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# The trouble with *ET*?

SUSAN BAYLEY, *Executive Director of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.*, replies through the Editor to Morton Benson's article 'The trouble with TESOL' in *ET* 33 Jan 93:

On behalf of the TESOL membership and the Executive Board, I would like to respond to Morton Benson's article, 'The Trouble with TESOL' (Vol. 9, No.1, January 1993). We appreciate your sending us an advance page-proof copy of the article a few weeks before it went to press. However, we are disappointed that we were not asked to respond to Benson in time for publication in the same issue. If a healthy debate about TESOL, the international professional organization for the field of teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language, is what you as an editor aimed for, placement of the two articles in the same issue would have been much more conducive to thoughtful reflection.

Benson reports accurate enough information about the TESOL organization, but he does not seem to appreciate the depth and breadth of the field of English language teaching that the Association represents. Although many of our members have specialized in teaching survival English, a review of recent TESOL literature (*TESOL Quarterly*, *Journal*, and *Matters*) would yield articles on not only grammar, but also reading, writing, listening and pronunciation as well as second language acquisition, testing and assessment, teacher development, methodology, curriculum planning and materials development, program planning, computer-assisted instruction, video, etc. That a lexicographer such as Benson might be disappointed in the depth of information about grammar and syntax would not be surprising, given the wide range of interests and needs of the TESOL membership. TESOL members with more specialized interest in grammar and usage consult *English Today* and other publi-

cations as resources. Moreover, one person's trivia can often be another's special interest and area of expertise.

TESOL members might find *English Today* filled with 'trivia,' as Benson describes the content of TESOL publications. Articles on grammar, syntax, lexicography, and worldwide varieties of English are of special note in your publication. However, where is information on methodology or second language acquisition in *English Today*? The simple thing to do when finding fault with a publication for not being what it is not designed to be is simply not to subscribe to it. Benson and his academic interests lead him to *English Today*, while TESOL members choose to know about other aspects of English language study, i.e., English language education.

To argue that an entire organization (not only a publication) is not attending to a narrow interest (grammar and usage) is specious. If Benson wishes TESOL to publish more information about his areas of professional concern, he ought to contribute. We welcome his input. □

*Editor's note* It was good to receive such a swift response from Susan Bayley. When I forwarded the advance page-proof copy of the article in question, I offered TESOL comparable space to reply to Professor Benson in this or a later issue. It was not possible – or indeed desirable – to hold the article until a parallel reply from TESOL could be offered to readers of the same issue: the original would have had to be delayed and I could not have been sure that a simultaneous reply would be forthcoming. Journals can seldom be run in such a way. My offer of space for a reply in depth has been turned down, a decision which I regret. Instead, Susan Bayley has said that TESOL 'would appreciate' space in our Oct 93 issue 'to describe TESOL's services', which is something rather different.

TESOL's headquarters are at Suite 300, 1600 Cameron Street, Alexandria, Virginia, USA. Its letterhead describes it as 'an international organization whose mission is to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English around the world while respecting individuals' language rights', a policy position that *ET* respects and fully endorses.