

# Pedagogies for plainer talk: Reclaiming the commons of discourse<sup>1</sup>

Everything has changed except our way of thinking—A. Einstein

Bill Templer  
*University of Malaya*

---

## ABSTRACT

This programmatic paper argues for a ‘paradigm shift’ in rethinking our approaches to teaching ELF (English as a lingua franca) as a more effective international means of communication, especially in and for the Global South. It suggests looking at and experimenting with two modes of EFL—Basic English 850, developed by Charles Ogden and Ivor Richards, and VOA Special English, a venture maintained by the U.S. government—for a kind of ‘plateau proficiency’ in skills both of reception and production, particularly for average learners. The paper also explores alternative ideas on what authentic mass literacy in plainer, less complex English as L1 could be. In this, it looks to the field of research and extensive practical application known as Plain Language (<http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/> [accessed 20 July 2008]), or more specifically Plain English. The two terms will be used synonymously here. My broader orientation in language pedagogy is to a world of greater educational and social equity, ‘reclaiming the commons of discourse.’

---

**KEYWORDS:** *Plain Language, Basic English, VOA Special English, English as a lingua franca, ESL*

## Introduction

Plain Language is geared to reducing lexical and syntactic complexity and enhancing clarity, and thus readability (Crystal, 1995, pp. 376-377). It is committed to reshaping discourse to levels of complexity which average readers, largely working class and non-elite, find comfortable, in a great variety of written discourse domains. Among Plain Language analysts, it is generally accepted that a majority of Americans from all social classes have a proficiency reading level of about 9th grade, and are comfortable reading for fun and information at 7th–8th grade level. Studies suggest only some 13% of US citizens have 12th grade proficiency in reading English: “Nearly all of today’s blockbuster writers write at the 7th-grade level, including John Grisham, Stephen King, J.K. Rowling, and Dan Brown. Experts today recommend writing legal and health information at the 7th-grade level.”<sup>2</sup> In studies on reading of Dutch in the Netherlands, Texamen

---

<sup>1</sup> The present paper is based in part on a presentation at the International Conference on Educational Innovation, University of Malaya, 6–8 May 2008, Legend Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, entitled “Less is More: Pathways to a Simpler, Plain People’s English as an Equitable Lingua Franca.”

<sup>2</sup> See the article on Readability, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Readability> (retrieved on May 16, 2008).

in Rotterdam (<http://www.texamen.com> [accessed 20 May 2008]) has found that some 50% of the Dutch population has a maximum comfortable reading level of about 8th grade.

The paper advocates forging a bond between research on Plain English in its myriad current applications and the field of ELF pedagogy and research—in particular, concerns in ELF for a simpler, more learnable and ‘pedagogically sustainable’ mode of the language. Such a link currently does not exist, and only few linguists in the field of TESL, or classroom teachers, are aware of the ongoing ‘turn’ toward Plain Language advocacy within the English-speaking societies, especially in domains like law, medicine, social welfare and government communication.

### Countering complexity

My guiding thesis is that, both in native language instruction and foreign language instruction, we live in worlds of discourse and action too dominated by privileged elites, their hegemonies and prioritizing of complex discourses that exclude many ordinary people. That is true in many societies in the global North and South, but this paper will look specifically at English, both as L1 and a learned second additional language. Significantly, “tackling unnecessary complexity” and simplifying communication are core concerns of the new Simplification Centre at the University of Reading:

Over-complex information is not just a nuisance: it’s unfair, ugly, unsafe and a huge waste of everyone’s time. A large proportion of the population struggles with functional literacy—and there are everyday tasks that defeat the cleverest [...] There are a lot of people in government, in industry and in the community, trying to deal with this. To help them, we’re starting the Simplification Centre.<sup>3</sup>

The reflections below are in part in the progressive spirit of this Centre.

### Five theses

The paper looks at five theses. The first explores the practice in crisis of teaching and learning ELF among the ‘social majorities,’ the ‘Multitude’ of learners throughout the developing world. The second suggests the need for reducing or ‘downshifting’ discourse for mass literacy in English as a lingua franca, and explores two paradigms of a simplified, more ‘minimalist’ mode of English as a potential proficiency target for large numbers of learners: Basic English 850 and VOA Special English. ‘Downshifting’ is a term used today to mean trying to cut down on what is unnecessary in daily life: “it’s about living more simply, slowing down; about making life less frantic and fraught. It values time over money and possessions” (Sevier, 2008, p. 1). It is introduced here metaphorically, applied

<sup>3</sup> The Centre was officially launched in the spring of 2008: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/simplification/> (retrieved on July 31, 2008). Perhaps it would be useful to establish a similar center based somewhere in the Southeast Asian region as well.

to concept of a simpler language, within English as a lingua franca, and within English as L1, in the form of Plain English. The terms ‘downsized’ and ‘leaner’ discourse are also acceptable metaphors, but may seem to carry a burden of neo-liberal connotation. ‘Lean language’ is memorable because it is alliterative.

The third thesis emphasizes the need for greater knowledge among language educators worldwide about the growing field of Plain Language research and practice. The fourth thesis, ‘class matters,’ draws attention to the central aspect of social class that structures access to this cultural capital, both in L1 and L2 pedagogy, urging greater interest in what can be termed ‘working-class pedagogies’ (Willis, 1977). A fifth thesis suggests the need for a mini-center focusing on empirical research in the field on such downshifted discourse, both in second language pedagogy, and in L1 learning and use.

### **Towards equitable communication**

I share the view that the hegemony of global English is a product of cultural, socioeconomic and political hegemony that is ultimately imperial in origin, and perhaps in significant measure neo-imperial today in current function as cultural capital for a privileged transnational elite within global capitalism (Phillipson, 2002). Like Phillipson, I value many of the specific approaches within English as a lingua franca linguistics (pp. 169-170), particularly for the masses of less privileged learners. And like him, I think Esperanto would probably be a more equitable alternative as a world language of wider communication (pp. 171-174), and could create a more “level linguistic playing field” (p. 169) Yet, as Hip Hop activism constantly stresses in the U.S., “there’s a REAL world,” and that is where change must occur (Pinkney, 2008, p. 1). Current realities suggest, I would contend, that we concentrate on possible transformation inside the teaching of what has become the default global language by dint of the history of the capitalist world system. While interrogating its hegemony, I think ways must be found to lessen its burden for the great mass of underprivileged learners everywhere. I also think ELF has a vital role in ASEAN and elsewhere as a lingua franca for trans-cultural working-class communication needs—phrased in the terms of Hardt & Negri (2000), English for the Multitude (over against ‘English for Empire’). That is largely still not a reality, and workers’ movements are under great repression in the region. Moreover, the Plain English movement I briefly present, though by dint of historical development still centered in the rich North and BANA countries, is relevant *wherever* English is taught and used. To argue otherwise is I think short-sighted, and fundamentally hostile to the basic needs of working-class discourse pedagogy.

### **Thesis 1. ELF for the ‘social majorities’—A pedagogy in crisis**

Sustainable educational innovation needs to address a major problem: a widening gap between EIL haves and have-nots, between the privileged and less privileged. I wish to argue, based on experience, that working class learners in many corners of the globe, particularly the lower-income South, need a more

'downshifted,' leaner form of English for basic communication and extensive reading and listening—instead of climbing the 'Everest' of trying to master a highly complex and academic English based on middle-class native English-speaker proficiency as a paradigm (Phillipson, 2003, pp. 163 ff.). A high level of lexical and syntactic complexity as a proficiency goal is today the dominant agenda. It prioritizes these "often colonizing, predatory discourses of export-variety EFL" (Johnston, 1997, p. 693), and is, I would argue, for most ordinary learners an unrealistic aim. Many teachers across a vast topography of non-elite teaching of EFL, both in the North and South, sense this basic unrealism of expectations and how defeating and demotivating it is for their students. Yet in my experience they often may fail to articulate this loudly enough, given the dominance of the prestige paradigm of complex native-speaker English in ESL teaching, and the reluctance of linguists based in the rich economies to address these issues more openly. I believe that reluctance can be corroborated empirically, and have repeatedly observed it at conferences and elsewhere, but admittedly offer no hard evidence for that here. A different notion of mass literacy in a simpler global lingua franca, less meritocratic and more democratic, English for the Multitude, seems imperative.

In many corners of Asia, the present approaches are largely geared to more elite learners and the prioritizing of complex academic Standard English and its social epistemologies (Tupas, 2006). At the educational grassroots among the social majorities, a policy myopia, blind to working-class needs and learning styles, often results in millions of boy/girl hours wasted, with far too little ELF learned and retained. Teacher experiences corroborate this widely among "the miseducated, the undereducated or the noneducated, who constitute the majority of people on earth, the "Two-Thirds World"" (Prakash & Esteva, 1998, p. 2). This is true in Thailand, in Laos, probably in much of Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, and across vast stretches of the PRC. Asraf & Ahmad (2003) describe an experiment in extensive graded reading for working class youth in village Malaysia, suggesting further inquiry into the "complexity of learning English in the rural school situation," and gearing instruction to disadvantaged learners' needs. Unfortunately, there is far too little research of this kind, and this paper is in part an argument for expanding such work. David (2007) sketches those divides, including the EFL gap between Malays and non-Malays, and between pupils in national and private Islamic religious schools, and more (pp. 10-12). This hinges on the social and socio-ethnic geography of ESL in Malaysia.

Even in Europe, an EFL teacher from Serbia notes:

I've mentioned several times how bad language education (in primary and high schools, but often the faculties too) in Serbia is, how after 10 years of second language study the vast majority of students [...] gets no further than a set of several basic sentences and a mediocre vocabulary which they can't put to any real use.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See <http://sagefromrage.wordpress.com/2008/06/17/a-different-kind-of-language-learning-classroom> (retrieved on June 19, 2008).

### *Silenced teachers*

This is a grassroots pedagogical reality, a statistical ‘central tendency’ most ordinary teachers are well aware of. Yet, it is too little investigated in the profession—and though highly evident, is too little focused on research. One reason this reality is underexamined is that the overwhelming majority of teachers working with ordinary learners do not publish, and are grossly under-represented at international conferences, even in their own country. They, and their students, seem virtually invisible in the profession. They have little time to make their voice heard and assert the legitimacy of their problems. As Hayes (2005) notes: “In many state school contexts, in millions of classrooms around the world, teachers and students are everyday engaged in studying English as a school subject, but their experiences continue to be scarce in the TESOL literature” (p. 169). Hayes (2007), speaking from experience in Sri Lanka and Thailand, warns against a “monolithic view of TESOL based on western conceptions of idealised practice” (p. 17). He has stressed the crucial need to “lessen the ethnocentrism of western-based TESOL practitioners and publishing companies as they dominate both the research and practice agendas” (Hayes, 2005, p. 191). Empirical Inquiry on Lives of Teachers/LOT (Johnston, 1997; 2002; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Hayes 2005, 2007) through teacher narratives is a much neglected research priority, centered on both learner and teacher narrative of their practice and life worlds, and the problems they cope with in multiple peripheries.<sup>5</sup> More extensive learner accounts of their learning biographies and difficulties are also needed, especially from countryside and underprivileged settings (Lam, 2005). It is imperative to ‘undo’ that silence. Yalin’s (2008) rich description of her encounters with village teachers—and their pupils—in a remote area of Nepal gives an inkling of what LOT could explore in such a grassroots, vernacular setting, restoring to rural teachers their dignity.

### **Thesis 2. Downshifting ELF discourse for mass literacy—Basic English 850 and VOA Special English**

For foreign learner literacy, we need a ‘leaner discourse,’ a ‘satisficing’ model that can be easily taught, readily learned and widely used. Such a model for most ordinary ELF learners is a focus that needs new prioritizing in research and practice, for mass proficiency in a usable L2 English.

Two prime models for such a ‘downshifted’ ELF, for both receptive *and* productive skills, are Basic English 850, developed by the semantic theorists Charles Ogden and Ivor Richards, and Voice of America Special English, a simplified mode of American English for receptive skills developed and propagated by the U.S. government since 1959, although little known or used in many corners of the Global South, or, because of legal restrictions (Smith Mundt Act), even with ESL learners inside the United States. I believe both can be experimented with as a plateau proficiency, which can be practiced & recycled for extensive reading and listening whenever one wishes—a power tool level akin

<sup>5</sup> The LOT SIG website (<http://galileo.stmarys-ca.edu/jbrunett/livestch/menu.html>) is useful for initial orientation. See also Templer (2008a).

to “Threshold” level (B1) in the Council of Europe (2001, p. 23) proficiency pyramid of the Common European Framework.<sup>6</sup>

### Revisiting Basic

Charles Ogden and Ivor Richard’s Basic English 850 is an older model of highly simplified English, based on 850 carefully chosen headwords, that is now being rediscovered for possible application in ELF pedagogy (Templer, 2005; 2006; Seidlhofer, 2002). It is slightly expanded in Richards’ *Everyman’s English* (Katagiri & Constable, 1993), to a core vocabulary of some 1,000 headwords. In a nutshell, Basic 850 is designed as an auxiliary language, with (surprisingly enough) only 16 verbs (‘operators’)—*come, get, give, go, keep, let, make, put, seem, take, be, do, have, say, see, send*, along with *may* and *will*, plus 20 “directives” (prepositions and particles)—conceiving of verbs as “directional actions”: “there are 4,000 common verbs in the English language which may be similarly displaced by the sixteen operators” (Ogden, 1937). Of the 850 core words, 513 are monosyllabic, a further 254 have penultimate stress, reducing problems with stress which have proved particularly difficult for speakers of East Asian tone languages. A micro lingua franca, it is ‘semantically engineered’ to be capable of expressing even quite complex thought, relying heavily on a battery of largely ‘delexicalized’ verbs with particles, a controversial feature of its core lexis. The best current textbook is the modified Basic (1,000 headwords by vol. 3) utilized in *English Through Pictures* (Richards & Gibson, 2005).<sup>7</sup> The *General Basic English Dictionary* (Ogden, 1960) is one of the most extraordinary dictionary projects in English lexicography, defining some 20,000 words using the core lexis. It is a prime example of a kind of “leveraged semantics,” where more difficult meanings are generated from a solid, simple and robust lexical base, saying “go away” in lieu of “leave,” “put an end to” instead of “rescind” or “revoke.” Ogden (1932) noted: “Basic English is a system in which 850 English words will do the work of 20,000, and so give to everyone a second or international language which will take as little of the learner’s time as possible” (p. viii). Aizawa (2007) views Ogden’s achievement from a contemporary Japanese perspective, a book to mark the 50th anniversary of his death.

Basic 850 is not ‘simplified’ English for elementary learners; rather, it bears some resemblance to a kind of Esperanto (900 core roots) built from English. Conceived as an all-purpose auxiliary language suited for Business, Administrative, Scientific, Instructional and Commercial uses, it is “not merely a list of words, governed by a minimum apparatus of essential English grammar, but a highly organized system designed throughout to be as easy as possible for a learner” (Richards, 1943, p. 21). The Basic word list—100 Operation Words, the 600 Things (400 General and 200 Pictured), the 100 Qualities and the 50 Opposites—arranged in columns on a single sheet of paper is an emblem of that economy in learning effort and compactness of presentation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On a 6-level scale: A1/A2 B1/B2 C1/C2 (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 21ff.).

<sup>7</sup> See also [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basic\\_English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basic_English). A Basic Language Institute with a huge array of materials is maintained by Jim Manor out of Iowa: <http://www.basic-english.org> (retrieved on May 10, 2008).

The Basic 850 project also envisioned a “democratization” of knowledge by translating a nuclear library of 500 books into Basic, and myriad other texts. Of course, such democratizing of texts needs to be within a social system of educational and social equity, so that access is assured. Moreover, a strong cultural element is retained within the ethos of Basic English. Ivor Richards’ (1942) edition of *The Republic of Plato*, and Richards (1950) version of Homer’s *Iliad* are both world classics in a slightly expanded Basic 850. Richards’ student and colleague William Empson was also involved in teaching Basic in pre-war China, and in developing methods for teaching poetry by ‘translating’ it into simpler Basic. One application for Basic 850 for native speakers, and EFL learners, is what Richards termed “vertical translation,” an exercise in a kind of simple semantic analysis, learning to say in simple Basic what is said in far more complex prose or poetry (Katagiri & Constable, 1993, p. 304). This is an excellent method to increase “language awareness” (Seidlhofer, 2002), in the broader sense of a meta-knowledge about what meaning can be and how discourse functions. Basic sprang very directly from the work of Ogden & Richards on *The Meaning Of Meaning* (Harcourt, 1923).

Writing in 1943, Ogden dreamed of international shortwave broadcasting in Basic English, international news: “Five minutes would be enough—five minutes every hour on the hour—to give everyone the feeling that this little earth was pulling itself together” (1968, p. 92). This was a precursor vision to the reality of Voice of America Special English launched 16 years later.

### *(Re-)discovering a major resource*

VOA Special English is a very under-used graded resource—both for weaker learners and more proficient students who want to really strengthen and recycle foundations—launched in 1959 on shortwave and now a mouse click away, cost-free (<http://www.voaspecialenglish.com> [accessed 21 May 2008]). It is based on a 1,500 headword core vocabulary. Sentences are short, averaging 14 words. Repetition is frequent. There are few adjectives and almost no idioms. One ‘proposition’ per sentence. The speed of delivery is 90 words per minute, about 25 percent slower than ‘normal’ speaking tempo. For all feature reports, you can both read the text and listen to the audio. Every day, there is 10 minutes of world news, followed by two feature reports in 14 categories, from development and economics to health, economics and business, exploration, agriculture, science, music, education and a kind of American ‘mosaic’ of culture. The online archive going back to 2001 has more than 5,000 separate feature texts, many with MP3 audio. Students can learn to browse, self-select what interests them, all at a comfortable reading level: a huge resource for extensive reading/listening, over-learning at a crucial ‘plateau’ proficiency level. And its rich storehouse of feature texts can be tapped individually for ‘narrow’ reading of simpler scientific

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www2.educ.fukushima-u.ac.jp/~ryota/word-list.html>. On Basic in Japan, see Ryotosan’s blogspot: <http://ryotosan.blogspot.com/> and <http://ryotosan.jugem.jp/> (retrieved on June 20, 2008). The GDM (graded direct) method in Japan utilizes Richards’ modified BASIC as its main teaching tool. Japan is the only country with a Basic English Society, exploring the ideas of Ogden and Richards today (Aizawa, 2007).

and technical material (Krashen, 1997, pp. 31-32). Indeed, the current online archive comes close to the “library of print and aural comprehensible input” that Krashen has advocated for extensive light and serious reading on a variety of subjects (*ibid.*, pp. 44-45). As Special English chief Shelley Gollust remarked: “It’s almost like Hemingway. You can write something easy and direct, and it’s more powerful that way” (Goodman, 2007).

### *Ideologically free?*

Though run by the U.S. government, with a budget in excess of \$1 million annually, this today is not a heavily slanted propaganda channel. Its coverage is fairly balanced. For much of the Cold War, it was an ideological tool, that is undisputed. Of course, there is inevitable skewing of emphasis and content in any such international information media, whether corporate-controlled, like CNN, or run by a government bureau. Chomsky (1997, *np.*) reminds us that mainstream media have to sell a product to a market, and

the market is, of course, advertisers (that is, other businesses). Whether it is television or newspapers, or whatever, they are selling audiences. Corporations sell audiences to other corporations. In the case of the elite media, it’s big businesses. [...] The obvious assumption is that the product of the media, what appears, what doesn’t appear, the way it is slanted, will reflect the interest of the buyers and sellers, the institutions, and the power systems that are around them.

At least VOA has no advertisers, is not big media business in the corporate sense. In any event, Special English texts can also be read through a critical literacy prism “against the grain” of their positioning and rhetoric (Richardson, 2006). I am using Special English texts on global issues to have students learn to read between the lines and discern what is left unsaid.

Recent Special English biographies have included Margaret Sanger, Billie Holiday,<sup>9</sup> Kurt Vonnegut, Bob Dylan and Ray Charles.<sup>10</sup> There are also simpler versions of American short stories online. Special English is designed as a simpler platform for American Studies in a broad sense, and for learning about American culture. Critics who contend such simplified English reduces the ‘cultural’ function of learning language as a window onto another culture are simply wrong in the case of Special English. On the contrary: American music, literature and popular culture are presented in a highly accessible form.

### *A progressive Special English?*

It would be desirable to have a more progressive ‘critical’ source akin to VOA Special English, but none today exists. A laudable but now defunct paradigm is “Global Issues for Learners of English,” a spin-off website based on the progressive magazine *The New Internationalist*. This website, still accessible (<http://www.>

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/2007-12-01-voa1.cfm> and <http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/archive/2007-03/2007-03-25-voa1.cfm> (retrieved on May 22, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/2008-06-21-voa1.cfm>.



newint.org/easier-english/contents.html [accessed 20 July 2008]), operated from 1997 to 2002, and was then discontinued due to the heavy work load it entailed for its founders, Bob Keim and Chris Doye (personal communication, Bob Keim, 9 June 2005). "The Story of Jeans," a feature in easier English critical of international garment sweatshop manufacture, is one prototype of their work (<http://www.newint.org/easier-english/Garment/jeansintro.html> [accessed 20 July 2008]). I have used its texts on child labor with Thai students, readable even at mid-elementary level. It would be very useful if progressive TESOLers could revive this website.

### **Research dearth**

Despite its presence for nearly half a century, there is virtually no research on Special English anywhere (Templer, 2007; idem, 2008b). That is the case today even in the People's Republic of China, where there are numerous locally produced books and CDs utilizing VOA texts available in the urban PRC market (Damon Anderson, RELO Beijing, personal communications, 15 April, 5 June 2008). There is likewise no research ongoing in Indonesia (Michael Rudder, RELO Jakarta, personal communication, 24 January 2008). Despite extensive research on graded readers, their use in extensive reading (Bamford & Day, 2004), simplification in language-teaching materials, and the construction of frequency-based and other word lists (Nation, 2001), there is no published work detailing empirical analysis of Special English as a graded-discourse learning tool (personal communications, Shelley Gollust, 2 Nov. 2006; Paul Nation, 19 March 2007; Damon Anderson, 15 April 2008).

### **Simple Wikipedia**

In a similar minimalist vein, another expanding initiative in cyberspace is the Simple English Wikipedia (<http://simple.wikipedia.org>), a downshifted form of the Wikipedia people's cyber-encyclopedia that reflects an interest in democratizing knowledge, making the Internet more 'readable' for all users of English. There are now over 33,600 articles. The public is invited to contribute material, and there is a hands-on guide "How to write Simple English articles."<sup>11</sup>

### **Field experimentation now**

Experimentation with these types of material in the schools is needed. Ministries should carefully examine these more 'minimalist' modes of English—also far easier for most teachers to teach—providing possibilities for empirical experimentation (with control groups) in the field, as an alternative to standard "full" and complex academic English. Such research was done over the years with Basic English 850 and *Everyman's English*, with striking results, especially in Yunnan, and later in Israel (Katagiri & Constable, 1993, pp. 359 ff. and passim). Richards noted: "As a result we are now satisfied that we can in two years give a

<sup>11</sup> See [http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How\\_to\\_write\\_Simple\\_English\\_articles](http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_write_Simple_English_articles) (retrieved on June 10, 2008).

sounder and more promising introduction to general English than has formerly been given in six" (*ibid.*, 61). The question of easing the burden on hard-strapped teachers is also very germane: many ELF teachers in non-privileged learning environments, especially at the primary school level, may themselves have low proficiency in English and little training in its teaching.

### *Aim for an 'over-learned' threshold plateau*

My recommendation for a more 'populist' ELF pedagogy: build a curriculum oriented toward over-learning at a crucial 'plateau proficiency' level of about 1,500 word families, or perhaps less. Bring students in roughly 200 hours of instruction to really master BASIC 850 or Richards' *Everyman's English* (Richards & Gibson, 2007). Gear classroom instruction to getting students to low intermediate level (lower B1), such as VOA Special English, or the *General Service List* level of West (1953)—and then let learners be learners on their own. Foreground learner autonomy, extensive free voluntary reading, constructivist-autonomous approaches in the curriculum (Reyes & Vallone, 2008; Marlowe & Page, 2005). Stephen Krashen has been advocating this for years, in reflections on "the easy way" for foreign language education (1997, pp. 46-47; 2004, pp. 146 ff.) and elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> In part, this can be accomplished through autonomous extensive graded reading & listening—such as at Jeff McQuillan's new site for listening at intermediate level (<http://www.eslpod.com> [accessed 22 May 2008]). As West (1955) emphasized: "At 1,700 words one can tell any strong plot, keeping much of the original style. A vocabulary of 2,000 words is good enough for anything, and more than one needs for most things" (p. 70). He developed the Minimum Adequate Vocabulary at 1,650 headwords (West, 1960, pp. 95-134), and a path-breaking 'learner's dictionary' (West & Endicott, 1935), using 1,490 words to explain 24,000. His dictionary and that of Ogden (1960) are unique, yet few teachers anywhere have ever seen them.<sup>13</sup>

### *Experiment with 'ESP-Lite'*

For scientific English, we need experimentation with Basic English (or VOA Special English), combined with necessary technical/specialist vocabulary, as an easier form. As Richards & Gibson (1945, p. 74) noted regarding BASIC 850:

Naturally, students of the language who have had a bad start with English but know they have invested years of study in it at first may feel dismay at being turned back to a small vocabulary and simple sentences. But the more intelligent they are, the more readily they come to see that drill with common statement patterns built up of widely useful words is what they need. An able surgeon from Peru will ask for three weeks of Basic structure patterns so that he can present a paper on obstetrics at the medical school where he is visiting. The medical terminology he has in common with the doctors he is to address.

<sup>12</sup> And now reflected in the new open-access periodical *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* (<http://www.ijflt.com> [retrieved on June 15, 2008]).

<sup>13</sup> Ogden's dictionary is available only from a small publisher in Japan (Hokuseido), and West's dictionary has long been out-of-print.

It is the frame-work of simple English statement that he needs, and he finds with relief that Basic can give it to him. It does with broken English what he can do with broken bones. [...] Take the simple grammar of Basic from the start and this won't happen.

VOA Special English can serve as a kind of ESP-Lite or CLIL-Lite (Content and Language Integrated Learning)—i.e., a corpus of engaging texts on a broad range of academic topics in simpler, plainer style and lexis at a more comprehensible level, as a platform for ESP. My own experience over years working with marine scientists in southern Thailand suggests they know technical lexis perfectly; what they lack is control of basic structural lexis and syntax. Intensive grounding in Basic 850 or Special English could teach them this. Another model is Simplified Technical English, developed in part by Tedopres International in the Netherlands. The AECMA Simplified English it promotes is a version of 'Controlled English' widely used in the international aerospace industry (Verduijn, 2004, pp. 52ff.).<sup>14</sup> There are new initiatives to get scientists to write plainer English, for example for the journal *Science* (Berkowitz, 2008).

### **Thesis 3. Plain Language—A neglected focus in ESL and ELF research**

For *native speakers*, we need new perspectives on what discourses most working people are comfortable reading and listening to. This is what is focused on in the Plain Language community of research and practice in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Australia/NZ, India and elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> Bill DuBay (2004; 2006) provides an introduction to the whole field of readability research in two volumes.<sup>16</sup> Cutts & Maher (1986) is an insider introduction to the Plain Language Campaign in Great Britain, which continues with added momentum today. Cutts (1995, p. 3) defines Plain English as:

The writing and setting out of essential information in a way that gives a co-operative, motivated person a good chance of understanding the document at first reading, and in the same sense that the writer meant it to be understood.

Few linguists in our field have explored the terrain of Plain Language as a relevant field of related inquiry. Bridges between applied linguistics and Plain Language practice and theory need to be built. The focus in Plain Language is on furthering 'testable' mass literacy for most ordinary folks in their L1 through empirical studies on readability. It enhances audience dignity by learning to respect the target audience and their authentic level of comprehension skills, what they find most readily understandable. This is the basis of a person's *authentic literacy*. The principle of equity here is that ordinary people have a right to communicate—and be communicated to—in language they can readily understand: "Nothing is more critical for the progress and exercise of democracy"

<sup>14</sup> Their work is available here: <http://www.simplifiedenglish.net/> (retrieved on May 12, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> The Plain Language Association International (PLAIN) is an active network of Plain Language editors and researchers: <http://plainlanguagenetwork.org> (retrieved on May 15, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> See also his website: <http://www.impact-information.com/>, where he maintains an excellent newsletter.

(DuBay, 2007b, np.). Cutts has argued in Britain that “Plain Language should, I believe, become an accepted part of plain dealing between consumers and business, and between citizens and the State” (1995, p. 8). Cutts (2008) provides a unique lexicon of 1,200 key words for readability assessment, based on data from the British National Corpus and Dale & O’Rourke’s magisterial *Living Word Vocabulary* (1976). This is an excellent basis for assessing word frequency, a key focus in work by Nation (2001) and others.

Normally, most texts in the public sphere are at C1 level in all countries. Yet Texamen argues: it is possible to write down all of the information in our society—about almost anything—at A2 level, without losing valuable information. The implications are far-reaching. What is enough? Texamen suggests: Flesch Reading Ease 70–85, about 7th grade, age 13, which is the level most citizens in Holland (and the U.S.) are comfortable reading their native language at.<sup>17</sup>

A couple of examples of such simplification in the name of clarity reflect part of the pressing need to downshift legal language and government discourse, often easier said than done, here from an address by Al Gore (1998). A regulation was formerly worded:

Means of Egress: Ways of exit access and the doors to exit to which they lead shall be so designed and arranged as to be clearly recognizable as such. Hangings or draperies shall not be placed over exit doors or otherwise so located as to obscure any exit. Mirrors shall not be placed on exit doors. Mirrors shall not be placed in or adjacent to any exit in such a manner as to confuse the direction of the exit.

The new regulation in Plain English, reduced from 76 words to 14, reads: “An exit door must be free of signs or decorations that obscure its visibility.” Or here, from the Veterans Benefit Administration in the U.S:

We are providing the following information about an insurance payment you indicate you have not received or which is otherwise missing. We have given the Treasury Department the necessary information to trace the check in question.

It was simplified to: “We received the missing check form you sent us. We asked the Treasury Department to find out what happened to your check” (Gore, *ibid.*). Crystal (1995, pp. 376-377) provides other examples relating especially to legal English.

Plain Language initiatives are increasingly on the agenda of governments, especially across the English-speaking world.<sup>18</sup> In the U.S., Florida Governor Charlie Crist’s ‘Plain Language Initiative’ (January, 2007) mandating the use of Plain English in all Florida state government documents and communication with citizens, focusing on “clear language that is commonly used by the intended audience.” Significantly, the Plain Language in Government Communications Act of 2008 has introduced new momentum for Plain English at the U.S. federal level. House Bill H.R. 3548, passed 15 April 2008, constitutes a milestone in efforts for getting government offices to rethink what they do “by promoting

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.texamen.com/index.php?id=1> (retrieved on May 20, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> See the website of the U.S. government: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov> (retrieved on May 1, 2008).

clear communication that the public can understand and use."<sup>19</sup> Online training in Plain Language is available at this U.S. government site: <http://plainlanguage.nih.gov/CBTs/PlainLanguage/login.asp> (retrieved May 29, 2008). Kimble (1997) gives a good introduction to concerns of Plain Language for government communications, with numerous examples of 'before' and 'after.'

### ***Plain Language: A government tool for citizen control?***

Of course, this is government action. It is designed to better communicate with, inform and 'control' the citizenry. Some linguists might argue that Plain English is largely driven by government and corporate priorities. Yet, it also reflects concerns among the political elite that the great mass of citizens are often bewildered by what the government, and the political class, are saying. I believe it is also imperative for critical writers on the left to write in a simpler, leaner style of rhetoric that ordinary folks can understand. Half a century ago, reading analyst Rudolf Flesch (1946) argued the need for using "FAIRLY EASY English" for international affairs and most communication in the public sphere. He ends his still intriguing study by suggesting that "democracy could be defined as government by plain talk" (p. 194). For Flesch, plain talk is by definition more equitable, fairer for making meaning, since it is geared to be comprehensible to most ordinary individuals, more concrete, part of what can be called working-class rhetoric. Overall, it is a practice in rhetoric for 'inclusion' of the marginalized.

### ***Zeroing in on readability***

To test readability rapidly online, there are excellent utilities.<sup>20</sup> Though not foolproof, they give remarkable split-second results, an instant analysis of roughly how 'readable' a text is. That can be combined with a handy utility for headwords of higher frequency, with a great deal of informative data on a given text of your choice.<sup>21</sup> For Flesch Reading Ease, scores of 90–100 are considered easily understandable by an average 11-year old student. Students 13–15 years old could easily understand passages with a score of 60–70, high school seniors a level of 50–60, and passages scoring 0–30 are best understood by college graduates.

### ***How hard is easy?***

The *Reader's Digest* tests at about 9th grade native speaker level. *The New York Times*, *USA Today* are at 10th grade level. *The Boston Globe*, *LA Times*, score at 12th grade level, as do *Time*, *Newsweek* and the *Atlantic Monthly*. *The New York Review of Books* and *Harvard Law Review* test at 4th year college level, American native speaker. In Australia, tests I have run on copy in *The Daily Examiner*, a local paper in Grafton (New South Wales), indicate 7th–8th grade level for many stories.

<sup>19</sup> See the full bill: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-3548> (retrieved on May 21, 2008). But see Clague (2008) for a more critical view of government legislation of this kind.

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.editcentral.com> or [http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability\\_test\\_and\\_improve.jsp](http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp) (Retrieved on May 22, 2008)

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.lexutor.ca/vp/eng/> (Retrieved on June 15, 2008).

Some rural papers in Australia are pitched lower, in order to increase sales, as one Australian scientist observed:

I once went to a seminar where a reporter/editor was speaking and asked her why the standard of language [in the local daily paper] was so abysmally low and she told me that the paper pitched its language to the level of a year six primary school child for maximum sales—and she didn't mean to primary schoolers (M.H., quoted in Lee Brunckhorst, personal communication, 7 June 2008).

That is their commercial interest. But the editor's candor reflects the actualities of authentic literacy and comfortable reading level habits, which is what is under focus here. The UK's most successful tabloid, the *Daily Mirror*, is at 9th grade level. The *New Straits Times* in Malaysia averages 9th/10th grade level, though editorials may reach 13th and even 17th grade level. The *Straits Times* in Singapore publishes copy which often scores at Flesch-Kincaid 15th grade. It is matched by *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post* in Thailand, two English-language dailies that indulge in complex discourse, often carrying reports and feature articles at 13–14th grade level. Who among the Thai population can be reading such complex text voluntarily, other than a minute privileged stratum? Internet English websites are at a variety of levels. At the high end of the scale are standard auto insurance policies. They generally score at 17th grade level (DuBay, 2004, p. 26), barely comprehensible to anyone.<sup>22</sup> Discourse equity suggests that such texts should be made simpler, no matter what a person's formal level of education, most particularly for adult readers. How literacy is taught in the schools also needs, in the view of some, to be transformed, at the primary school level. DuBay (2007a, np.) stresses:

Plain English can be taught even earlier in grammar school. The problem is that tradition favors teaching children that good writing is more complex and difficult. They get rewarded for learning how to write difficult language, with dependent clauses, and lots of prepositions, adjectives, and such. At least by grade fifth grade, we should back up a bit and show them how to communicate in simple language. Simplicity will help them find a style that is both transparent and vigorous.

A big problem in schools is that we don't teach students the practicality of reading and writing in their real world. [...] even for many adults, it is a big revelation to realize that difficulty in reading is often a fault of the text, something not matching the intended audience.

DuBay envisions a more 'democratic' world where talk and communication about many things is plainer, and feels schools are doing a disservice to popular literacy by teaching a language that is unnecessarily complex. As Gee (2008) notes, in all post-traditional societies, we have a "highly stratified social ranking based not on literacy per se, but on the degree to which one controls a certain type of school-based literacy" (p. 62). It generates and reproduces social class identities and social inequity. The alternative is not 'dumbing down' discourses but rather

<sup>22</sup> See the full bill: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-3548> (retrieved on May 21, 2008). But see Clague (2008) for a more critical view of government legislation of this kind.

'rightsizing' them up to the level of broad comprehension across social strata, a discourse policy grounded on social inclusion.

#### **Thesis 4. Class matters**

Tupas (2006, p. 169) stresses: "Class-based issues that accrue to English in many societies [...] remain marginalized and ignored". This complex of discourse differences is anchored in social class. In my view, the 'satisficing' model *both* for learners of English as L1, and as an additional language, should be oriented to what average working class learners find reasonable and learnable, and in tune with their own actual repertoires of reading practice. This is in keeping with a more democratic scale of 'people's literacy.' For L1 speakers, it should be based on their actual working literacy, which is always the 'target' in Plain Language honed to communicate with a specific audience. The working class audiences are the majority in virtually all societies. Most adults from working families are not in school, and did not have a privileged education. Public talk of all kinds, and documents for citizens, should be readily understandable for them. How public discourses better address the communication needs and levels of ordinary working people also needs to be put on the research agenda for inventive innovation in EFL pedagogies. Gee (2008), echoing Gramsci, stresses that dominant literacies function "in age after age, to solidify the social hierarchy, empower elites, to ensure that people lower on the hierarchy accept the values, norms, and beliefs of the elites, even when it is not in their self-interest or group interest to do so" (p. 61). He argues that schools and their curricula "ought to allow students [...] to create new Discourses, and to imagine better and more socially just ways of being in the world" (p. 221). I wish to argue that one such way is a simpler ELF. Another is a mode of Plain English for all pupils across BANA.

This is integral to the multidisciplinary field of working class studies. Whatever your educational qualification, you're still probably working class—most teachers everywhere are.<sup>23</sup> Economists like Michael Zweig<sup>24</sup> argue that some two-thirds of the U.S. population is working class (Russo & Linkon, 2005, pp. 99 ff.). In Thailand, Malaysia and throughout much of South and Southeast Asia, that percentage is even greater. Ser (2004) sketches a somewhat different picture for Singapore, noting that "forty-seven percent of those aged 15–29 years identified themselves as middle class, as compared to 37% of those aged 45–59 years" (p. 17), though recognizing that "a large proportion of working class people will classify themselves as middle-class if the option is between being middle-class and lower-class" (p. 14).

Class in the classroom impacts on all aspects of EFL learning and student attitude. Lam (2005) does not explicitly mention social class, though this remains a salient structuring factor in EFL learning and access to instruction and resources

<sup>23</sup> Instructive on class analysis is Metzgar (2005). See the excellent material at the CWCS in Youngstown: <http://www.centerforworkingclassstudies.org> (retrieved on May 10, 2008). Such a center would be useful based at a university in an ASEAN country.

<sup>24</sup> Prof. Zweig runs the Center for Working Class Life at SUNY/Stonybrook (<http://www.sunysb.edu/workingclass/> [retrieved on June 9, 2008]); see also Zweig (2000). See also the Working Class Studies Association, <http://www.wcstudies.org/>.

in the PRC. The poverty level of students and their overall access to print (in the home, school and community) are remarkably strong indicators of how well they will perform in standardized reading tests in the U.S. (McQuillan, 1998), pointing up the ever widening gulf between learners from higher-income and low-income families.

Such factors play a role in EFL instruction across the planet, but have been too little investigated through an informed social-class prism (Tupas, 2006). The Center for Working Class Studies (CWCS) at Youngstown State University in Ohio “places working-class people, their voices, experiences, and perspectives, at the center of its research, teaching, and activism” (Russo & Linkon, 2005, p. 111). For foreign language education, that can involve trying to understand how the real-world experience of being working class impacts on learning styles, motivation, access to books and print, attitudes toward reading, their cultures of orality, repertoires of practice and other dimensions. We have to be able to look beyond the distorting lenses of our own highly interiorized literacy as teachers, in effect “decolonizing” our own pedagogies (Smith, 1999; Tejada, Gutiérrez, & Espinoza, 2007)—and unpacking the often conflicting and elitist values of our own praxis (Johnston, 2002). Willis (1977) is a classic exploration of “counter-school cultures” and resistance to classroom learning among youth from working-class families in Britain. Central here is the rethinking of more equitable models for ELF discourse and its teaching in the context of class in and beyond the classroom.

### **Thesis 5. A ‘lean language’ mini-center**

For sustainable educational innovation in teaching ELF, I believe an inventive mini-center for research and field experimentation with downshifted forms of English (and other languages) here in Southeast Asia—a center for ‘lean language’—is needed. It can spur and develop empirical work to test models, student response, student progress in communication, new approaches to ESP. Qualitative case-study research (Stake, 1995; 2006) would be desirable. It can also explore the extent to which such simpler modes of English preserve cultural functions of the language, and through graded materials make them even more accessible to learners. And could include empirical study on Lives of Teachers, since voices of educators from the grassroots are essential to understanding how realistic sustainable policy should be crafted. No such center exists anywhere, North or South. It is directly germane to language planning policy for greater discursive equity. It could contribute to the “contours of critical English language pedagogies” that Tupas (2006, p. 182) envisions on the necessary horizon.

### **Conclusion: ‘Reclaiming the commons of discourse’**

Lateral thinking requires educators and language policy planners to be open to new ways of seeing and action. My overall thesis is that it is important now to begin implementing a less complex, more learnable discourse for all, a TESOL for democratic comprehension, within a ‘pedagogy of solidarity’ with



the great Multitude of learners and the social majorities. To forge that, we need empirical data on results, genuine field inquiry. Tupas (2007) has emphasized that “reconstituting (im)balance between voices from ‘above’ and voices from ‘below’ is crucial in crafting more realistic and more democratic language policies.” New approaches to teaching simpler English for science need to be experimented with (Berkowitz, 2008). And more broadly, we need to generate new ideas for ELF and L1 literacy pedagogy, in constructivist modes, better attuned to the grassroots life worlds (Prakash & Esteva, 1998) and repertoires of practice among the minimally privileged—a ‘lower-energy’ language for a more sustainable ‘discursive commons.’<sup>25</sup> This might be termed ‘reclaiming the commons of discourse.’ Privileged ELF learners can climb to whatever levels of upscale proficiency they aspire to. The question is how to better address the authentic literacy needs of the majority, with advocacy for an international workers’ lingua franca, in solidarity with them and in the name of educational equity (Reyes & Vallone, 2008, pp. 168-172).

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Any correspondence should be directed to Bill Templer, University of Malaya (bill\_templer@yahoo.com).

---

<sup>25</sup> Lower energy input in terms of boy/girl hours/years invested, teacher time expended, time and expense training teachers—a simpler, linguistically ‘greener’ power tool for a more downshifted universe of discourse. Seidlhofer (2002) questions why so much effort is invested in Germany and Austria in mastering complex English to such a high standard, *qui bono?*

## References

- Aizawa, Y. (2007). *C.K. Ogden, a genius, attracted with 850 words* (in Japanese). Tokyo: Hokuseido Press. Retrieved summary on July 15, 2008, from <http://ogden.basic-english.org/books/sumogden.html>.
- Asraf, R., & Ahmad, I. (2003). Promoting English language development and the reading habit among students in rural schools through the Guided Extensive Reading program. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15(2), 83-102. Retrieved on May 21, 2008, from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/October2003/mohdasraf/mohdasraf.html>
- Bamford, J., & Day, R. (eds.) (2004). *Extensive reading activities for language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Berkowitz, J. (2008). Popularize or perish. *University Affairs*, January. Retrieved on June 22, 2008, from [http://www.universityaffairs.ca/issues/2008/january/opinion\\_01.html](http://www.universityaffairs.ca/issues/2008/january/opinion_01.html)
- Chomsky, N. (1997). What makes mainstream media mainstream. *Z magazine*, October. Retrieved on July 30, 2008, from <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199710-.htm>
- Clague, B. (2008). The pitfalls of Plain-Language legislation. *River Cities' Reader*, June 5. Retrieved on July 31, 2008, from [http://www.rcreader.com/index2.php?option=com\\_content&do\\_pdf=1&id=12817](http://www.rcreader.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=12817)
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crist, C. (2007). Governor's Executive Order Number 07-01. Retrieved on June 20, 2008, from <http://www.flgov.com/release/8482>
- Crystal, D. (1995). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cutts, M. (1995). *The quick reference Plain English guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cutts, M. (2008). *Plain English lexicon*. London: Plain Language Commission. Retrieved on June 15, 2008, from <http://www.clearest.co.uk/files/PlainEnglishLexicon.pdf>
- Cutts, M., & Maher, C. (1986). *The Plain English story*. Stockport/UK: Plain English Campaign.
- David, K. (2007). *A guide for the English language teacher: A Malaysian perspective*. Petaling Jaya: SIRD.
- DuBay, W. (2004). *The principles of readability*. Costa Mesa/CA: Impact Information. Retrieved on July 31, 2008, from <http://www.impact-information.com/impactinfo/readability02.pdf>.
- DuBay, W. (2006). *Smart language: Readers, readability, and the grading of text*. Costa Mesa: Impact Information.
- DuBay, W. (2007a). Posting, 26 February, on listserv plainlanguage@yahoogroups.com.
- DuBay, W. (2007b). Posting, 11 November, on listserv plainlanguage@yahoogroups.com.
- Gee, J. (2008). *Social linguistics and literacies. Ideology in discourses* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Goodman, J. (2007). Easy does it: Language made simple. *Columbia News Service*, November 11. Retrieved on July 31, 2008, from [http://greatreporter.com/mambo/index2.php?option=com\\_content&do\\_pdf=1&id=1572](http://greatreporter.com/mambo/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1572)
- Goodson, I., & Sikes, P. (2001). *Life history research in educational settings: Learning from lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hayes, D. (2005). Exploring the lives of non-native speaking English educators in Sri Lanka. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 11(2), 169-194.
- Hayes, D. (2007). Exploring 'unknown worlds': The lives & careers of non-native speaking teachers of English in Asia. Conference plenary address, TLEiA2, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Langkawi/Malaysia, 16 June.
- Johnston, B. (1997). Do EFL teachers have careers? *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(4), 681-712.
- Johnston, B. (2002). *Values in English language teaching*. Mahwah/NJ: Erlbaum.
- Katagiri, Y., & Constable, J. (eds.). (1993). *A semantically sequenced way of teaching English*. Kyoto: Yamaguchi Publishing House.
- Kimble, J. (1997). Writing for dollars, writing to please. *Scribes Journal of Legal Writing*, 6, 1-37. Retrieved on June 20, 2008, from <http://www.impact-information.com/impactinfo/dollars.htm>
- Krashen, S. (1997). *Foreign language education: The easy way*. Culver City: Language Education Associates.

- Krashen, S. (2004). *The power of reading* (2nd ed). Portsmouth/NH: Heinemann.
- Lam, A. (2005). Language learning in China: The experience of four learners. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, 4, 1-14. Retrieved on July 15, 2008, from <http://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/publications/LamVol4.pdf>
- McQuillan, J. (1998). *The literacy crisis: False claims and real solutions*. Portsmouth/NH: Heinemann.
- Marlowe, B., & Page, M. (2005). *Creating and sustaining the constructivist classroom*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Corwin.
- Metzgar, J. (2005). Politics and the American class vernacular. In J. Russo & S. Linkon (eds.), *New working-class studies* (pp. 189-208). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ogden, C. (1932). *The ABC of basic English*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Ogden, C. (1937). *Basic English and grammatical reform*. London: Eldritch. Retrieved on June 10, 2008, from <http://ogden.basic-english.org/begr.html>
- Ogden, C. (1960) [1940]. *General basic English dictionary*. London: Orthological Institute. Reprinted Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1992.
- Ogden, C. (1968). *Basic English: International second language*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Phillipson, R. (2003). *English-only Europe? Challenging language policy*. London: Routledge.
- Pinkney, L. (2008). Cynthia McKinney & Rosa Clemente: Building a movement for REAL change. Retrieved on July 31, 2008, from <http://www.runcynthiarun.org/node/302>.
- Prakash, M., & Esteva, G. (1998). *Escaping education: Living as learning within grassroots cultures*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Reyes, S., & Vallone, T. (2008). *Constructivist strategies for teaching English language learners*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Corwin.
- Richards, I. (1942). *The republic of Plato: A new version in Basic English*. Armed Services Edition. New York: Norton. Armed Services Edition.
- Richards, I. (1943). *Basic English and its uses*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Richards, I. (1950). *The wrath of Achilles: The Iliad of Homer*. New York: Norton.
- Richards, I., & Gibson, C. (1945). *Learning basic English: A practical handbook for English-speaking people*. New York: Norton. Retrieved on May 10, 2008, from <http://ogden.basic-english.org/lbe4.html>
- Richards, I., & Gibson, C. (2005). *English through pictures*. (3 vols). Toronto: Pippin.
- Richardson, J. (2006). *Analysing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Russo, J., & Linkon, S. (eds.) (2005). *New working-class studies*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2002). The shape of things to come? Some Basic questions about English as a lingua franca. In K. Knapp & C. Meierkord (eds.), *Lingua franca communication* (pp. 269-302). Frankfurt: Peter Lang. Retrieved on May 9, 2008, from <http://www.basic-english.org/member/articles/seidlhofer.html>
- Ser, E. (2004). *Does class matter? Social stratification and orientations in Singapore*. Singapore: World Scientific.
- Sevier, L. (2008). Shifting gear. *The Ecologist*, March 28. Retrieved on June 20, 2008, from [http://www.theecologist.org/pages/archive\\_detail.asp?content\\_id=1186](http://www.theecologist.org/pages/archive_detail.asp?content_id=1186)
- Smith, L.T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies. Research and indigenous peoples* (excerpt). London: ZED Books. Retrieved on May 9, 2008, from <http://www.decolonizing.com/researchliterature.htm>
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks/CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: Guilford.
- Tejeda, C., Guttierrez, K.D., & Espinoza, M. (2007). Toward a decolonizing pedagogy: Social justice reconsidered. Retrieved on May 20, 2008, from [http://www.decolonizing.com/pdfs/Tejeda\\_Decolonizing.pdf](http://www.decolonizing.com/pdfs/Tejeda_Decolonizing.pdf)
- Templer, B. (2005). Towards a people's English: Back to BASIC in EIL. *Humanising Language Teaching*, 7(5), np. Retrieved on May 21, 2008, from <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/sep05/mart05.htm>
- Templer, B. (2006). Revitalizing 'Basic English' in Asia: New directions in English as a lingua franca. *TESL Reporter*, 39(2), 17-33.
- Templer, B. (2007). 'Less is more': Reconfiguring 'simplified' models for English as a lingua franca. *The New English Teacher*, 1(2), 11-25.

- Templer, B. (2008a). LOT: Exploring teachers' real lives and voices. IATEFL. Global Issues Special Interest Group. Articles. Retrieved July 30, 2008, from <http://gisig.iatefl.org/pages/articles.html>.
- Templer, B. (2008b). Rediscovering VOA Special English. Ms.
- Tupas, R. (2006). Standard Englishes, pedagogical paradigms and their conditions of (im)possibility. In R. Rubdy & M. Saraceni (eds.). *English in the world: Global rules, global roles* (pp. 169-183). London: Continuum.
- Tupas, R. (2007). Reviewing language policy from 'above' and 'below': The language wars in the Philippines. Paper presented during the *Roundtable: Striking a Balance: Language Policy and National Identity in Southeast Asia*, National University of Singapore, August 14.
- Verduijn, A. (2004). *The new language in international business: Simplified English*. Tilburg: Tedopres International.
- West, M., & Endicott, J. (1935). *The new method English dictionary*. London: Longmans, Green.
- West, M. (1953). *A general service list of English words*. London: Longman.
- West, M. (1955). *Learning to read a foreign language*. London: Longmans, Green.
- West, M. (1960). *Teaching English in difficult circumstances*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour*. Hampshire: Saxon House.
- Yalin, S. (2008). Just another day in a Nepali village. *Travelmag*, 22 June. Retrieved on July 14, 2008, from [http://www.travelmag.co.uk/article\\_1402.shtml](http://www.travelmag.co.uk/article_1402.shtml)
- Zweig, M. (2000). *The working class majority. America's best kept secret*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.