Alice in TESOL-Land: A parody of *Alice in Wonderland*

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Note from the Editor: This is the script of a parody of <u>Alice in Wonderland</u> which will be presented at the 1995 MEXTESOL National Convention in Acapulco. The authors requested us to publish it "so that teachers can read it, better understand the idioms, bad puns, etc., as well as have the opportunity of seeing how it is transferred from the page to the stage with actions."

Scene 1: Down the Rabbit Hole

Alice: I was beginning to feel very tired, sitting at my desk with too

much to do--what with grading papers, doing lesson plans,...and besides (*she begins to get sleepy*) what good is a book without

pictures of conversation?

White Rabbit: (sings) I'm late! I'm late! For a very important date! I can't turn

in my grades on time, I'm in an awful state! You see, I'm overdue!...My goodness! WHO are YOU? (She drops keys)

Alice: I'm Alice...but... (Rabbit rushes off stage)(Alice picks up the

keys) Oh look! These are the four keys to Language Learning! READING, WRITING, LISTENING AND SPEAKING.. but

WHICH one should I use first? And on WHICH door?

White Rabbit: (Rushes back on stage) (sings) I'm late! I'm late! For a very

important date! And I forgot my Lesson Plan! I hope my class

will wait! Oh dear! (She rushes off stage again)

Alice: Let's try the READING key! (Mimes opening the door) And

look! Here's a book which says "READ ME, READ ME!" OK. I'll read it. (*She reads*) "Methodology and Practical Application of Linguistics must be considered while drinking coffee, but only when the cup is extremely LARGE!...WHAT? (*A huge 'cup' appears with a sign on it which says "DRINK ME!*

DRINK ME!") OK. I'll drink some. (She drinks) Oh no! HELP! I'M SHRINKING! (She mimes opening a second door) What now? It's a big piece of paper. It says, "WRITE ME. WRITE ME!" OK. (She asks the audience) But what should I write

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about? (Audience suggests something. She improvises a sentence and writing it) Oh dear! Now I'm GROWING!

BIG...BIGGER...BIGGEST! CURIOUSER and CURIOUSER!

White Rabbit: (Rushes back on stage) WRONG! WRONG! you must say

"MORE CURIOUS" and "THE MOST CURIOUS"! Don't you know anything? Syllables! Syllables! CUR-I-OUS! THREE SYLLABLES! Now Alice, pay attention to the way I teach this PRONUNCIATION LESSON. (She turns to the audience as her

class) Now class, repeat after me...

"TWAS BRILLIG AND THE SLIVY TOVES... (Audience tries) No, no, no! "BRIL-LIG! BRIL-LIG!" (They try again)No, no, no. It's "SLI-THY, not SLI-VY!" (They try again)"DID GYRE AND GIMBLE IN THE WABE." (They

try.)

Alice: (Interrupting) But WHAT does it MEAN??? WHERE is the

CONTEXT?

White Rabbit: Context? Context?? We have the TEXT! I don't see WHY we

need a CON!

Alice: Well, maybe a SONG would help? Songs are good teaching

tools!

White Rabbit: A Song? Yes! Just the thing! Good idea!

(White Rabbit SINGS A SONG using AUDIENCE

PARTICIPATION.)

Scene 2. By the sea.

Alice: That was a very good song!

White Rabbit: Thank you, Alice. My keys, please? (Alice gives her the keys)

Now! Let's go the SEA!

Alice: To SEE who? Er...to SEE what?

White Rabbit: To THE sea, Alice. To the ocean! To the beach!

Alice: Oh great! I love the SEA!

White Rabbit: Good. Then you'll love meeting the MAD HATTER, THE

LOBSTER and THE MOCK TURTLE. They are always AT SEA! (*They all meet and introduce each other. White Rabbit*

exits.)

Mad Hatter: Now, Alice, when you used the White Rabbit's KEYS, you

practiced REELING and WRITING, so it's time to practice

LISPING...

Lobster: And SNEAKING!

Alice: I think you're pronouncing them wrong. It's READING,

WRITING, LISTENING and SPEAKING!

Hatter/Lobster: That's what we said: REELING (They FISH), WRITHING

(They WIGGLE), LISPING (They LISP) and SNEAKING

(They SNEAK)

Alice: SPEAKING!

Mad Hatter: YOU are SPEAKING. We are SNEAKING! Can't you SEE the

difference?

Alice: But...but...but...

Lobster: Don't sputter. You must learn your LESSONS.

Alice: Oh yes! I have THREE Teaching Certificates!

Mad Hatter: And yesterday, you had FOUR!

Alice: What?

Lobster: That's the thing about LESSONS. They LESSEN every day!

Alice: I don't understand.

Mad Hatter: Yesterday you had FOUR Teaching Certificates.

Lobster: Today, you have THREE!

Mad Hatter: And tomorrow you'll have TWO, and by (the next day) you'll

have ONE, and by (the day after that) you'll have NONE AT

ALL!

Alice: That doesn't make sense!

Mad Hatter: Of course it doesn't make CENTS! Or DOLLARS either! It

barely makes PESOS!

Lobster: You didn't become an English Teacher to make SENSE, did

you?

Mad Hatter: NON-sense is more like it!

Alice: Oh dear. I'm so confused. Everything is backwards here!

Lobster: The MOCK TURTLE has a question for you. He's one of your

students.

Alice: Is he? I don't think I've ever seen him before. No, he's not in

my class.

Mad Hatter: Don't be a SNOB, Alice. He may not have a lot of money, but

he's still in your CLASS!

Alice: I didn't mean that he wasn't in my SOCIAL CLASS. I meant he

wasn't in my ENGLISH CLASS!

Mock Turtle: Please, Miss Alice. I need to talk to you about my GRADE!

Mad Hatter: Your GRADE? You mean you MARK, don't you?

Lobster: GRADE!

Mad Hatter: MARK! (Lobster and Hatter exist, repeating GRADE! MARK!

Arguing.)

Scene 3. The Duchess, Sheep and Pepper

Mock Turtle: Miss Alice, I'm so worried! My father will KILL me!

Alice: Oh, poor Mock Turtle! What's the matter?

Mock Turtle: Oh, I'm not so poor. My parents paid a lot of money for me to

study English but I only got a "9" on my Final Exam! I have to get a "10"! PLEASE HELP ME! My father will KILL me, and

then he'll take me out of school!

Alice: NONSENSE! Parents don't kill children because of grades!

Mock Turtle: Will you, won't you...will you, won't you...will you, won't you

CHANGE MY GRADE?

Alice: Well, um...I think we'll have to take this up with my Superior,

the DUCHESS! (*They move to another part of the stage where*

the DUCHESS is sitting) Now, Turtle, you can ask the

DUCHESS!

Mock Turtle: Good morning, Your DUCHESSNESS! Will you, won't

you...will you, won't you...will you, won't you...CHANGE MY

GRADE?

Duchess: (Snaps her WHIP) Can't be bothered. Can't be bothered. I am

sitting in the shade!

Mock Turtle: (On his knees, BEGGING.): P-L-E-A-S-E!!!

Duchess: Amuse me with a POEM, and I'll think about it.

Mock Turtle: (Recites) The time has come, the student said,

To talk of many things...

Of Nouns and Verbs and Novios

Of romances in Spring.

And WHY we have to COME TO CLASS...

And WHETHER I will ever PASS...

Alice: Now, Turtle, you shouldn't be thinking about your GRADES,

you should be thinking about LEARNING something!

Duchess: We'll talk about your grade, after the TEA PARTY, when the

CROQUET GAME is played!

Alice: But I don't know how to play croquet!

Duchess: (Angrily) WHY NOT? Didn't you have a Methodology Course?

Didn't you learn how to teach English by playing GAMES?

What do you think this is...a SERIOUS TOPIC?

Mock Turtle: I just want my grade changed.

Duchess: (Snaps her WHIP again) Then write a quick essay on

"WHETHER PIGS HAVE WINGS." (Turtle writes one quickly,

then hands it to Duchess.)

Duchess: (SINGS, to the tune of "Buttons and Bows.")

"Pigs have wings, and Mice have toes, And the wrong ones we have chose.

Let's go where the pigs keep wearing those Wings and things, like rings in their nose..."

Not bad, Turtle, not bad.

Alice: But, Duchess, you're holding a SHEEP, NOT a pig! (3)

"students" enter to stand by the Duchess. They have 'Sheep

coverings' on.)

Duchess: That's right! Students are SHEEP, not pigs! But they must NOT

be allowed to act like SHEEP! (She talks to Alice with this

advice, but HITS the Sheep Doll and the Student Sheep with her

WHIP.)

Be cruel when your students talk, And BEAT them when they CHEAT! They only do it to annoy...

Don't let them act like SHEEP.

Sheep Students: (They open GIANT ACCORDIONS like the little ones sometimes

used for cheating) Bl...eee...t! Bl...eee...t!

Ch...eeeaaa...t! Ch...eeeaaa...t!

(Duchess hits them with her WHIP. Alice is HORRIFIED.)

Alice: Oh! Don't do that! They'll never learn English THAT way!

Duchess: Alright...Then I'll PEPPER THEM! (She sprinkles PEPPER on

the Sheep Doll and Student Sheep. The Student Sheep SNEEZE

a lot!)

Alice: (Even more HORRIFIED) Please! Please! Duchess! Let me try

my VISUAL AID!

Duchess: What? Well, I hope it starts with a "T".

Alice: Here it is. (She shows the AUDIENCE her sign which says, "WE

ALL WANT A RAISE!)

Duchess: What does that have to do with Students cheating?

Alice: Nothing! I just thought we should change the subject! (*Students*

exit.)

Duchess: Hmmm. It's a good VISUAL AID, but it doesn't start with a

"T", so you CAN'T take it to the TEA PARTY! However, let's try it. (She points to the signs and instructs AUDIENCE to say it) Now! SAY IT! (AUDIENCE says "We all want a raise!")

Then STAND UP! IMMEDIATELY! RIGHT NOW! STAND

UP! (AUDIENCE stands up.)

THERE! You've had a RAISE! Now SIT DOWN!

Alice: (Disappointed) Well, maybe that will at least help them stand

up for themselves!

Mock Turtle: (*Returning to his usual theme*) But will you...won't you. (etc.)

(Duchess pushes Alice offstage, and they exit, ignoring Turtle.)

Duchess: You think changing a grade is a problem? JUST YOU WAIT

until you meet our new School Administrator, the QUEEN OF HEARTS! (*THEY EXIT, Mock Turtle following them, still*

begging.)

Scene 4. In the Queen's Throne Room

Queen of Hearts: I am the MOST SUPERIOR of all the SUPERIORS! I don't like Students! And most of all, I don't like TEACHERS!

(SINGS, to the tune of "Just You Wait" from "My Fair Lady".)

Just you wait, all you teachers, just you wait! You'll be sorry, but your tears will be too late! You will substitute for money. Will I pay you? Don't be funny! Just you wait, all you teachers, just you wait!

Just you wait, all you teachers, just you wait! You'll get contracts, but they'll all arrive too late! When you yell you want vacation, I will LAUGH at your frustration!

Just you wait, all you teachers, just you wait!

One day you'll be working, you'll be proper and prim...
Preparing your classes, though you want to go to the Gym.
I will call SEVEN MEETINGS, and you'll have to be there!
But I will never, ever tell you WHERE! Ha! Ha!

Oh, all you teachers. Just you wait until those meetings come around!

Oh, all you teachers. And you bring me the ideas you have found! I will steal them. Yes, you said it! Will I ever give you credit!

Oh, ho, ho, all you teachers. NO, NO, NO, all you teachers, just you wait!

You will get your LEVELS jumbled! You'll be FIRED if you GRUMBLE! Oh, all you teachers, JUST... YOU... WAIT!

Scene 5. *The Mad Tea Party*

(The MAD HATTER, WHITE RABBIT, DUCHESS, ALICE, LOBSTER, TURTLE, AND DOR-MOUSE are seated at a big table. DOR-MOUSE is in a TEA-POT with a lid that opens and closes on her head. During the Scene, they CHANGE SEATS a lot.)

(They are all TALKING AT ONCE, improvising about their problems.)

Mad Hatter: ORDER! ORDER!

Duchess: Vegetarian for me.

Dor-Mouse: Hamburger, French Fries and TWO cokes!

Alice: Excuse me, but I think he's trying to call the meeting to order!

White Rabbit: That's ridiculous! Meetings don't order! We haven't enough

food for them too!

Duchess: Where is the Queen of Hearts, or administrator? She could have

brought the TARTS to tea!

Mad Hatter: I didn't know girls like THAT had been invited! (*He passes*

them mime cookies and tea) Will you have a PAST PERFECT

or a PRESENT PROGRESSIVE?

Alice: Oh dear. I thought it was TEA!

White Rabbit: It IS tea! TEA BE...or NOT TEA BE! That is the question! I'll

have a NEGATIVE INTERROGATIVE with a READING

COMPREHENSION, if you please.

Dor-Mouse: (Waking up) Statistics prove that POSITIVE

AFFIRMATIVES...

All: (*Slamming the lid down on her*) Shhhhh!

Alice: Well, I don't see how I can have ANYTHING if I don't

understand what I'm having!

Mad Hatter: You're having a nervous breakdown!

White Rabbit: If not, you soon will.

Dor-Mouse: (Waking up again) Statistics prove that 30% of ESL teachers are

subject to nervous breakdowns in their first three hours of teaching when they have classes of 40 or more students with

MIXED LEVELS and...

All: (*Slamming the lid on her*) Shhhhh!

Mad Hatter: (*Takes a mime cookie*) I'll have a MIXED LEVEL myself. Very

tasty. (To Alice) Will you have a CAMBRIDGE

PREPARATION?

Alice: (Hungrily) Oh yes! I don't mind if I do!

White Rabbit: You MUST mind! You must MIND your Academic Director.

Mad Hatter: Did you all bring your "T" things?

(They each show a VISUAL AID with a picture of their item on

it.)

Duchess: I took a TAXI from the TAVERN.

Dor-Mouse: I took a TOOTHBRUSH for my TEETH.

White Rabbit: I took a TEST! What a treat!

Alice: I took a TESOL TERMINOLOGY.

Mad Hatter: TAKE A SEAT! (They all change seats and SING to the tune of

"Turkey in the Straw".)

All: Take a taxi to Tavern,

Take a Toothbrush to your teeth. Take a Turkey to the Table, Take a Test, now that's a Treat.

Take your Temperature each morning, Take a Termite from your house. Take a TESOL Terminology...

Alice: Take the DOR-MOUSE! (They all try to grab the Dor-Mouse

who screams loudly.)

Dor-Mouse: AAAHHHH! Wait! Help! No! I don't start with a "T"!

Duchess: Then perhaps you'd like to start with a COFFEE instead?

White Rabbit: Take a Tablet!

Lobster: Take a Time Sheet!

Mock Turtle: Take a Telepathic Tasmanian Testimony!

Dor-Mouse: TWINKLE...TWINKLE...TWINKEES!

Mad Hatter: (Banging loudly on the table) ORDER! ORDER!

All: We already DID!

White Rabbit: This is a Tempest in a TEA pot!

Mad Hatter: The next item on the agenda is...

Alice: Excuse me, but the GRIFFEN, who is missing...

Duchess: WHO is he missing? His wife?

Mad Hatter: He's not married. GRIFFENS never marry!

Alice: Please! Let me finish! The Griffen wanted me to tell you that he

needs a SUBSTITUTE for his class tomorrow...

(All turn their heads to the right, look away, ugly expression)

at 7:00 AM in the morning!

(All turn their heads to the left, with audible snarls, since

nobody wants to substitute at that hour)

Mad Hatter: WHOM did you say was missing?

Duchess: NO! It's WHO is missing!

Alice: Well, ah...the Griffen, I believe!

White Rabbit: You should never believe the Griffen. He always lies.

Duchess: Really? With WHOM does he lie?

Alice: (Getting the idea) That's RIGHT!

Mock Turtle: What?

Dor-Mouse: (Waking up) That's RIGHT! WHO is the subject of the

sentence. WHOM are we discussing?

Alice: This is a TRAVESTY!

Mad Hatter: GOOD FOR YOU! Travesty starts with a "T".

Alice: What?

Mad Hatter: Never mind. You said you needed a substitute?

Alice: No, not ME! The GRIFFEN needs a substitute!

Duchess: Here's some NUTRISWEET for your TEA. THAT's a good

substitute! And don't argue!

White Rabbit: (Taking a big watch on a chain out of her pocket) 7:00 A. M.,

you say? Why it's NOT 7:00 A. M. at all!

Alice: I didn't say it WAS!

Duchess: You didn't say it WASN'T either!

Alice: (Angrily) It WASN'T either! There!

Mock Turtle: Where?

Mad Hatter: Wake up, DOR-MOUSE. It's TIME to TEACH!

Dor-Mouse: (Waking up) You might just as well say that "I TEACH WHILE

I SLEEP is the same thing as saying "I SLEEP WHILE I

TEACH!"

Alice: Oh no, it's NOT the same at all!

Duchess: If you were TEACHING while you were SLEEPING, you

would be DREAMING that you were teaching!

White Rabbit: And if you were SLEEPING while you were TEACHING, you

would be FIRED! It's the WORD SEQUENCE that matters!

Mad Hatter: SEQUENCE! SEQUENCE! IT'S ALL WORD SEQUENCE!

All: SEQUENCE! SEQUENCE! IT'S ALL WORD SEQUENCE!

Alice: So what's NEXT in this SEQUENCE OF EVENTS?

All: The QUEEN'S CROQUET GAME! Let's go! (*All exit*)

Scene 6: The Queen's Croquet Game (Last Scene)

(All the characters are in this scene. The WHITE RABBIT, making sure that everyone has arrived ON TIME, takes out a LARGE CARDBOARD CLOCK, shows it to the AUDIENCE, then puts it down on the floor, where everyone tries to fit on to it.)

White Rabbit: All right, everyone! Hurry up! We must be ON TIME!

(All SALUTE as the QUEEN OF HEARTS enters)

All: Your Majesty!

Queen: WICKETS? WICKETS? WHERE ARE THE WICKETS?

(The WICKETS are PHRASAL VERBS. Teacher volunteers play

the WICKETS, bending over like wickets, with PHRASAL

VERBS SIGNS attached to their sides. They have NO lines, but they MOVE whenever anyone tries to hit a BALL through them)

Lobster: Here they are, you QUEENLINESS!

Queen: WHERE ARE THE MALLETS?

Duchess: (Bringing in the MALLETS, which are long sticks with

ERASERS on the bottom.) Here they are, your MAJESTY!

Queen: And the BALLS? WHO has the BALLS?

Mad Hatter: (Bringing in a basket of SPIT BALLS) I have them, of course,

your SUPERIORNESS!

Queen: And about TIME too!

White Rabbit: (Sings) For every season, TURN, TURN, TURN,

There is a TIME, TIME, TIME!

All: SHUT UP!

Alice: That's a PHRASAL VERB!

Queen: Very GOOD, Alice! Very GOOD! You're PICKING it UP

rather quickly! (Hatter hands BALL to each player, Duchess

hands MALLET to each, as they begin to play)

Hatter. TAKE your TURN! (Mad Hatter TURNS AROUND

HIMSELF) NO! NO! NO! OFF WITH HIS HEAD!

Mad Hatter: Sorry, your BOSSYNESS! (He tries to hit BALL through

WICKET with sign that says "STAND UP", but the WICKET

stands up and runs away)

Queen: You MESSED UP on that one! DUCHESS, next!

(Duchess tries to hit BALL through WICKET with sign that says "THROW UP". She misses because the WICKET moves and mimes THROWING SOMETHING UP in the air and then mimes THROWING UP-vomiting)

Queen: You should be THROWN OUT of the game!

Duchess: Sorry, your ROYALNESS!

Queen: DOR-MOUSE, NEXT!

Dor-Mouse: But...but...

Queen: Don't SPUTTER!

(The Dor-Mouse is so nervous that she drops her MALLET. The White Rabbit picks it up and the Oueen says to the Rabbit)

HAND IT OVER!

White Rabbit: (Mimes putting her hands OVER something) Over WHAT, your

Majesty?

Queen: GIVE IT TO HER! (Rabbit gives MALLET to Dor-Mouse) GO

ON! GO ON!

Dor-Mouse: On...on WHAT, your GRACIOUSNESS?

Queen: CARRY ON! CARRY ON!

(Mock Turtle rushes on with a TRAY, gives it to Dor-Mouse. Dor-Mouse puts her BALL on the TRAY and tries to CARRY it

around)

Queen: OFF WITH THEIR HEADS! OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!

Alice: Oh please, your Majesty! Please...LOOSEN UP!

Queen: Why, Alice! That's another PHRASAL VERB! Very GOOD! I

shall try to LOOSEN UP! DOR-MOUSE! CONTINUE!

(Dor-Mouse hits BALL to WICKET with sign that says "BACK

OUT" but the WICKET moves and BACKS UP instead)

Alice: Your Majesty! Your REGALNESS! The wicket BACKED UP!

It didn't BACK OUT! Besides, you can only BACK OUT of a

contract or an agreement!

Queen: (Hugs Alice) EXCELLENT, Alice! You're CATCHING ON

beautifully!

(As they hear the word 'CATCHING", everyone rushes to try to

CATCH a WICKET, but they run away. Queen is furious.)

Not CATCH UP WITH! Not CATCH! Alice is CATCHING ON! OFF WITH THEIR HEADS! You teachers can be replaced

by a VIDEO COURSE! For only \$99.00 pesos students can receive 12 ESL Video Cassettes, and they won't need you!

All: That's HORRIBLE!

Queen: But WAIT! There's MORE! They also receive 7 Cantinflas

Videos, 6 Audios and a Partridge in a Pear Tree!

Mad Hatter: But, your ROYALNESS, there is NO interaction with a Video

Tape Course! There is NO SUBSTITUTE for a LIVE teacher!

Queen: Nonsense! The Dor-Mouse will substitute, won't you?

Dor-Mouse: (Waking up) ACQUISITION. PREPOSITION. NUCLEAR

FISSION.

Queen: (More furious than ever) DUE TO THE DEVALUATION, NO

TEACHERS WILL RECEIVE A RAISE THIS CENTURY!

White Rabbit: But how can we GET BY with no raise, and all this inflation?

Queen: Get BY? Get by WHO? Er...Get by WHOM? Er...

Alice: (Whispering to Queen) Ah, no, your LOVELINESS, GET

BY...GET ALONG WITHOUT...ummm...LIVE ON...so little

money!

Queen: (Delighted with Alice) ALICE! My dear! THREE PHRASAL

VERBS IN A ROW! YOU HAVE JUST WON THE GAME!

Turtle and Lobster: But we haven't had a TURN yet!

(Queen TURNS each one of them around and around until they

are dizzy)

Queen: There! Now, everyone, TURN IN your mallets and balls!

ALICE is the WINNER! (She takes off one of her big RED PAPER HEARTS and pins it on Alice) AIN'T SHE SMART?

(Last SONG and CHARLESTON DANCE to tune of "Ain't She

Sweet?")

All: Ain't she smart? And she's even got a HEART!

Now we ask you very confidentially, ain't she smart?

She has WIT! And she's not afraid a bit!

So we ask you very confidentially, ain't she fit?

She knows her Verbs and her Conjunctions,

Vocabulary Words, and Grammar Functions! (La la la la)

She can TEACH! And she has such lovely SPEECH!

And there ain't a goal in Language Teaching that she can't

reach!

Just cast a look in her direction!

Her Lesson Plans will bear inspection! (La la la la)

We repeat. Don't you think she's kind of neat?

And there ain't no problem in her teaching she can't defeat!

Duchess: Alice, tell us. How did you get to be such a GOOD TEACHER?

Alice: Well, MEXTESOL really helped me a lot! I go to all the

Conventions!

Queen: Absolutely correct, Alice. MEXTESOL helps all of us, and

every English Teacher should join it!

All: (SING) MEX-TE-SOL! You should join it, one and all!

Participate the WHOLE YEAR ROUND, not just in the Fall!

Queen: Alice, if you could live through this crazy play, you can do

ANYTHING!

All (SING) Ain't she smart? And she's even got a HEART!

And her students love her MONUMENTALLY!

Queen: WHY?

All: Because... (SING) SHE'S GOT HEART!!!!!

The End