

# 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 concious of its extent, however, one beginr 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 pam'cular, 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, anda 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 sentido sin ni 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 concientiizado 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: *Titulares (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 labeled 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 Lecerle (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 Lecerle, 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 I, *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 criterion 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 [lɔ:d], 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**.

Meaning2: 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**, paranomasia, 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", ie "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

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.)<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup>. 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?<sup>4</sup> 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/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.

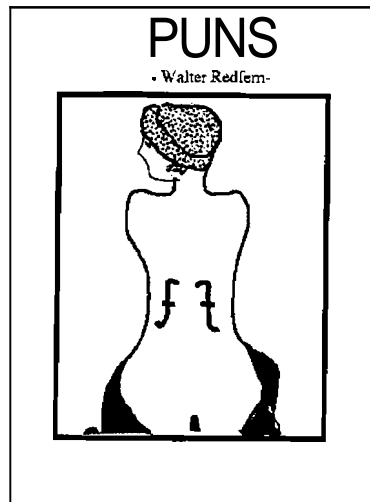
The dictionary definitions quoted **again** suggest that the major object of the pun is to amuse. This is **only part** of its **purpose**, however, and the semantic adjacencies found in the extracts from Roget under 839 **supply** a more complete picture. **While** the main point of a pun may be to 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 vilification 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 the gall, ie 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"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> 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 pun, 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 *Violon 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 cognisance 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 *violon 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*)<sup>7</sup> 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?<sup>8</sup> 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 other allusions, but this much will suffice to reinforce the point at issue here. However, we are not quite finished. We must now return to the cover of Redfern'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 Redfern mean this? Given his theme, it is hardly a serious question<sup>10</sup>.

The immediately foregoing remarks are not **totally** divorced from newspapers, since these **too** 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 **all this** 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 cripplingly 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** excursus 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)<sup>11</sup>. 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-homographic homophone for a word expected in a given collocation or context*<sup>12</sup>: 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 ('idol 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 LEEK (*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'<sup>13</sup> 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 off' 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.

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-BELLIED 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

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**<sup>14</sup> 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**<sup>15</sup>, 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

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**<sup>16</sup>.

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** quoted at the end of the relevant **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

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

<sup>1</sup> Personal correspondence, for which I am grateful. "Though *Puns* 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."

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Alan Cardew for having drawn my attention to this publication.

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

<sup>4</sup> 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".

<sup>5</sup> 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 meant 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.

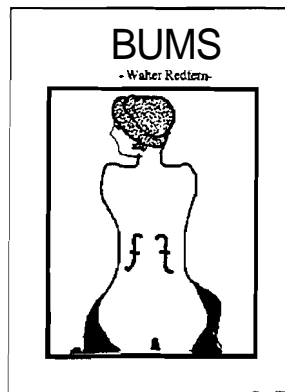
<sup>6</sup> The figure is, in fact, that of Kiki de Montpamasse, née illegitimately on 2 October 1901 as Alice Prin (Baldwin:1988:105 and Klüver & Martin:1988:119), a model, *gamine*, *courtisane* and minor artist, but in her heyday the darling of the Dadaists and Surrealists of Montpamasse. She entered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

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

<sup>8</sup> Georgina 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 turn of phrase, what I think Man Ray may have been after: that neo-classicism seems 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> There is even, at first blush, a greater plausibility about:



<sup>11</sup> 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 footnote material 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 that or those societies, their mores and behaviour, their value and belief 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 here perhaps India 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



speaking 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 nuanced, 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 nigh on the last millennium principally by the native English-speakers 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 consideration of the language or languages 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 natively English-speaking 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: Politzer (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), summarising many comments in this vein: "The meanings which the words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in 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 Politzer/Rivers position stated above (by far the least dubious of the four major assumptions subtending Audolingualism). 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 &y is divided up and the rituals accompanying the divisions vary considerably from culture to culture. Thus, a Spanish speaker simply 'translating' the Hispanic divisions of the day and the accompanying verbal rituals into English, and going around in Britain greeting people with "Good evening" at two o'clock in the afternoon will, happily, occasion no opprobrium, 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's' and 'thank you's', be very likely to be considered a 'rude pig'. Much the same applies to British tourists in France, who, barking in English at waiters, and then asking themselves why they are not better served, do not realise that their path would be

eased by a minimal command of French 'sweeteners', such as: 'sil 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 imbued 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 no 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 living within a given culture possesses of it, and which is 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 attuned 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. Rivers's statement of the case cannot be improved upon.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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 leek' 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 somewhere near to this second mechanism when talking of 'phonemic changes', but, in general, their manner of categorising is muddled, since they do not respect a sufficiently strict division between word-plays conveyed through speech and word-plays conveyed through writing.

<sup>14</sup> 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 [lɔ:]. 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 epenthetic element, so that both phrases are articulated as [lɔ:r̥no:də].

<sup>15</sup> I 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. Mr Richard Ingrams (I think), in a radio discussion years ago which involved Lawrence of Arabia's aieged

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".

<sup>16</sup> *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]

<sup>17</sup> 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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## APPENDIX I: Some lexical orientation with regard to the pun

pun<sup>2</sup>pun, v.i. to play upon words alike or nearly alike in sound but different in meaning. - pr.p. **punning**; pa.t. and pa.p. punned. - n. a play upon words. - ns. punn'ing; and pun'ster a maker of word-plays. [A late-17th-century word; origin unknown; It. puntiglio, fine point, has been conjectured.] Chambers English Dictionary.

pun /pʌn/, word-plays, punning, punned. **1.** A pun is a use of words that **have** more than 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. **N COUNT**  
 † joke  
 = play on words  
 v † joke  
*Collins* Cobuild English Language Dictionary.

pun' (pʌn) n. **1.** the use of words or **phrases** to exploit **ambiguities** and **innuendoes** in their meaning, usually for **humorous** effect; a play on words. An example is: "Ben Battle was a soldier bold, And used to war's alarms: But a cannonball took off his legs, So he laid down his arms." (Thomas Hood). - vb. word-plays, pun-ning, punned. **2.** (intr.) to make word-plays. [C17: possibly from Italian puntiglio point of detail, wordplay; see PUNCTILIO] *Collins* English Dictionary.

Pun (pon) , sb. 1662. [prob. one of a **group** of clipped words which **became** fashionable in Restoration times (cf. CIT, MOB sb.<sup>1</sup>, PUNCH sb.<sup>4</sup>); app. short for †*pundigrion*, which occurs with †*punnet* and quibble in 1676, and may be a **fanciful alt.** 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..**tuned** 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 **Punn-ology**, the **subject** or **study** of word-plays.

**Pun** (pon), v.' 1670. [Goes with PUN sb. 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. *witticism*...**Vb.** be equivocal, cut both ways; play upon words, pun...

**839. Wit** - N....biting wit, *satire*, sarcasm 851 n. ridicule; *irony* 850n. affectation; word-fence 477n. *sophistry*; word-play, equivocation...**Vb.** be *witty*...be equivocal; fool, *jape*; *tease*, *chaff*, rag, banter, quip, 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.

**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.**

HEADLINES	NO. OF TEXT EXTRACT
1. WHY IT'S ACE TO CALL YOUR SON GOBNAT	
2. WEDDING KNELLS	
3. WAR WAR, BORE BORE [Discussion of TV documentary]	
4. TRILL A SECOND SENDS NEIGHBOUR UP THE WALL	
5. TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO TOY HAS GONE BEFORE	
6. TILL REF US DO PART!	
7. THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE DOUGH BUSINESS	
8. THE SILK WHO TOOK A £440,000 CUT	
9. THE IMAGE MAKERS	
10. TANKER OP WAS SUCH A WOK-UP	
11. STAND AND DELIVER: A CASE OF HIGHWAY ROBBERY	
12. SQUAWK DIRTY TO ME!	
13. SILENTS ARE GOLDEN	
14. SHE'S A TWEETIE [Headline announcing a 'page 3 pin-up']	
15. ROAD RAVE	
16. NAZI SALUTES MADE MY LIFE SHEER HEIL SAYS GERMAN	
17. MOGNIFICENT SEVEN	
18. LORE AND DISORDER [Book review title]	
19. LIGHT RELIEF FOR TOOTHACHE	
20. LET US VOTE, SAY FAITHFUL	
21. LEGAL DOGFIGHT ENDS AFTER NOISY PETS SEE THERAPIST	
22. I'M GOING TO WASH THAT HAIR RIGHT OUT OF MY MAN	
23. IT WAS MAJOR WHAT ONE IT	
24. IT'S LOVE AT FIRST BYTE.	
25. IDOL SPECULATION	
26. I'LL CURRY ON AT WORK	
27. HOW TO LOSE BY A WHISKER	
28. HISS-TERIA ON A GRAND SCALE IN 'JUNGLE JAWS'	
29. HIGH-TECH ANGLING IS BANNED AS TOO FISHY	
30. HEINEKEN KILLS THE CARPS OTHER BEERS CAN'T REACH	
31. HATCH OF THE DAY FOR PET IN A POCKET	
32. HAMMER HORROR	
33. FRENCH MEDDLERS HAVE SOME GAUL	

34	FEET <b>AND</b> TWO WEDGE	
35	EPISTLES AT DAWN AS TWO AUTHORS FIGHT OVER ST PAUL	
36	EATING MY HEART OUT	
37	DOWNFALL OF £400M HODFATHER	
38	DON'T CHICKEN OUT BECOME A HIGH 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 SPOKE IN A CYCLIST'S WHEEL	
45	CARE TO HANG OUT THERE?	
46	BRITS 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	

## APPENDIX III: Extracts from texts

1. "A **CHIP** on your **shoulder**, an **H-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** in mind. And **yet**, as the **manufactured teen idol** Bongo Herbert in Val Guest'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 spliffs** in the car is a way of **kicking** off a **holiday**," says Patsy, a marketing **executive**". "I get **stoned every night** 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 **awake** 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 a **Mafia boss** was **behind bars last night**, with his...**fortune** in **police hands**...**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 bnck 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 Briton 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** Digswell the **Dog**...Digswell, a **cartoon dog** from **outer space** who had **adventures** whenever he **digs 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 *Digswell: The Movie*. And **consortiums** in **Korea, Japan** and **Russia** are **planning** to **build theme parks** using the **astromutt** 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 Hanks, **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 well-nigh impossible** to **arrange** a **one-member-one-vote contest**, even if the **clamour** for **change** proves **unstoppable** over the **next month**. Some **favour** an **interim 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...Jan 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 therefore **identifiable** as a **silent film** not **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**, as **though** that were 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 12th 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 "ageist" approach to the **medium** (ageist, **because nobody** would regard it as **odd** to read an "old" novel or listen to an "old" string quartet) **The Lumières** 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 singled** out by **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** to get rid of **delivery charges**...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\***"



- but I need reading glasses to discover what the asterisk refers to: "Price excludes £410 cost of delivery to dealer premises and number plates." *The Tima*, 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 scientist boyfriend and John Voight, fabulous an evil Crocodile Dundee-type who makes a living trapping big snakes. Within minutes they've hit a storm, run out of fuel, been stranded in snake-infested backwater and started being killed by each other and the big scaly crusher...they show the snake too soon and too much - and it's not that realistic either. Still, it's the sort of movie that grabs you by 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 quarry in the River Glen in Lincolnshire 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. Barney Bocks has finally passed his driving test at the 97th attempt. MI 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 right turns." Was there anything left apart from going straight and forward? *The Tima*, 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 winged her way to a top position. Breda, who was 17 when she joined the wmpany famous for its deep-fried 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 peerage and a £60,000 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". MI Falconer and his wife, Marianna, 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 blamey! Dishy Debbie Cummins keeps a budgie. Must be what makes our 24-year-old Kent cutie such a favourite with bird fanciers! *The Sun*, February 27, 1996.
  16. CLUMSY Colin Clayton had to apologise to his girlfriend in 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 poster...Jackie - who gave goldfish Bill to Colin as a birthday present - was stunned when she saw the billboard. It read...*Jackie Birtwhistle. The goldfish you bought me has passed away. I accidentally split lager in his bowl the other day! P.S. I think he died happy! Love Colin Clayton.* note: a photograph of the 'reconciled couple' bears the Sun caption '*The gill 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 "loveable egg" - has now spawned spin-offs Digital Doggie, Compu Kitty and Baby 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 was the only professional platform for sophisticated graphical work is no longer true: the advent of wlow 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...1992 has seen great advances in sophistication and reduction in prices of wlow printers... *The Sunday Times, Business Computing*, 29 November 1992.
  19. Despite wintry weather, there is a good selection of fish this week, with prices remaining steady. Among shellfish, scallops are in plentiful supply, and the consumer group Food and Other Matters recommend crab as its best buy of the week. *The Times*, Friday, May 9, 1997.
  20. During his grim sojourn in the town [Dorchester] Jeffreys lodged at 6 High Street West. Today, the building not only still stands but thrives as a busy hostelry called Judge Jeffreys Restaurant...It seats 90, has five bedrooms above, and has just come on 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 Fawcay-style humour of his British workmates. They not only mentioned the war, they made

- his life a misery with a barrage of goose-stepping, Nazi salutes an 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 Delègue, 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. Delege is dead now, and the manner of his passing has provoked an unusual controversy in France...On April 18 this year...Agence France Presse...circulated...a brief announcement. Albert Delege... "le mec le plus ultra"...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 Delege'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 leave us? We loved you so much..." *The Sunday Times, Style*, 11 June 1995.
  23. FOR A FEW DOLLARS MORE Being a Hollywood star used to be a relatively straightforward business. Once they had clawed 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 moguis...It is a miracle, you might think, that they still have time to grace the odd film. What are they trying to do? Make the Forbes list? *The Sunday Times, Style*, 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 Jan Westby, a pet therapist, has brought peace to the street and Mr Bambrough has halted 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 doddle...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 Cantonese 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 Virendra Patel has scooped a £2.2 million Lottery jackpot - but WON'T quit his job...Virendra, known as Vee, has vowed to carry on at 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-up school asks 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 flushed spokesman for East Riding Council yesterday admitted the school's plight was "undesirable". *The Sun*, Friday, May 9, 1997.
  28. Here's a sight guaranteed to put a spring in your step [reference to picture] - underwear made from recycled mineral water bottles. It takes three 1½-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 bang a drum. Then the English civil war. I was romantic but wrong. I did all Boney's campaigns. Then there was the big one, the great war. I did the Somme and Vietnam at the same time; Goodbye to All That in the dorm dugout at night, the DMZ with Joan Baez during the day. Christ, I was hardly man enough to shave, but I went...But when the call came for the Gulf war, I couldn't face it...Yomping into Stanley finished it for me...As wars go, the Gulf war was a goodish war. Loads of equipment, plenty of clunk-click...But it missed out on a big number in the second act, Saddam nicked our last Rolo. *The Sunday Times, The Culture*, 25 February 1996.
  30. In America, hole-in-wall divorce machines are taking the strain 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 ...well, for a whole 20 minutes more...At the moment, QuickCourt can only help you with divorce, 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 coiffured and computerised head. *The Sunday Times, Style*, 11 February 1996.
  31. In France, the lorry-drivers are blocking the roads again. They say their government has wshed on promises it made to buy off their strike 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 strikes in France...are damaging 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.

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 as price tag of about £15, it's a computerised virtual pet the size of a keyring. ...it...**outperforms** a cat, tonoise or goldfish because it is more **interactive**. For the Tamagotchi - "loveable 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 battered Government scraped to a one-vote victory last night after a Commons mauling 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 **Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists** stayed away. *The Sun*, February 27, 1996.
34. **Judy Langley and Barbara Blum** are the **self-appointed heritage 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 egged on by residents, has turned it into a **Conservation Area**...For Mapesbury residents, this means that householders can do absolutely nothing to the fronts of their properties without first seeking the permission of the council's planning department. Infringing the rules can cost householders fines up to **£20,000** and a criminal record How much are you prepared to pay to watch Sky TV? *Independent on Sunday*, 12 March 1995.
35. One the one side, the **bobbo lobby complains** 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 30 years suggests** that there is a fundamental **tension between** the values of **crime control and due process of law**...But the **street-cops** he quotes say it all for us. "The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. And you see these so-called leaders of society, breaking the law and getting away with it. Major launched 'Back to Basics' and then his own people turned out to be over the side...There is simply no way I'm going to vote Tory. I'm only just waking up to what the arrogant bastards have done". If you want to understand the times, ask a policeman. *Independent on Sunday, Sunday Review*, 4 February 1996.
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 quizzed 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 Riches has banned a cockatoo from his house...for parroting his nights of nookie** with his missus. The saucy bird cocked an [sic] **naughty ear** every time David and wife Sue made love. And it didn't live up to the name Angel when it stated imitating their **ecstatic 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 penny dropped for the **amazed couple** when fallen Angel blurted out in Sue's voice: "Helio. big boy." *Daily Star*, Wursday, May 8, 1997.
38. **SOCCKER-mad Richard Stanley said "I do" m 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 while 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 Witney and District Supplementary Cup**. Karen refused, but said he could play till half-time, then return to the reception. She said: "He is absolutely soccer mad and it was the only way I would get wed". *The Sun*, Wursday, 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 tooth under treatment. The reduced noise and vibration remove two of the main phobias about going to the dentist, and the third - the pain - almost vanishes. *The Guardian*, Friday, May 9, 1997.
40. The most ~~important~~, intellectual 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 Dr Tom Wright. For months, they have been arguing and point-scoring in print over 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 murmur of Cambridge on a winter's day is muffled by 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 teaching grown 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 that defuse friction...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 Trad, and when our hotel organised a disco I did my best to attract 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 thin and pretty and kiss boys like the other girls at 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...I had, in fact, put hair-removing cream on his head. He's known as Bob the Balding B\*\*\*\*\*d ever since. *Daily Mirror, Woman*, February 28, 1996.
44. The xxxxx, along with ankle straps and spindly heels (or desert boots and thongs, to go to the other extreme) is the big shoe look for the summer. Xxxxxs are great because they give height without forsaking comfort, although if you twist them off you, your ankle may well break. This is why I wear mine with trepidation (do not attempt to wear tights with xxxxxx, you need all the grip you can get). The Prada 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 heap of severed hands and a few scalps lying on the desk in Michael Southgate's airy glass-walled office in West Kensington. Downstairs in reception, limbs and torsos are piled high. Southgate is creative director of Adel Rootstein, the world's premier manufacturer of display dummies, although dummy is certainly not a term used here. These are the Rolls Royces of the shop window and are referred to, reverentially, 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 fit in with the look of the moment. Legs may be lengthened a tad, bosoms enlarged or reduced a smidge, and all imperfections miraculously disappear. "Mannequins are...not real people and no real girl is as beautiful as a mannequin," says Southgate firmly...you could ask for a Karen Mulder with green eyes and long dark hair or a Susie Bick or Ute Lemper or Catherine Bailey or Dianne 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 sad news for them all [wearers 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 figures 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 fattest cats in Britain. In human terms, they would be eligible as sumo wrestlers. In cat terms, 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 Kearns, who has lived next door to Miss Ashby for 30 years, complained to the council. As a result, a heartbroken Miss Ashby, 69, has been served with a noise abatement notice. She has been told she will [of] 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, Cumbria, has been a cycle fanatic all his life...When he had saved up £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 plus...But when the bike was stolen last October, he received only a £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 re-marry this year - that 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.