a group of clipped words which became fashionable in Restoration times (cf. CIT, MOB sb.); ap. short for PUNdigrion, which occurs with punnet and quibble in 1676, and may be a fanciful alter. of PUNCTILIO] The use of a word in such a way as to suggest two meanings, or the use of two or more words of the same sound with different meaning, so as to produce a humorous effect; a play on words. Also attrib. Laud. turned out Archy, the King’s fool, for a p. [viz. for saying as grace ‘Great praise be to God, and little Laud to the devil!’ or words to that effect] D’ISRAELI. Hence Punnology, the subject or study of word-plays.

Pun (pon), v. 1670. [Uses with PUNish trans] 1. intr. To make word-plays; to play on words. 2. trans. To bring or drive by punning 1711. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

518. Equivocalness - N. word-play, paronomasia 574 n. ornament; pun, calembour, equivoque, double entendre 839 n. witicism. Vb. be equivocal, cut both ways; play upon words, pun...

839. Wit - N. biting wit, satire, sarcasm 851 n. ridicule; irony 850 n. affectation; word-fence 477 n. sophistry; word-play, equivocation. Vb. be witty... be equivocal; fool, jape; tease, chaff, rag, banter, quiz, twit, pull one’s leg, make fun of 851 vb. ridicule; caricature, burlesque 851 vb. satirize... Roget’s Thesaurus, Penguin Books, Longman Green & Co Ltd, 1962, 1966.

Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
APPENDIX II: Headlines and instructions for matching them to text-extracts

READ THE HEADLINES AND THE TEXT EXTRACTS AND TRY TO MATCH THEM UP. WRITE THE NUMBER OF EACH TEXT EXTRACT IN THE BOX TO THE RIGHT OF THE HEADLINE WHICH FITS IT. SOMETIMES IT WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT TO MATCH HEADLINES AND EXTRACTS, BUT YOU MUST BE IN A POSITION TO EXPLAIN WHY THEY MATCH.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEADLINES</th>
<th>NO. OF TEXT EXTRACT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. WHY IT'S ACE TO CALL YOUR SON GORNAT</td>
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<td>2. WEDDING KNELLS</td>
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<td>3. WAR WAR, BORE BORE [Discussion of TV documentary]</td>
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<td>4. TRILL A SECOND SENDS NEIGHBOUR UP THE WALL</td>
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<td>5. TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO TOY HAS GONE BEFORE</td>
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<td>6. TILL REP US DO PART</td>
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<td>7. THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE DOUGH BUSINESS</td>
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<td>8. THE SILK WHO TOOK A £440,000 CUT</td>
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<td>9. THE IMAGE MAKERS</td>
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<td>10. TANKER OP WAS SUCH A WOK-UP</td>
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<td>11. STAND AND DELIVER: A CASE OF HIGHWAY ROBBERY</td>
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<td>12. SQUAWK DIRTY TO ME</td>
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<td>13. SILENTS ARE GOLDEN</td>
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<td>14. SHE'S A TWEETIE [Headline announcing a page 3 pin-up]</td>
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<td>15. ROAD RAVE</td>
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<td>16. NAZI SALUTES MADE MY LIFE SHEER HEIL SAYS GERMAN</td>
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<td>17. MAGNIFICENT SEVEN</td>
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<td>18. LORE AND DISORDER [Book review title]</td>
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<td>19. LIGHT RELIEF FOR TOOTHACHE</td>
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<td>20. LET US VOTE, SAY FAITHFUL</td>
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<td>21. LEGAL DOG-FIGHT ENDS AFTER NOISY PETS SEE THERAPIST</td>
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<td>22. I'M GOING TO WASH THAT HAIR RIGHT OUT OF MY MAN</td>
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<td>23. IT WAS MAJOR WHAT ONE IT</td>
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<td>24. IT'S LOVE AT FIRST BYTE</td>
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<td>25. IDOL SPECULATION</td>
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<td>26. I'LL CURRY ON AT WORK</td>
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<td>27. HOW TO LOSE BY A WHISKER</td>
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<td>28. HESS-TERRA ON A GRAND SCALE IN 'JUNGLE JAWS'</td>
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<td>29. HIGH-TECH ANGLING IS BANNED AS TOO FISHY</td>
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<td>30. HEINEKEN SELLS THE CARPS OTHER BEERS CAN'T REACH</td>
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<td>31. HATCH OF THE DAY FOR PET IN A POCKET</td>
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<td>32. HAMMER HORROR</td>
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<td>33. FRENCH MEDDLERS HAVE SOME GAUL</td>
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Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
| 34 | FEET AND TWO WEDGE |
| 35 | EPISTLES AT DAWN AS TWO AUTHORS FIGHT OVER ST PAUL |
| 36 | EATING MY HEART OUT |
| 37 | DOWNFALL OF HOID FATHER |
| 38 | DON'T CHECK OUT, BECOME A HIGHER FRYER |
| 39 | DO YOU HAVE THE BOTTLE TO WEAR THIS? |
| 40 | DISPENSING JUSTICE |
| 41 | DEGREES OF VIOLENCE |
| 42 | DARK KNIGHT OF THE SOUL |
| 43 | CRABS ARE BEST OF THE WEEK'S CATCH |
| 44 | COSTLY SPOKEN IN A CYCLIST'S WHEEL |
| 45 | CARE TO HANG OUT THERE? |
| 46 | BRITISH DON'T KNOW FATS FROM FICTION |
| 47 | BRIGHTEN UP YOUR IMAGES |
| 48 | BOTTOM OF THE CLASS |
| 49 | AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOME IS HIS HASSLE |
| 50 | A CRASH COURSE |

*Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142*
APPENDIX III: Extracts from texts

1. "A Chip on your shoulder, a bomb in your pants – it's you against the world, baby, and the world loves you for hating it. There are many rock 'n' roll legends to whom it's easy to imagine those words being addressed, but Sir Cliff Richard is probably not the first to spring to mind. And yet, as the manufactured teen idol Bongi Herbertin's great 1960 film Expresso Bongo to whom Lawrence Harvey's Svengali character addresses the above immortal line – Cliff achieved a portrayal of the darkness at the heart of pop stardom that makes the Sex Pistols Great Rock 'n Roll Swindle look like the proverbial vicarage tea party. Independent on Sunday, The Sunday Review, 20 April 1997.

2. "Having a few days off is a way of kicking off a holiday," says Panayi, a marketing executive. "I've stolen so many nights and I don't think twice about driving. I have the usual thing of discovering I'm driving much more slowly than I think I am and sometimes I get home and wonder: How on earth did I get here?" But I've never come even close to having an accident... Simon, a junior doctor, recently found himself driving from near Oxford to work in London during the small hours of a Sunday morning, while coming down from a night on E: "I would never drive totally off my face," he says... or drunk, as alcohol kills your judgement and reactions and makes you aggressive. But... I felt pleasantly calm. I was probably more aware than the other drivers on the road at that hour and I didn't feel any anger when they made stupid mistakes. So, I'd say, on any long journey, take an E... Independent on Sunday, Real Life, 4 May 1997.

3. A BRICKLAYER who became Mafia boss was behind bars last night, with his... fellow in police bands... Piazza, the 66-year-old son of poverty-stricken parents, had turned himself into the richest man in Sicily. But the construction boss dropped a bomb when he dodged paying tax on his crooked empire. In 1989, he declared an income of just £800. Now he is awaiting trial accused of tax fraud and laundering illegal Mafia cash. The Mirror, Friday, May 9, 1997.

4. A British astronaut was given the freedom of Seattle yesterday after completing a Russian-US space mission to mark the 500th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of the New World... The Brion lifted off from Russia two weeks ago before orbiting Earth for five days and splashing down off America's West Coast for a rendezvous with a Russian warship... So why have you not heard of Britain's role in this historic mission? Because the astronaut was two feet tall, stuffed, and called Dogwell the Dog. Dogwell, a cartoon dog from outer space who had adventures whenever he dug a hole, is the creation of James Driscoll, chairman of the Storm Group, which licenses such children's film favourites as the Wombles and Shoe People. Film companies are already bidding to make Dogwell: The Movie. And consortiums in Korea, Japan and Russia are planning to build theme parks using the astronaut as their mascot. Independent on Sunday, 29 November 1992.

5. A flood of exotic new entries join traditional favourites in the Oxford Concise Dictionary of First Names, published yesterday for the first time in five years. As well as a revival of Celtic names, surnames and names of places are being used as first names along with made-up words and come that look suspiciously like misprints. Patrick Huck, co-author of the revised edition, said that many of the new names... show a return to Celtic roots. The Times, Friday, May 9, 1997.

6. A growing band of senior Tories, from Lord Archer to former candidates and the head of a key national committee, yesterday joined the chorus of party faithful calling for the involvement of party members in the leadership election. But with no central membership list and a collapsing, demoralised organisation served by ageing constituency officials, it will prove highly impossible to arrange a one-member-one-vote contest, even if the clamour for change proves unstoppable over the next month. Some favour an internal leader who will have to face re-election next year if a new electoral system, matching Labour and Lib Dem internal democracy, is put in place. The Guardian, Friday, May 9, 1997.

7. A JEALOUS lover bludgeoned his girlfriend to death when she refused to have sex "one last time", a court heard yesterday. Ian Bradford, 33, allegedly hit Beverley Burridge 42 times over the head with a claw hammer. Daily Mirror, February 28, 1996.

8. A silent film is identifiable as a silent film because of how it sounds (or rather, doesn't), but because of how it looks. Unfortunately, most casual references to the silent cinema still tend to focus solely on the absence of sound, just as was the last, not the first word on the subject. Audiences of the period, after all, never thought of these films as "silent" (just as nobody living in the 21st century ever thought of himself as belonging to the Middle Ages...). More than any other, the silent cinema is the victim of what might be described as an "esthetic" approach to the medium (esthetic, because nobody would regard it as much more than an "old" novel cut from an "old" string quartet). The Lumiere most of all: if their amazing little films are watched at all today, it is as documents, not as the works of art they undoubtedly were... So forget the absence of sound... The Sunday Times, The Culture, 4 February 1996.

9. According to the motor trade, if I buy a shirt at Marks and Spencer, I pay a delivery charge. Nobody complains to M&S about that, but everybody complains to the motor trade about their delivery charges. Therefore, the motor trade is being unfairly singed by the people like me... I said at the outset that this column would be unfair if it so chose, so let us get on with a campaign... I take a random example from the back cover of Top Gear magazine, which carries an advert for the Seat range. You would have to be registered blind not to read "the Seat range starts at £6,767."

Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
but I need reading glasses to discover what the asterisk refers to: "Price excludes £140 cost of delivery to dealer premises and number plates." The *Times*, February 4 1995.

10. ANACONDA (15): Beautiful Jennifer Lopez is a documentary director on an expedition deep into the Amazonian rainforest to film a lost tribe. Her party includes Eric Stoltz as her scientific boyfriend and John Voight, fabulous as evil Crocodile Dundee-type who makes a living trapping big snakes. Within minutes they've got a storm, 75% out of fuel, been stranded in a snake-infested backwater and started being killed by each other and the big scaly cruiser... they show the snake too much and it's not that realistic either. Still, it's the sort of movie that gives you the neck and holds you till you scream. The *Sun*, Friday, May 9 1997.

11. Anglers have been banned from using fish-finders after a competitor in a fishing-match was discovered sitting on a river bank with a miniature echo-sounder by his side. Roger Mortimer netted 474 roach, tench and perch using the device, which dangled from a pole into the water in front of his seat. A display by his side alerted him to the movements of fish in the River Glen in Lincolshire and MI Mortimer cast his bait among them. The technique won him fourth place and £60 in a local competition, but the National Angling Federation and the Angling Times, which run the majority of angling competitions in this country, have since banned such devices. The National Park in Killarney, Co Kerry, has also banned the equipment for unfairly tracking down half a million brown trout and salmon in three lakes. The *Times*, Thursday May 8, 1997.

12. Ramsey Bock has finally passed his driving test at the 97th attempt. Mr Bocks, from Chicago, spent £10,000 over 18 years on driving lessons and crashed 17 times. "It was reversing that got me," he said. "Everything else was fine except roundabouts and night turns." Was there anything left apart from going straight and forward? The *Times*, February 4 1995.

13. Breda Naciri made no bones about her ambitions when she applied for a job with fast-food chain KFC. And now she's wangled her way to top position. Breda, who was 17 when she joined the company famous for its deep-dried chicken, is now manager of a large outlet in Guildford and has her sights set on running an even bigger one with its own restaurant. She says: "I was willing to work hard and looking for a job that offered good training. I was pleasantly surprised - I didn't expect the fast-food world to have so many opportunities." The *Mirror*, Thursday, May 8, 1997.

14. Charles Falconer, QC, appointed by Tony Blair to be Solicitor-General, will be giving up a lucrative commercial law practice worth an estimated £500,000 a year for a pension and a £200,000 salary. He agreed there would be a financial disadvantage. "But money is not the most important thing and it seemed right I should give up my private practice at this point," Mr Falconer and his wife, Marietta, are two of the Blairs' closest friends as well as neighbours, in Islington, and, like the Blairs, are both barristers. The *Times*, Thursday, May 8 1997.

15. CLAW brolly/Doby Debbie Cummings keeps a brolly. Must be what makes our 24-year-old Kent cuntie such a favourite with bird fanciers! The *Sun*, February 27, 1996.

16. CLUMSY Colin Clayton had to apologise to his girlfriend for a big way after he killed the goldfish she bought him by dropping a can of Heineken on it. And he decided to say sorry to Jackie: on a 25ft by 15ft postcard. Jackie - who gave goldfish Billie Colin as a birthday present - was stunned when she saw the billboard. It read: "Jackie Birtwhistle. The goldfish you bought me is now passed away. Incidentally split liver in his bowl the other day. P.S. I think he died happy! Love Colin Clayton, note: a photograph of the 'reconciled couple' large the Suncaption 'The Goldfish I Love-Colin with Jackie'! The *Sun*, February 28, 1996.

17. Cyber pet fever hit Britain yesterday as the first batch of the computer creatures went on sale. Shelves at the Toys R Us store in Brent Cross emptied within minutes after 400 people queued in the rain. And the chain has already taken 5,000 orders across Britain. The original Tamagotchi - Japanese for "lovable egg" - has now spawned spin-off Digital Doggies, Compu Kitty andBaby T-Rex. The £9.99 video toys come on keyrings and need only the press of a button to feed, please or exercise them. The *Mirror*, Friday, May 9 1997.

18. Desktop publishing (DTP) has undergone fundamental changes in the past 18 months. The old adage that the Apple Macintosh won the only professional platform for sophisticated graphical work is no longer true. The advent of low and cheaper colour printing has brought new software products to the market and PhotocD, an exciting new photographic system pioneered by Kodak, is set to reduce costs dramatically. The system enables photographs taken on standard 35mm film to be transferred onto CDs and illustrated on television sets or personal computers. DTP is also enjoying the arrival of colour printing and software.柯特 recently introduced advances in sophistication and reduction in price of low printers... The Sunday Times, Business Computing, 2 November 1992.

19. Despite wintry weather, there is a good selection of fish this week, with prices remaining steady. Among shellfish, scallops are plentifully supplied, and the consumer group Food and Other Matters recommends claw crab as its best buy of the week. The *Times*, Friday, May 9 1997.

20. During his gym sessions in the town (Dorchester), Jeffrey's lodged at 6 High Street West. Today, the building not only still stands but thrives as a busy hostelry called Judge Jeffrey's Restaurant. It has 90 rooms, five bedrooms above, and has just come out to the market at £475,000 with Jackson-Stops and Staff in Dorchester. The property is freehold. The *Daily Telegraph*, February 28 1996.

21. Factory worker Klaus Rupertinger thought he'd feel at home when he landed a job with a German-owned company. But he reckoned without the Basil Fawlty style of humour of his British workmates. They not only mentioned the war, they made...
John Roberts

his life a misery with a barrage of goose-stepping, Nazi salutes and even a crude drawing of the Fuhrer [sic], an industrial tribunal heard yesterday. The Express, Friday, May 9, 1997.

22. Few British newspaper readers will recognise the name of Albert Delage, but many will know his face. For the past five years he was one of the busiest and most successful male models in the world... irresistibly handsome. He helped sell everything from Armani aftershave to Marks & Spencer shorts. Delage is dead now, and the manner of his passing has provoked an unusual controversy in France. On April 18 this year... Ageron France Press... circualted... a brief announcement... 'Albert Delage... had died of an AIDS-related illness. His death provoked an outpouring of grief and sympathy... One admirer, Nelly Dupuis, wrote: 'You were my prince, and that bastard virus has broken a fairy tale'. The Delage's mother... broke her mourning and launched a media blitz to counter the 'lies' being told about her son... The resulting confusion was symbolised by this month's edition of J&J Jeme et Jolie... 'Albert, why did you let them treat you so much?' The Sunday Times, Styie, 11 June 1995.

23. FOR A FEW DOLLARS MORE Being a Hollywood star used to be a relatively straightforward business. Once they had claved their way to the top, actors and actresses did not need much more than a mansion or two... a modest portfolio of investments and a lawyer to keep an eye on affairs. Recently, however, we have begun to see Hollywood stars as would-be burger tycoons... land developers and tourist resort moguls. It is a miracle, you might think, that they still have time to grasp the odd film. What are they trying to do? Make the Forbes list? The Sunday Times, 26 February 1995.

24. Four dogs whose barking drove neighbours wild are living the quiet life again... Magistrates threatened to remove the animals after Mark Bambrough protested about their continuous barking while their owner was at work. But six weeks with a pet therapist, has brought peace to the street and Mr Bambrough has hailed his legal action. The Times, Friday, May 9, 1997.

25. GIVEN that man has been to the moon and back, getting a tanker off some rocks should be a doodeute. But the recent attempts to shift the stricken Sea Empress took on farcical proportions. First, there was the introduction of a tug with a completely Cantones crew. After much slapping of foreheads, the salvage lot realised that none of their mob spoke Chinese. Enter the proprietor of the local Chinese takeaway... No wonder they couldn't get the tanker afloat... they seemed wholly incapable of organising a p**** up in a brewery. The tug and its crew sailed away, when, in fact, they were needed Daily Mirror, Woman, February 28, 1996.

26. Grocer Virenda Patel has scooped a £2 million Lottery jackpot but WONT quit his job... Virenda, known as Vee, has vowed to carry on a Sainsbury's, where he bought his ticket... Popular Vee, 38, earns £16,000 a year for running the fruit and veg section at Sainsbury's store in Kilburn, North London. The Sun, February 27, 1996.

27. Hard-to-school kids pupils for loo rolls A HARD-UP school has hit rock bottom * by asking pupils to bring their own LOO ROLLS Head teacher Joyce; French wrote to parents begging them to pack kids off to school with toilet tissue, soap and washing up liquid, Joyce took the drastic action to help stop teachers' jobs going down the pan after budget cuts. A dismissed speaking for East Riding Council yesterday admitted the school's plight was "unendurable" The Sun, Friday, May 9, 1997.

28. Here's a sight guaranteed to put a spring on your step [reference to picture]... Underwear made from recycled mineral water bottles. It takes three 1/2-litre plastic bottles to make this bra and briefs set. The bottles are first crushed into small pieces, then chemically reprocessed into thread and woven in the normal way to make fabric and lace. The technique has been developed by a Japanese subsidiary of German bra makers Triumph The Express, Thursday May 8, 1997.

29. I swore the Falklands would be my last war. My nerves are shot to hell. I can't do the dogwatch into the wee small hours with CNN the 1,000yd stare, the concentration, the horror, the horror. I've done my stint. My first campaign was Caesar's invasion of Britain, just big enough to be a drum. Then the English civil war... I was romantic but wrong. I did all Boney's campaigns. They were the big ones, the great war. I did the Somme and Vietnam at the same time. Goodbye to All That And then, in the same dugout at night, I DODG with Joan Baez during the day, Christ, I was hardly enough to shave, but I went... But when the call came for the Gulf war, I couldn't face it... Vomiting into Stanley finished it for me... As was go, the Gulf war was a goodish war. Loads of equipment, plenty of clunk-cluck... But it missed out on a big number in the second act. Saddam kicked us out of Kuwait The Sunday Times, The Culture, 25 February 1996.

30. In America, hole-in-wall divorce machines are taking the craig out of splitting up. They would be on their way over here... Victor then electronically raises his left eyebrow to denote a moment of solemnity. This is where it gets tough... 'Has your marriage irretrievably broken down? Are you absolutely certain this marriage can't be saved?' The answer is a simple yes or no. Press the wrong button now and you could stay married for a... for a whole 30 minutes more... at the moment least oral sex, child support and alimony payments, and small claims. But, with the new improved QC coming out in July, Victor will have a Family Crisis component fitted into his neatly coiffed and computerised head. The Sunday Times, Styie, 11 February 1996.

31. In France, the lorry-drivers are blocking the roads again. They say their government has washed its hands of the dispute last November... Whether the French have a Conservative or Socialist government should not be any concern of ours... but sadly, these days it is. Not just because the strike is in France... are damming our exports. But now we are ruled from Brussels the French can interfere in our affairs here at home. It should work the other way round as well, with us having a say in what happens in France. But as we all know, while we obey the Ewo laws, the French could not care less. The Sun, Friday, May 9, 1997.

Cuadernos de Filología Inglesa, 7.1, 1998, pp.115-142
32. It's the question children everywhere will be asking each other - have you got a Tamagotchi? And if you don't know what they're talking about, you soon will. But as thousands of them arrive in our shops, what is a Tamagotchi?... With a price tag of about $15, it's a computerised virtual pet the size of a keyring... It outperforms a cat, to some extent, because it is more interactive. For the Tamagotchi - "lovable egg" in Japanese - relies on its owner to keep it alive. If it gets a lot of attention, it grows and prospers. But if you neglect it then it dies - or, in child-friendly cyber-speak, returns to its home planet... The Express, Friday, May 9, 1997.

33. John Major's Government scraped to a one-vote victory last night after a Commons tussle over the Scott Inquiry into Arms for Iraq. Victory was only clinched when would-be Tory rebel Rupert Allason voted with the Government and three members of John Major's Democratic Unionists stayed away. The Sun, February 27, 1996.

34. Judy Langley and Barbara Blum are the self-appointed hereditary police of the Mapesbury Estate in Brent, North London. They walk its suburban streets, camera and notebook at the ready to record home improvements that aren't home improvements at all... The local council agrees that Mapesbury is architecturally and historically important, and pegged on by residents, has turned it into a Conservation Area... For Mapesbury residents, this means that householders can do absolutely nothing to the front of their properties without first seeking the permission of the council's planning department. In bringing the rules on cost householders fines up to £20,000 and a criminal record. How much or sew prepared to pay to watch Sky TV: Independent on Sunday, April 12, 1995.

35. One of the bobby's complaints is that the constraints of legality and due process force the police to fight crime with one hand tied behind their backs. Against this, civil libertarians bemoan the inadequacy of legal regulation of the police. They point to a string of notorious miscarriages of justice... As David Rose tells us, the mainstream academic analysis of criminal justice over the last thirty years suggests that there is a fundamental tension between the values of crime control and the process of law... The Sun, Sunday, May 11, 1997.

36. People are trying to eat well but don't really know what food is healthy, a survey reveals. While a high number of those asked say they stick to a good diet, there are also many who are unsure about what to consume. The Mirror, Friday, May 9, 1997.

37. RED-FACED animal lover David Richards has banned a cockatoo from his house... for parroting his night's吸毒 with his missus. The noisy bird cocked an (sic) saucy ear every time David and wife Sue made love. And it didn't live up to the name Angel when it started imitating its eccentric MOANS and GROANS in front of their kids and visitors... Yesterday Sue, 42, giggled: "It was so embarrassing. We had no idea Angel was listening in to our nights of passion... But the potty dropped for the amazing couple when fallen Angel blurted out in Sue's voice: 'Hello, big boy'... Daily Star, Wednesday, May 8, 1997.

38. "I do" in bride Karen... then left her at the register office to play in the cup final, Star player Richard, 33, ditched his wedding suit and donned a team strip for his second match of the day. And Karen, 28, had to kick her heels whilst he joined his village side for the first 45 minutes of the crunch game. At first Richard begged her to postpone their wedding when Freeland got to the final of Oxfordshire's Winter and District Supplementary Cup. Karen refused, but said he could play half-time, then return to the reception. She said: 'He is absolutely soccer mad and it was the only way I would get married.' The Sun, Wednesday, May 8, 1997.

39. the American Food and Drug Administration has approved for use by dentists a laser device that beams in on tooth decay and makes the drill redundant... The laser cuts away decay more finely than a drill and sterilises the teeth under treatment... reduced noise and vibration remove two of the main complaints about the drill, and the third - the pain - almost vanishes. The Guardian, Friday, May 9, 1997.

40. The most intellectually heated debate of the year comes to a head later this month in a face-to-face confrontation. The Great St Paul Debate, sponsored by the Evening Standard, will be held at St James's Piccadilly on 27 May between novelist, biographer and columnist A.N. Wilson and the Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, the Very Rev De Tony Wright. For months, they have been trading point-scoring put-downs on some of the fundamental questions of Christianity... They will write together for a sustained, hour-long debate which is likely to be as entertaining as it is instructive. Formally, it will cover such ground as whether the cult of Jesus was in fact conjured by St Paul from a combination of visionary experiences and romantic imagination. Evening Standard, Friday 9 May 1997.

41. The muntant of Cambridge on a winter's day is a fluffy snow. Yet above the gentle purr of Rolls Royce minds and whirring bicycle chains a new sound clamours for attention: the percussion of baseball bats on human bone. Town is reaching a bloody lesson... In the past year attacks on Cambridge students have doubled, to three or four a week... Manchester University, with two or three muggings a week, has another serious problem: students there stand a 70% chance of being burgled. By contrast, Oxford, with its spread of colleges, large non-student population and multiple business activities, records little student-bashing. Universities least troubled by violence claim to have built bridges to the local community and ease tension, East Anglia university, for example, has opened a nightclub in Norwich for local
students... York university still experiences some anti-student graffiti... but believes the situation is stable. The Sunday Times, Style, 25 February 1996.

42. The summer of my 15th birthday we went to Portugal for two weeks. I had a crush on a boy named Tris, and while our hotel organised a disco I did my best to catch his attention. Ten years on I retain this image of my teenage self - a porky red-faced girl in a frilly white blouse, a too-tight pink ra-ra skirt, and a hairband sprouting a pair of antennae at the end of which bounced two glittery pink polystyrene hearts. No wonder he ignored me. I looked like a fat pink slug. I wanted to be the pretty and kissy boys like the other girls in school. At the same time I didn't want to upset my mother by refusing food. Making myself sick after meals seemed the perfect compromise. So I would go to my bedroom and be sick into rubbish bags, which I threw away later. Independent on Sunday, 19 February 1995.

43. David and I had been going out for more than two years when I learnt from friends he was cheating on me. But instead of having an out-and-out bust-up, I invited him to my London home one evening and told him I'd like to use my skills as a beautician to pamper him. What he didn't know was that I'd arranged to go back to Ireland to see my family and my bags were packed. I told him to get in the shower, and gave him lots of potions and lotions to use on his skin and face. Then I handed him a special "hair-conditioning" treatment - so special, I explained, that he had to leave it on for 15 minutes. Then I slipped through the kitchen and out of the back door. It wasn't long. I later gathered, before his scalp began to burn and he started to panic, Daid, in fact, put hair-removing cream on his head. He's known as the Balding B**** ever since. Daily Mirror, Woman, February 28, 1996.

44. The xxooxx, along with Leslie's and Andy's (or, as they say, "the other extreme") is the big shoe look for the summer. xxooxx are great because they give height without forsaking comfort, although if you twist them off you're unlikely to wear them again. This is why I wear mine with a pair of jeans. (note always to wear tight with xxooxx, you need all the grip you can get). The Freda one here is one of the best available, but it will sell out almost immediately. Independent on Sunday, Red Life, 4 May 1997.

45. There's a small batch of several pairs and a few scalps lying on the desk in Michael Southgate's airy glass-walled office in West Kensington. Downd artillery in reception, limbs and torsos are piled high. Southgate is creative director of Adel Rooswein, the world's premier manufacturer of display dummies, although dummy is certainly not a term they use. These are the Rolfes of the shop window and are referred to, reverently, as mannequins. The living model will pose for a sculptor for four hours a day, three days a week, over three weeks. Sometimes, a bit of cheating goes on, if the model doesn't quite fill in the look of the moment. Legs may be lengthened, bosoms enlarged, reduced, amigded, and all imperfections miraculously dispensed. "Mannequins aren't real people and no real girl is as 9 as beautiful as a mannequin," says Southgate. "You could ask for a Karen Mulder with green eyes and long dark hair or a Susie Back or Sue Parr or Catherine Bailey or Diane Brill with blue eyes or red curls or a crew cut. Independent on Sunday, Red Life, 4 May 1997.

46. There has been a brief attempt to bring back the beard over the past few years. Bob Geldof had a goatee, although he favours so much designer stubble that it was often difficult to tell. He might simply have forgotten to shave. I have gay news for them all [wearing of beards]. Although the Guinness Book of Beards and Moustaches lists the main reasons for growing beards as sex appeal, looking more mature, distinguished and sophisticated, a Gallup poll in 1993 showed that 86% of the women questioned said that beards were "a turn off." Look on the bright side. They might not be sexy, but bearded men can be very handy about the house. The Sunday Times, Style, 4 February 1996.

47. They don't have the kind of face you might normally see on a catwalk. But this assortment of extra-large felines can boast the most outstanding vital statistics: they are among the fastest cats in Britain. In human terms, they would be eligible as sumo wrestlers. In contrast, they are simply Very Big Indeed. The Daily Mail, Friday, May 9, 1997.

48. They may be pretty boys and girls to their owner Margaret Ashby. But the twittering of more than 80 budgerigars was driving her neighbour up the wall. Finally, Maureen Keams, who has lived next door to Miss Ashby for 30 years, complained to the council. As a result, a heartbeat Miss Ashby, 69, has been served with a noise abatement notice. She has been told she will [or at least half her feathered family, if she is unable to quieten them] down. The Daily Mail, Friday, May 9, 1997.

49. TO BE the victim of theft is bad enough, but to find out that you were never fully covered for any loss can be just as upsetting. John Williamson, 63, from Carlisle, Cumberland, has been a cycle fanatic all his life... When he was insured for £168 for a new mountain bike two years ago, he lovingly insured his pride and joy by including it on his Norwich Union insurance, 55 per cent... But when the bike was stolen last October, he received only £93 payout from his insurance. Yet even the cheapest new mountain bike will set him back £210. John thought he was covered on a "new-for-old" basis - but the policy pays out less wear and tear and depreciation on bikes, household linen and clothes. The Daily Mail, February 28, 1996.

50. Traditional white weddings are dying out as the number of marriages dropped 12 per cent since 1991, a survey revealed yesterday. More couples are opting for civil ceremonies or tying the knot abroad. Nearly a quarter just prefer to live together. In all 324,000 sweethearts will marry or remarry this year - which is down 7.5 per cent since the early 1990s. And the number of people marrying has plunged 40 per cent since the Sixties. The Mirror, Friday, May 9, 1997.