



Glossary Mining: Brush Up Your English

By Lee Wright

As the final topic of our

series on online resources for language professionals, we will focus on those sites related to the English language. It is hoped that the information will prove equally valuable both for translators working into English (i.e., their mother tongue) and for those translating from English into another language. Although primarily focused on writing usage and vocabulary, the list also addresses a number of other aspects that often come into play during the translation process, including slang and idiomatic expressions, acronyms and abbreviations, collocations and collective nouns, and language etymology. The article concludes with a selection of URLs for websites that contain information about the differences between U.S. English and “the King’s/Queen’s English,” as well as several more esoteric or entertaining sites pertaining to the English language.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Specialized references that provide information about slang and idiomatic expressions constitute a subcategory of “regular” dictionaries. There is no shortage of online resources for this particular subject.

Abbreviations.com
www.abbreviations.com

Acronyma
(English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish)
www.acronyma.com/?language=en

Acronym Finder
www.acronymfinder.com

Businessballs.com
www.businessballs.com/acronyms.htm
This site includes some humorous acronyms.

Canonical Abbreviation/Acronym List
www.astro.umd.edu/~marshall/abbrev.html

Free Dictionary by Farlex
<http://acronyms.thefreedictionary.com>

DICTIONARIES

Translators always need to consult dictionaries in order to identify the meanings of words encountered in their source documents. In this regard, you can find quite a large number of online resources that provide definitions and other information about English lexical items. Here is a sampling of the most reliable sites.

American Heritage Dictionary
www.bartleby.com/61

Ask Oxford.com
www.askoxford.com/?view=uk

Online resources that focus on specific usage aspects of the language can offer invaluable help for both native and nonnative speakers.

Cambridge Dictionaries Online
<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/default.asp?dict=P>

Dictionary of Difficult Words
www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/dictionaries/difficultwords/data/content_a.html

This site contains many “esoteric” or infrequently used lexical items.

Die.net
<http://dict.die.net/a>

Linguasphere Observatory
www.linguasphere.org/dictionary/a.html

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
www.m-w.com

MSN Dictionary
<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/dictionary/home.aspx>

OneLook Dictionary Search
www.onelook.com

Synonym.com
www.synonym.com/synonym
This is an excellent source for synonyms, antonyms, and definitions.

Tiscali References
www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/dictionaries/english/data/content_a.html

Wiktionary
http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

WordNet Search 3.0
<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>

This is a machine-readable lexical database organized by meanings that was developed at Princeton University.

Wordsmyth
www.wordsmyth.net
This site requires a subscription.

Your Dictionary.com
www.yourdictionary.com
This is a combination dictionary/thesaurus, and contains glossaries of specialized terms. For example, the Glossary of Quaint Southernisms (www.yourdictionary.com/library/southernese.html).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ETYMOLOGY

Not everybody is a devotee of English etymology like me, but if you are, you can find some very helpful (and occasionally entertaining) resources at these websites.

Anglik.net
www.anglik.net/englishlanguage/history.htm

British English Translations
www.uta.fi/FAST/US1/REF/engtran.html

Etymology Dictionary
www.etymonline.com

Origin of Things
www.mindlesscrap.com/origins/moreorigins.htm

Origin and History of the English Language
www.krystal.com/english.html

University of Toronto English Department

www.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercy/hell
This site provides a history of the English language from a Canadian standpoint.

Word Origins e-Zine
www.takeourword.com/arc_logi.html

GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Many (if not most) of the websites dealing with English grammar and usage are directed at speakers of other languages who are learning English. Nevertheless, they generally contain a great deal of useful information for native speakers who need to clarify a given usage question (e.g., the difference between restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses). The sites that are my personal favorites are marked with an asterisk, but you should also check out the others because each one is a little different.

Bartleby.com
www.bartleby.com/64
This site contains numerous links to grammatical references.

* **Big Dog’s Grammar**
<http://aliscot.com/bigdog>
This site contains basic and advanced English grammar.

* **Brian Paul’s Common Errors in English**
www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html

British Council Grammar Archive
www.learnenglish.org.uk/grammar/archive/mainindex_wide.html

CliffsNotes
www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/CliffsReviewTopic/English.topicArticleId-28962.html ➔

Glossary Mining: Brush Up Your English Continued

This site has separate pages for grammar and writing.

Eclectic English

www.eclecticenglish.com/index.html

English the Easy Way

www.english-the-easy-way.com/index.htm

English Glossary of Grammar Terms

www.usingenglish.com/glossary.html

*** Englishpage.com**

www.englishpage.com/grammar

English Rules Writing Guide

www.englishrules.com/writing

English-Zone.com

<http://english-zone.com/index.php>

This site claims to be the best site for English grammar and usage.

Eslbase English Grammar

www.eslbase.com/grammar

*** Guide to Grammar and Style**

<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing>

*** Guide to Grammar and Writing**

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar>

Hypertext Guide to English Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage Rules

http://ei.cs.vt.edu/~cs5014/courseNotes/5.TechnicalCommunication/tc_2_Usage.html

Internet Grammar of English

www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/frames/glossary.htm

Modern English Grammar

<http://papyr.com/hypertextbooks/grammar>

Purdue University

Owl Online Writing Lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar>

Refdesk.com

www.refdesk.com/factgram.html

Speakspeak Grammar

www.speakspeak.com/html/d10_english_grammar.htm

*** Tiscali English Page**

www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/dictionaries/english

University of Illinois

Grammar Handbook

www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/writer_resources/grammar_handbook/grammar_handbook.htm

University of Ottawa

HyperGrammar

www.arts.uottawa.ca/writcent/hypergrammar

Using English.com

www.usingenglish.com/articles

Well Bred Sentence

www.englishgrammartutor.com/Grammar%20Book.htm

Wikipedia Grammar

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_grammar

YourDictionary.com Language

Library

www.yourdictionary.com/library/index.html#dr

MISCELLANEOUS

Just to prove that the study of English can be lots of fun, make time to explore some of the following miscellaneous sites. You will be amazed by how much you can learn about the language from them!

Alternative English Usage

<http://alt-usage-english.org/index.shtml>

Anglo-Saxon Heathen Terminology

www.homestead.com/english/heathenism/glossary.html

Anglo-Saxon Lexicon

www.keystothepast.info/durhamcc/k2p.nsf/K2PGlossary?readform&GLOSSARY=Anglo-Saxon

Cheesy American English Usage

www.heptune.com/english.html

Dialectizer

<http://rinkworks.com/dialect>

This site converts standard English to a variety of dialects.

Dictionary of Foolish English

www.aaaugh.com/dictionary

Sample: WIDOW: The wife of a golfer during the opening of the season, unless she golfs, too. In that event, the children are golf orphans.

Dictionary of the Scots Language

www.dsl.ac.uk/dsl

Engrish.com

<http://engrish.com>

Fun with Words

www.rinkworks.com/words

Hellatine Dictionary of

Bureaucratess

<http://home.earthlink.net/~skilton/dictionary.html>

Mathematical English Glossary

www.emis.de/monographs/Trzeciak

Old English Lexicon

www.keystothepast.info/durhamcc/k2p.nsf/k2pGlossaryList?readform&letter=A

Phrontistery

International House of Logorrhea
<http://phrontistery.info/ihlstart.html>

A free online dictionary of weird and unusual words.

Scientific English

http://users.wpi.edu/~nab/sci_eng/index.html

Words: Frequently-Asked-Questions

<http://dictionary.reference.com/help/faq/language/index.html>

SLANG AND IDIOMS

Specialized references that provide information about slang and idiomatic expressions constitute a subcategory of “regular” dictionaries. Here again, there is no shortage of online resources for this particular subject.

Alternative Dictionaries

www.notam02.no/~hholm/altlang

This site contains slang, profanities, insults, and vulgarisms from around the world.

Dictionary of British Slang

www.peevish.co.uk/slang/a.htm

Dictionary of Historical American Slang

www.alphadictionary.com/slang

Dictionary of Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms

Double-Tongued Dictionary

www.doubletongued.org/index.php/dictionary/alphabet/A

Common American Slang

www.manythings.org/slang

Idiom Connection

www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/6720

Lexscripta Dictionaries of Slang

www.lexscripta.com/desktop/dictionaries/slang.html

This site contains many varieties of English slang, including terms from Australia, Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, and the U.S. There is even a link to the etymology of slang.

Online Slang Dictionary

<http://onlineslangdictionary.com/browse/a>

Shadow Slang Glossary

www.intercom.net/user/logan1/glossary.htm

Slang Insider

www.slanginsider.com

Slangsite.com

www.slangsite.com/slang/A.html

SPECIFIC USAGE (COLLOCATIONS)

Online resources that focus on specific usage aspects of the language can offer invaluable help for both native and nonnative speakers. Collocations in particular (e.g., what prepositions combine with what verbs) sometimes pose knotty problems that can be resolved easily by consulting the following references.

English Collocations Lessons

www.better-english.com/strongcoll.htm

Medical English

www.englishmed.com/resource-centre/collocations

PhrasalVerbDemon.com

www.phrasalverbdemon.com/dictionarya.htm

Phrasal Verb Dictionary

www.englishpage.com/prepositions/phrasaldictionary.html

VERBage

www.oceansiderevolution.com/verbage

Verb/Preposition Dictionary

www.englishpage.com/prepositions/verb_preposition.html

Wikipedia (Collective Noun)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_noun

STYLE GUIDES

Usage guides also include a subcategory, namely style guides and manuals. Some of them are intended for “everyday” writing purposes, while others are oriented toward specialized writing needs (e.g., technical, medical, business). A number of universities and government agencies have prepared style manuals for internal purposes, but a few are also available to the public online. Here are a few of the most helpful resources in this category.

Bates College

Introduction to Journal-Style Scientific Writing

<http://abacus.bates.edu/~ganderso/biology/resources/writing/HTWgeneral.html>

Chicago Manual of Style Online

www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/contents.html

This site requires a subscription.

Dictionary.com Style Guide

<http://dictionary.reference.com/writing/styleguide>

Garbl’s Writing Center Style Manual

<http://garbl.home.comcast.net/stylemanual>

Guardian Unlimited Style Guide

www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide
This site emphasizes British English usage.

Guide to Technical Writing

www.rbs0.com/tw.htm

Guidelines for Technical Writing

www.ent.ohiou.edu/%7Eevaly/techwrite.html

**James Madison University
Technical Communication
Style Manual**

www.isat.jmu.edu/common/projects/StyleManual/ISATStyleManual.htm

**NASA Technical Writers Handbook
(Grammar, Punctuation, and
Capitalization)**

<http://stipo.larc.nasa.gov/sp7084/sp7084cont.html>

Online Technical Writing

www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook
This is a very good text on technical writing.

Oxford University Press

www.oup.com/us/samplechapters/0841234620/?view=usa
This site contains listings for several well-respected style guides.

**University of Alabama
Guide to Style and Design**

<http://main.uab.edu/show.asp?durki=7713>

**U.S. Government Printing Office
Style Guide**

www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/browse.html

**Writing Guidelines for Engineering
and Science Students**

www.writing.eng.vt.edu

THESAURUS

Another subcategory of reference tools for English is the thesaurus. Of course, just about everybody is familiar with the venerable *Roget's*, which is also available online, complete with hyperlinks from the headwords to the main entries. The other five URLs listed below provide excellent complementary resources in this area of language usage. The last one is included just because it is quadrilingual instead of monolingual, which is a rarity among thesauri.

Itanda English Thesaurus

<http://dictionary.amcd.co.uk/thesaurus.php>

LingvoSoft English Thesaurus

www.lingvozone.com/free-online-thesaurus

MSN Thesaurus

http://encarta.msn.com/thesaurus_/thesaurus.html

**Project Gutenberg Etext of Roget's
Thesaurus**

www.cs.utexas.edu/users/kbarker/working_notes/roget-taxo.html

Thinkmap Visual Thesaurus

www.visualthesaurus.com/index.jsp
This nifty visual thesaurus requires a subscription for access.

**Wordweb Quadrilingual Thesaurus
(English, French, German, Spanish)**

www.online-thesaurus.net/search

**TRANSLATING BRITISH
ENGLISH/AMERICAN ENGLISH**

There may be some occasions when you might need to translate from British English to the American variety, or perhaps vice versa. These sites will help you with deciphering some of the significant differences.

**American's Guide to
Speaking British**

www.effingpot.com

**American↔British
English Dictionary**

www.peak.org/~jeremy/dictionary/dictionary/dictionary.php

**British English
for the American Novice**

www.hps.com/~tpg/ukdict

**Common Words in British and
American English**

www2.gsu.edu/~wwwesl/egw/jones/words.htm

English→American Dictionary

<http://english2american.com/dictionary/a.html>

English Usage in the U.K.

www.kryстал.com/ukandusa.html

World Wide Words

www.worldwidewords.org/qa/index.htm

This site presents English from a British point of view. It also includes topical words, turns of phrase, and weird words.

KEEP DIGGING!

So, now I have finally reached the end of the mine shaft, although the ore certainly is not totally played out. You never know when you might hit another mother lode somewhere down the line, so it does not hurt to keep digging.

ata