

## In the Bookstores...

## Friedbichler: A superlative and unusual German medical dictionary



*Friedbichler and Friedbichler. KWiC Web Guide to Medical English for German-Speaking Health Professionals / Fachwortschatz Medizin Englisch. Sprachtrainer und Fachwörterbuch in einem. Thieme-Verlag, 2007. ISBN 978-3-13-117462. Print version and CD-ROM each €59.95.*

Ingrid and Michael Friedbichler's English-German dictionary *Fachwortschatz Medizin Englisch. Sprachtrainer und Fachwörterbuch in einem* is an exceptional work in many ways. Now in its second edition, it has over 100,000 entries and features nearly 70 graphics, a selection of clinical and idiomatic phrases and a general guide to pronouncing English medical terms. There is also a list of over 400 English medical abbreviations not covered elsewhere in the dictionary. It includes standard auxiliary information such as the phonetic alphabet and a list of key differences between British and American spellings.

The dictionary was designed as part of a new approach entitled *Key Words in Context* (KWiC); the entries are grouped into 142 units of subcategories such as indications, anatomical systems, clinical procedures and so on. Unlike the standard alphabetical format of most dictionaries, the print edition has German and English indices in the back. Once you have found your term in the index, you have to flip forward to an entry in the main part of the text, where you will find not only the word you wanted but semantic and usage-related information on the English as well. The *Key Words in Context* system was created with an international audience of non-native speakers in mind, which means that the focus is squarely on English; the German translations are listed as key words to the right of the more detailed English entries.

To provide an example, if you look up 'affective disorder' in the print edition, the index will send you to unit 4, entry 4 (as shown on the blue tab in the right margin and the number in the lower right corner of the grey box, respectively), where the term is number 13:

## Illness &amp; Recovery

## BASIC MEDICAL TERMS 15

**disease** [ˈdiːz] *n.* *syn* **disorder** *n.*, *sim* **condition**<sup>1</sup> *n.*, **dysfunction**<sup>2</sup> [1] *n.* *term*  
 specific impairment [ɛ] of health or disturbance [ɛ] of normal function [Δ]  
**diseased**<sup>3</sup> *adj.* *term* • **disordered**<sup>4</sup> *adj.* • **disease-free**<sup>5</sup> *adj.* • **dysfunctional** *adj.*  
 He suffers from a rare heart condition. Does he have a medical condition that could account [au] for the fatigue<sup>6</sup> [fəˈtɪɡ]? Patients with associated conditions<sup>7</sup> may benefit from<sup>8</sup> this mode of therapy.  
 Use to eradicate<sup>9</sup> a disease • heart / lung / viral [au] **disease** • crippling<sup>10</sup> / advanced / rare disease • progressive / no evidence of (abbr NED) **disease** • systemic / underlying<sup>11</sup> / predisposing **condition** • in a critical **condition** • **diseased** organ / area • mental / behavior<sup>12</sup> [ɛɪ] / affective<sup>13</sup> / attention deficit **disorder** • autonomic / (borderline/ antisocial) personality<sup>14</sup> / emotional **disorder** • organic / functional / psychosomatic [saɪkə-] **disorder** • congenital [dʒɛ] / anxiety<sup>15</sup> [au] **disorder** • panic / posttraumatic stress **disorder** • eating<sup>16</sup> / substance abuse **disorder** • multiorgan / motor / endocrine / erectile<sup>17</sup> **dysfunction** • **dysfunctional** uterine bleeding (abbr DUB) / labor<sup>18</sup> [ɛɪ] • **dysfunctional** state / sphincter / voiding<sup>19</sup>

**Note:** While *illness* is a broad term for any health problem, *disease* is used with distinct pathologic entities and *condition* preferably with chronic or multiple disorders.

**Krankheit, Erkrankung, Störung**  
 Krankheit, Leiden; Zustand, Befinden<sup>1</sup> Funktionsstörung, Dysfunktion<sup>2</sup> krank, erkrankt, befallen<sup>3</sup> krank, gestört<sup>4</sup> rezidivfrei<sup>5</sup> Müdigkeit<sup>6</sup> Begleiterkrankungen, Komorbidität<sup>7</sup> profitieren von<sup>8</sup> eine Krankheit ausrotten<sup>9</sup> zur Invaliderität führende K.<sup>10</sup> Grunderkrankung, -leiden<sup>11</sup> Verhaltensstörung<sup>12</sup> Affektstörung<sup>13</sup> dissoziale Persönlichkeitsstörung<sup>14</sup> Angstneurose<sup>15</sup> Essstörung<sup>16</sup> Erektionsstörung, erektile Impotenz<sup>17</sup> Dystokie<sup>18</sup> Miktionsstörung<sup>19</sup>

4

4

## Help through the research regulation jungle

Hugh Davies from the UK's National Research Ethics Service answers (*BMJ* 2008;337:a2920) some of the problems raised in Stewart et al's article 'Regulation—the real threat to clinical research' (*BMJ*;337:a1732). He points out for instance that the Ethics Service runs an email queries line to help researchers through the intricacies of regulation (queries@inres.npsa.uk).

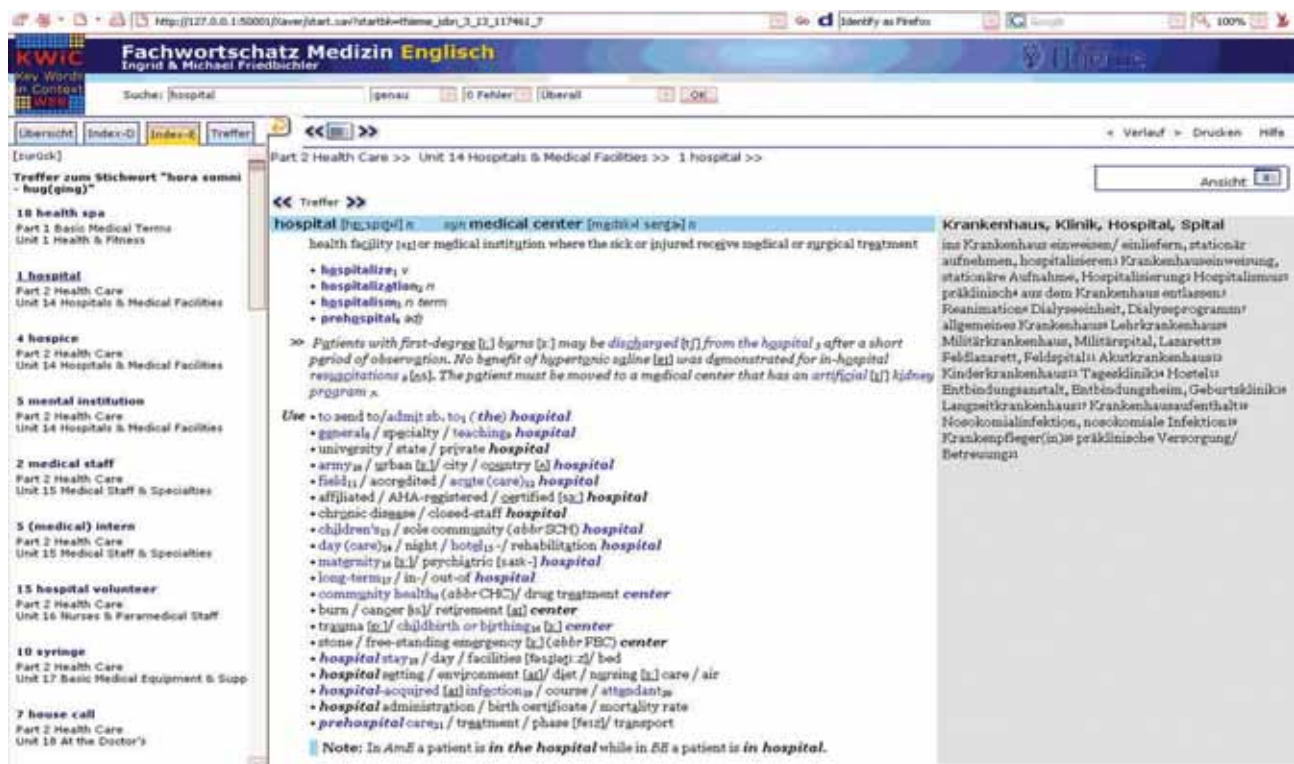
The obvious and unique advantage of this approach is that when you look up a word, you are shown a wide range of synonyms, antonyms, abbreviations, collocations, related parts of speech, pronunciation of challenging words, technical and lay terms and other information on usage. This is extraordinarily helpful, especially when you are dealing with a subject area which is not familiar to you. The drawback to working with the print version is that having to flip back and forth and search more than usual takes some time, which is not expedient for rush jobs or when dealing with

In the Bookstores...

other time constraints. Correspondingly, my university students of translation appreciated the Friedbichler dictionary immensely but often relied on other reference works at test time because they were only allowed to use print media during their exams and wanted to move quickly in an exam setting. Under regular working conditions, however, the benefits of using the print version of this dictionary greatly outweigh the inconvenience of having to spend more time looking for a word. The second edition is also available as a CD-ROM, which eliminates the problem altogether.

An example of an entry in the CD-ROM version:

have been using it for translations from German into English, there have been only very few occasions where I have disagreed with the terms it suggests or questioned the relative merits of an entry. The wide range of topics it covers is nearly unparalleled among German-English medical dictionaries; its 142 units feature subcategories such as histology, physical therapy and rehabilitation (even including the names of standard therapeutic devices), surgical equipment, first aid, walking and locomotion, biochemical elements and compounds, genetics, common signs and symptoms for several indications, and much more. If in doubt,



Mousing over a term in blue font highlights both the word itself and its translation. The interface works with an Internet browser, and the interface language is German. One of the dropdown menus for the search function has a noteworthy option. In online dictionaries, it is quite common to be able to choose whether the word you're looking for should appear at the beginning, middle or end of a phrase or precisely as entered (although as is often the case, this function only really works when quotation marks are used); however, the search criteria here also let you do a fuzzy search for up to two errors or deviations from the word in question. To take 'heart' as an example, a zero-error search yields 134 relevant hits, whereas allowing for one error leads to 218 hits which include 'heat stroke' and 'heating blanket', and searching with two errors yields 1039 hits, among them 'beard', 'heal', 'heavy goods', 'health spa' and so on. This unusual function can be especially advantageous for non-native speakers and the spelling-impaired.

The Friedbichler dictionary has become a trusted part of my library of medical references, and in the four years I

the authors clearly chose to err on the side of excess; for example, the section on food and drink is detailed to an extent which may not be entirely relevant in a medical dictionary. However, this is not to be regarded as a failing, especially since their thoroughly researched work does not sacrifice quality for quantity.

The dictionary is very good about pointing out distinctions between British and American usage, reflecting the needs of its target audience of non-native speakers, and it is also generally good at citing alternative pronunciations. Like every dictionary, it has a few shortcomings here and there: for example, it correctly states that the word migraine is pronounced [maɪˈɡreɪn] or [miːˈɡreɪn] but does not inform readers that the former is American and the latter is British. Some local flavor is evident in a few words which are not widespread outside the authors' home country of Austria. Most of them are listed as being regional variants, but in cases such as *Ordinationszeiten* for 'office hours' versus the high-German term *Sprechstunden* for 'consulting hours', the distinction seems arbitrary, and I see no reason



## &gt;&gt;&gt; In the Bookstores...

why the terms should not be listed as synonyms. Occasionally some imprecision arises, such as ‘assaultive behavior’, which does not belong under the entry on ‘rape’ unless it is intended as a euphemism; *pasta asciuta* for ‘spaghetti in tomato sauce’; or *Dauermedikation*, which is listed as ‘life-long medication’ although it could also mean ‘long-term medication’. In light of the dictionary’s overall reliability and scope, however, these oversights are minor.

Ingrid and Michael Friedbichler have released a similar, albeit much smaller, dictionary on the topic of dentistry, and currently they are making arrangements for their *Key Words in Context* concept to be applied to other language pairs. All in all, their German-English dictionary has created a superlative resource which is without peer on the market of bilingual medical works. It is affordable, consistent, trustworthy and incomparably useful for both native speakers and non-native speakers. If you want to start building a library of bilingual medical dictionaries, start with this one.

**Laura Russell**

University of Mainz,  
Germany  
laura@russell.de

## English as Tyrannosaurus rex or linguistic diversity?



Augusto Carli and Ulrich Ammon editors: *Linguistic inequalities in scientific communication today*. AILA Review Volume 20. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007. ISBN 1461-0213. 133 pages. Euro 87, USD 131.

For those who are not familiar with the *Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée* (AILA)<sup>1</sup>, a few introductory words are in order. AILA is an international federation of associations for applied linguistics that was created in 1964 and has affiliated associations and organizations in 35 countries. In broad terms, the aim of AILA is to promote, coordinate and disseminate research in applied linguistics and to collaborate with international, non-governmental organisations in key areas of the discipline.

The book under review represents its 20<sup>th</sup> Volume, edited by two renown applied linguists: Augusto Carli from the Università degli Studi di Modena-Reggio Emilia (Italy) and Ulrich Ammon from the Universität Duisburg-Essen (Germany) who have both extensively published on the various issues at stake in this Volume (e.g. [1, 2, 3]). More specifically, the book deals with the actual and potential problems related to language choice—or linguistic inequalities—in today’s scientific communication, topics dealt with from different perspectives (linguistic, econom-

ic, political) by authors from both Western and non-Western parts of the world.

After an interesting Introduction about the history of AILA, its original multilingual character, the rapid and drastic growth of scientific monolingualism in the so-called hard sciences, the social sciences and the humanities, the book opens up with a paper by Florian Coulmas (German Institute for Japanese Studies, Tokyo) that deals with the issue of English monolingualism in scientific communication and progress in science. It is written in the form of a Platonic dialogue between two ‘experts’ in the field: F which stands for Florian, and C which stands for ... Coulmas! This entertaining, lively and shrewd discussion is, in fact, a ‘conversation’ of the author with himself—very original paper, indeed; an excellent choice to open a Volume on the pros and cons of, *inter alia*, English monolingualism in scientific communication.

This opening chapter is followed by two papers that specifically deal with the problems faced by non-Anglophone scholars, called ‘users of English as an additional language (EAL)’, when writing their papers in English, the language that, for historical, socio-economic and political reasons, became the scientific *lingua franca* in the 1960s. John Flowerdew (University of Leeds, UK, previously City University of Hong Kong) takes the case of a bilingual Chinese-English Hong Kong doctoral student who, in spite of his extensive exposure to English, still encounters great difficulties to write and publish in this language, a topic and a context about which Flowerdew is an expert. In this particular paper, the author presents and discusses the controversial writing strategy quite common among EAL writers called ‘language re-use’ that consists in copying fragments of previously published articles and using them again in their own papers. This strategy is quite common indeed among EAL graduate students (and EAL writers, in general) because, on the one hand, they do not have the confidence in their own English to appropriately express what they want to say, and, on the other, because of the pressure put on them to publish in English-medium journals in order to graduate. Is this strategy identical to plagiarism, an issue about which so much has been written lately? Flowerdew, who sympathises with the plight of EAL writers, ends up his contribution by presenting some pragmatic ideas aimed at alleviating the immense difficulties EAL doctoral students and/or scholars face when writing in English.

There is one point I would like to argue upon. Towards the end of his paper, Flowerdew argues that in certain contexts, viz. when no editorial support services are available to the EAL writers (e.g. in developing/peripheral countries), “encouraging practitioners to publish in non-English, non-indexed journals might not be a good solution”. I strongly believe that a solution for EAL writers in such contexts would be to write their papers in their own language and publish them in top-quality journals, i.e. journals indexed in international databases. Such a move would not only help EAL researchers gain international visibility, but

<sup>1</sup> The acronym AILA was coined on its name in French, the leading language of the Association when it was created in the mid-1960s’ and held its first congress

## In the Bookstores...

would also reduce linguistic inequalities in scientific communication and foster scientific multilingualism.

The third Chapter, by Cristina Guardiano, M. Elena Favilla and Emilia Calaresu (University of Modena-Reggio Emilia, Italy), also deals with EAL scholars' disadvantages. The authors, both fervent supporters of scientific multilingualism and of the 'linguistic rights' of non-native English writers, first present a review of the main stereotypes concerning English as the language of science with a special focus on non-Anglophone scholars' perceptions of the reasons behind the predominance of English in scientific communication. The authors then present the results of a pilot study conducted on a sample of Italian scholars from various scientific fields regarding language use and perception of language choice for scientific publications. The paper provides a good picture of what the situation looks like in Italy. It is interesting to remark that it is very similar to what can be observed in other parts of the non-English speaking world where writing in English is perceived as an ineluctable necessity (international prestige) rather than a matter of free choice. Regarding formal aspects, I would like to point out that the reading of the tables is quite difficult because they are in black and white (coloured tables would make the book even more expensive, see below). The authors could have used different 'designs' or patterns for each discipline, for instance, so as to enable to reader to readily distinguish one from the other.

In close relation with the results of the pilot study presented in the previous Chapter is the extensively documented article by Rainer Enrique Hamel (Autonomous Metropolitan University of Mexico) that deals with the pre-eminence of English in the international scientific periodical literature—in the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences—and the future of language use in science. To illustrate the situation, the author provides several very interesting (although at times unclear) tables and figures that display quantitative data about the share of the main scientific languages from 1880 till the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in six different disciplines. He also provides data about scientific publications in Hispanic America, especially Brazil and Mexico, emphasising the importance of both Spanish and Portuguese as languages of science in these two parts of the world. He then critically addresses the question of whether the hegemony of English, the "hypercentral language of the world" will create a total monopoly, at least at an international level, or whether changing global conditions may allow alternative solutions. Hamel closes his paper by advocating a plural language policy for scientific production and communication to avoid irreversible language attrition.

The following two chapters address a quite different issue related to the problems and/or disadvantages of the EAL scholar. Philippe van Parijs (The Catholic University, Louvain, Belgium), on the one hand, and Michèle Gazzola and François Grin (Geneva University, Switzerland), on the other, both deal with the economic aspect of the problem, although from two different perspectives.

Van Parijs starts his abstract and his paper with a bold assertion which will certainly strike the proponents of plurilingualism: "In science and all other domains that require communication across borders, we need one *lingua franca* and this *lingua franca* will be English." After reading the previous two chapters, this bold statement certainly comes as a shock. Van Parijs goes on arguing that the adoption of the native language of some as everyone's *lingua franca* unavoidably raises a problem of justice, and that the community whose language is being learned should subsidise the community which is learning up to the point where the cost become equal. The author proposes a criterion of fair burden sharing (proportionality of cost to benefit) and explores its policy implications. Obviously, the question to be asked is whether this linguistic tax on native-English speakers can be feasible at all. What about, for example, Third World English-speaking countries? Will their governments be charged as well as the British government will, for example? Certainly not. The author does refer to the different English learning communities with different per capita levels (the French vs. the Chinese, for instance) but makes no provision for developing countries (former British colonies) where English is spoken as a native language. The paper ends with several appendices that provide detailed information on how to estimate the Anglo fair share in today's learning cost. Beyond any doubt and whether we agree with the ideas put forth by its author, this chapter is the most thought-provoking, controversial and polemical of all, especially for those who sustain that linguistic diversity is as desirable as cognitive diversity (e.g.[3, 4])

Michèle Gazzola and François Grin from Geneva University also address the issue of linguistic equality from an economic perspective, but their approach banks on the economics of language and language policy evaluation, a field of research with a strong interdisciplinary orientation. The paper presents guidelines towards a general analytical framework to assess the relative efficiency and fairness of different ways of managing communication in 'multilingual organisations' (not only international organisations but also academic institutions, multilingual companies, etc) that have to cope with linguistic diversity for their internal and external communication. Although the paper raises some interesting points, we could wonder what it has to do with scientific communication per se, the topic of this AILA Volume.

The last article differs from all the others in the sense that it addresses the issue of language policy in a multilingual and multicultural country: Malaysia. Its author, Saran Kaur Gill (Kebangsaan University, Malaysia) explains, from a socio-political standpoint, the reasons why Malaysia experienced a major shift in language policy in 2003 for the teaching of science and mathematics in national and national-type schools. Indeed, national schools now teach these two subjects in English instead of in Bahasa Malaysia, the official national language, and national-type schools have been obliged to shift from Mandarin and Tamil to English to ensure homogeneity. The author particularly focuses on the Chinese community's responses to such changes and makes emphasis on how these recent developments are intertwined with ideology, politics and language policy. She very rightly argues that such a lan-

&gt;&gt;&gt;

## &gt;&gt;&gt; In the Bookstores...

guage policy threatens not only to bring to an end the socio-political balance that had been achieved through L1 (mother tongue) education, but also to lead to a loss of means of scientific conceptualisation in the local languages.

A discussion of the different issues raised in these articles concludes the Volume. It is written by one of the co-editors, Ulrich Ammon who makes some generalisations without entering into specific details. He first of all presents what he calls “reasonably safe knowledge”, i.e. a few basic facts that cannot seriously be called in question. He then provides a list of open questions that urgently require further research as well as policy suggestions, including a proposal to institutionalise the topic in AILA in the form of a committee entrusted with it and a request for more language norm tolerance vis à vis non-native English speakers or, as he himself phrased it in a previous publication [2] “the non-native speaker’s right to linguistic peculiarities”.

With this quote, I would like to take the opportunity to point out that the expression ‘non-native speaker’ (an expression I encounter in almost every paper that deals with the various issues at hand, see Cristina Guardiano, M. Elena Favilla and Emilia Calaresu in this Volume, for instance) does not seem appropriate. It should be ‘non-native ENGLISH speaker’. Indeed, aren’t we all speakers of a native language? By not mentioning ‘English’, we just assume that English is the native language of everybody. The same remark of course applies to the expression ‘native speakers’. It should be ‘native English speakers’, when we refer, of course, to those speakers who have English as their mother tongue. Ammon’s quote should thus read ‘the non-native English speaker rights to linguistic peculiarities.’ A very small detail indeed in such a fine Volume.

Another detail is the price of the book: it represents a very serious obstacle to the worldwide dissemination it certainly deserves. Such a high price means that AILA 20<sup>th</sup> Volume is beyond the reach of people who would be interested in reading it but who live in developing/Third World countries, let alone university libraries in the peripheral world that will not be willing to spend over 100 dollars for a social science book. This is a real shame, but I must unfortunately say that it is a recurrent problem of all the books published either by John Benjamins, Rodopi, Peter Lang, etc. who can be read by a privileged few only.

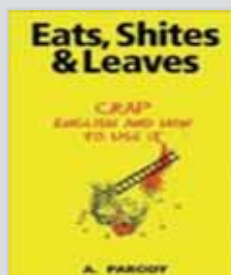
All in all, the Volume is a very interesting read that contains a lot of useful and sensible materials. It is, to my standpoint a timely addition to the field. I cannot but strongly recommend it to anyone who is interested in linguistic, economic and political issues related to scientific publication.

**Françoise Salager-Meyer**

Faculty of Medicine,  
University of the Andes,  
Mérida, Venezuela  
francoise.sm@gmail.com

**References:**

1. Ammon U. The dominance of English as a language of science. Effects on other languages and language communities. Mouton de Gruyter, 2001.
2. Ammon U. Global English and the non-native speaker: overcoming disadvantage. In *Language in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. H. Tonkin and T. Reagan (Eds), 23-34. Amsterdam. John Benjamins, 2003.
3. Carli A. and E. Calaresu (2007) Language and science. In Marlis Hellinger and Ane Pauwels (Eds.) *Handbook of Language and Communication: Diversity and Change*. Mouton de Gruyter. 523-551.
4. Salager-Meyer F. Scientific publishing in developing countries: challenges for the future. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 2008;7:121-132.

**An antidote to ‘proper’ English**

*A. Parody. Eats, Shites & Leaves. Crap English and how to use it. Michael O'Mara Books Limited, 2007. ISBN 1-84317-098-1 (Hardback). 9.99 GBP. 160 pages.*

The cover and proportions of this little book reflect those of the British bestseller *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*. The book declares itself to be about how the English language can be used and abused. The first words of the introduction are “Ever since man sought to express himself in the English language, there has always been somebody else telling him he has been using it incorrectly.” And later “...does it matter if it is not used well?” One of the bits of information in the book which might make you wonder if it does matter is that only 17% of native English speakers can spell the following words correctly: height, necessary, accommodation, separate, sincerely, business.

Basically (the true meaning of which according to the book is “this is going to get complicated”), the book is a jumble of amusing and educative examples. These are given under some delightful headings such as ‘*Needless to say, many words are better than one*’ or ‘*TUMA: totally unnecessary medical abbreviations*’. ‘*Why English is becoming redundant*’ traces man’s development from communicating by signs to spoken language and its degeneration back to smileys and emoticons. ‘*Signs of the times*’ includes the example “Automatic washing machines: please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.” ‘*I can see clearly now the brain has gone*’ has a quote that all medical writers will appreciate “Three kinds of blood vessels are arteries, vanes and caterpillars.” Under a list of politically correct euphemism involving ‘challenged’ we find “Verbally challenged (most English speakers)”.

We are told that there’s no rule that a sentence should not end with a preposition. This is a myth, the source of which is put down to a London bishop who thought it was impolite to round ones words off. And we are asked, “Do you find it reassuring that doctors call what they do practice?”

‘Barbecue’ is one of a list of words open to misinterpretation by non-native speakers who could think it means, “waiting in line for a haircut.” But then there are things we all know: The four most important words in the English language are listed as “I, me, mine, money”.

It’s fun and you even might learn something from it.

**Elise Langdon-Neuner**

langdoe@baxter.com