

To Matthew F [REDACTED],

EF Gaz

Dear Matthew,

Here are the two pieces we discussed on the phone.

I hope they fit in somewhere over the next few months.

If you don't see one or other fitting in, please let me know, so they can go elsewhere.

I was, naturally, delighted with the rather positive review HUMANISING LANG TEACHING got from your Reading IT reviewer. At almost the same time ELTJ also carried a robustly good review by Eastment. My writers must be doing something right.

Melanie's questionnaire, a while back, showed that the top area of the Gazette for readers were practical tips, followed closely by MA stuff, not the news stories etc.

My stats for HLT show me that LESSON OUTLINES are the most visited pages in the 'zine, confirming her findings. Please let her know.

So why don't we turn the Gazette and HLT into meadows of exercises and tips that our readers can browse off?

(Why do I complain, implicitly? After all I have lived, for half a career, from the EFL teacher's imperious need for practical techniques, just those things that many Univ courses fail to offer.)

Mario.

### **The Timid Revolutionaries**

by Mario Rinvoluceri, Pilgrims.

Fifteen years work on the Cancorde Oral Corpus by folk like Carter, McCarthy, Hughes and others at Nottingham University leaves us with a radical new way of looking at UK English in its primary mode, the oral mode.

### **The Cancorde Claims**

McCarthy and company have many claims to make of which these are but a few:

- to understand oral language you need to construct a DISCOURSE GRAMMAR. The old sentence level grammars devised to explain the written language just won't do.
- You cannot build a DISCOURSE GRAMMAR without dealing centrally with the personal relationship between the speakers. So, for example, if you say *Penelope was saying Darren is on his way over*, you are implicitly claiming you have a personal relationship with Penelope. The Cancorde Corpus shows that past continuous reporting verbs

imply that the speaker knows the person whose words they are reporting.

- You need a new meta-language to produce your DISCOURSE GRAMMAR.

It is barmy to say that *Coming?* is an elliptical form of *Are you coming?* if you find that *Coming?* has high frequency in ordinary talk. You can no longer usefully talk about “omitting the pronoun and the auxiliary verb”. To use the old written grammar term “clipsis” in describing oral behaviour makes scant sense. Better maybe to call *Are you coming?* the “stretch-limousine” or pleonastic form.

### A totally new Grammar

The Cancorde team offer us the beginnings of a radically new grammar of oral English, that accurately describes what natives do when they speak. This means taking a fresh look at areas that have been tucked away and taken for granted. So Quirk, in his 1985 Grammar of Contemporary English, relegated *to tend to* to a footnote, while McCarthy suggests that **TO TEND TO** is a semi-modal verb expressing habituality and occurs as much as 9 times more frequently in the spoken language than in the written. If you are a UK native this will probably sound spot-on- personally, I would tend not to classify a foreign speaker as “advanced” unless they tended to use this verb in a normal Ukish way. (Forget the Esperanto like nonsense about unmarked, culture-free, “international” English, a concept similar to that of “dry water”.)

### Why are the Cancorde team shouting so Quietly?

Why have the massive Cancorde discoveries only been presented in learned books and from Conference podiums?

Why do Carter and McCarthy pussy-foot so carefully, with little mincing steps, around how or even **whether** the new knowledge they have discovered should be taught to students?

If there a radical, scientifically-based set of oral language discoveries how can any half honest EFL teacher go on teaching her students the old stuff?

### Some Questions to which I have no answers

- **Why are Carter and McCarthy not running through the streets of Nottingham shouting “Eureka”.**

■ **Why are they trying to “gradualise” what is a genuine paradigm shift?**

■ **What are the pressures on them from their money-masters?**

■ **What are the publishers waiting for/ preparing to do/ not doing?**

■ **Should access to language corpora be restricted to “owners”, as may be happening, partly, with human genome knowledge?**

## Fifteen Precepts for Humanistic Teaching

Mario Rinvoluceri, Pilgrims, UK

I have worked in EFL for [15 x 3] years and with Pilgrims for [15 x 2] years. I have written fifteen books, mostly in collaboration with other people... and probably one or two more that I have forgotten about. **Grammar Games**, my most popular title, has sold around [15 x 7 x 1000] which is quite good for a teacher resource book.

Robert Campbell, being a brave man, asked me to guest edit **iT's for Teachers** in ..... (please add year and issue). I was delighted to do this and brought over some of the authors who otherwise write for **Humanising Language Teaching**, [www.hltmag.co.uk](http://www.hltmag.co.uk), which I edit for Pilgrims and its parent company, OISE. I have always liked the crisp, clear practicality of **iT's for Teachers**, which I feel makes it an elder sister to **Humanising**. Both magazines are hard-edged and mostly avoid "Applied Linguistic" pomposity, waffle and Emperor's New Clothes. And now for the 15 Precepts that are drawn from the thinking of some of the major influencers of the humanistic EFL classroom:

1. Explain briefly and clearly: expect your students to each make different sense of what you have explained.
  2. Remember that self-expression is a basic human need while communication is a miracle. (Caleb Gattegno)
  3. Realise that when you and your student look out of the classroom window and both "see a mountain", you are each looking at a radically different one. There is no chance that you may see the same mountain.
  4. One thing that students discover for themselves is worth ten things that you present to them. (Caleb Gattegno)
  5. You have two ears and one tongue. Use them in that proportion (Finnish proverb)
  6. Offer your students unconditional regard, whatever their surface behaviours. (Carl Rogers)
  7. Make your students know that mistakes are learning tools (Paul Davis)
  8. Realise there is no failure - you can only collect feedback on the way to later successes. (NLP)
  9. Your students know more than they believe they do and than you believe they do. (Caleb Gattegno)
  10. Be full of wonder as you think of each student.
  11. If a student is language-poor but rich in other intelligences, then teach him musically, spatially or kinaesthetically, etc... so he learns through what he shines in. (Howard Gardner)
  12. Enjoy your lessons for their rhythm and for what is unforeseen and unforeseeable. (Rudolph Steiner)
  13. Enjoy English and all other languages that come to meet you.
  14. If your students realise that you remember one tenth of what they tell you, they will marvel. (John Morgan)
  15. The above precepts do not need to be true to be useful. (NLP)
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