#### Seeing the Wood for the Trees

David Malone

14 April 2010

◆□▶ ◆□▶ ◆臣▶ ◆臣▶ 三臣 - のへぐ

# Perfect Language Student?

◆□▶ ◆□▶ ◆三▶ ◆三▶ →三 ● ● ●

Never much good at languages

- Learning Irish with this accent.
- Scared of those Faux Amis.

# But Languages are related...

◆□▶ ◆□▶ ◆□▶ ◆□▶ □□ - のへぐ

- One swallow does not a summer make.
- Eén zwaluw maakt nog geen zomer.

#### Even English is not Simple

If you think that, you've got another \_\_\_\_\_ coming!



#### think





▲□▶ ▲圖▶ ▲≣▶ ▲≣▶ ▲≣ - のへで

## So, where's this going?



◆□> ◆□> ◆目> ◆目> ◆目> 三日 のへで

#### The Wood for the Trees — in my Head

ACTUALLY LOST IN A WOOD. AM, BLASTED TREES

# Wrong type of wood!



#### Let out inner angry blogger

I presume that the phrase that is being alluded to is "Can't see the wood for the trees", and the implication is that reading The Economist will allow you to see the wood (ie., the log).

◆□▶ ◆□▶ ◆□▶ ◆□▶ □□ - のへぐ

Unfortunately, this expression means "cannot see the big picture" and "the wood" actually refers to a small forest! This can be confirmed by checking a dictionary or by looking at the equivalent expressions in Dutch "Je kunt door de bomen het bos niet meer zien" (you can no longer see the forest through the trees), French "L'arbre qui cache la foret" (the tree which hides the forest) or other languages.

#### That's not half of them either...

French L'arbre qui cache la forêt. German Er sieht den Wald vor lauter Bäumen nicht. Hungerian Nem látja a fától az erdöt. Dutch Je kunt door de bomen het bos niet meer zien. Hebrew מרר עצים לא רואים אם היער Russian ИЗ-ЗА ДЕРЕВЬЕВ ЛЕСА НЕ ВИДНО Swedish Kan inte se skogen för alla träden. Norwegian (Bokmål) Kan ikke se skogen for bare trær. Norwegian (Nynorsk) Kan ikkje sjå skogen for berre trær. Danish

Kan ikke se skoven for bare træer.

Estonian Ei näe puude taga metsa. Serbian НЕ ВИЛИ СЕ ЛИШЋЕ ОЛ ШУМЕ Spanish Los árboles no dejan ver el bosque. Finish Ei nähdä metsää puilta. Greek Μπορεί να δει το δέντρο και όχι το δάσος Chinese (Simplified, but see below) 见树不见林 Chinese (Traditional, but see below) 見樹不見林 Romanian Nu văd copacul pădure. Croatian Ne mogu vidjeti drvo od šume. Japanese (Also, see below) 木を見て森を見ず。

▲ロト ▲帰 ト ▲ヨト ▲ヨト - ヨ - の々ぐ

... but some are notable by their absence.

▲ロト ▲帰 ト ▲ヨト ▲ヨト - ヨ - の々ぐ

Polish, Italian, Portugese The neighbours have it. Chinese, Japanses May be a recent import. Turkish May be adopting. Irish No sign.

## They Replied

Referred me to Brewer's Concise Phrase and Fable.

Also dropped a clanger:

I wouldn't consider commenting on the origin of the phrase when translated into foreign languages, since the ad was designed only for the UK market.

#### I couldn't resist

Some time has passed since Dublin, where I saw these posters, was in was a part of the UK. The Irish language seems to have no equivalent expression. The expression came into use in the 1700s, possibly originating from the German poet Christoph Martin Weiland, ...





◆□▶ ◆□▶ ◆臣▶ ◆臣▶ 三臣 - のへぐ

- The phrase is much older than Wieland.
- Heard of John Heywood (c. 1497 c. 1580)?

### John Heywood

#### The Proverbs of John Heywood (1546) A dialogue of the effectual proverbs in the English Tongue concerning marriage

・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・
・

Plentie is no deyntie. ye see not your owne ease. I see, ye can not see the wood for trees.

#### The fecoub part. 31 olde faibe faibe, itche and cafe, cân no man pleafe. jalentie is no deguite. pe fee not pour olune cafe. j fee, pe can not fee the wood for trees. Y our ipps hang in pour light, but this poore ma fees Bothe bowe blyndle pe fande in pour owne leght. 31 no that pour toie on pour right fobe here reght. 31 no that pour toie on pour right fobe here reght. 31 no that pour toie on pour right fobe here reght. 31 wote well 3 might (quoth he) for the purs. Start pe a baby of Belfabubs bowre. Content pe (quoth the) take the flow the fowre. J wolf in ot be (quoth he) thus the parts. 31 mothe (quoth he) thus pe take if flowre. J might four flowre flouridhet thus in more ipe. Yes, it might (quoth he, and here this reafon why. bouwn is white.

Snowe is white and curry man lets it lye.

and hath a good fmacke And cucry man both it bye:

soplise (quoth bc) is tobite ? And lyeth not in the opice ? but all men know it good meate. Juncts all blacke ?

and bath an pll fmacke & Ro man will it dipnke no; cate.

The reme (quoth he) is muche elder than mone, But impnebeng newer, is trewer than thyne. Chau liken: A now, is a dopine automage, white fnow to fayze pouth, black pepper to fould age white fnow to fayze pouth, black pepper to fould age white is as plance bere by cood. Black pike is as plance is alack pepper is good. And white mylke as good meat, as white fnow is pli. But a milk fnow whit finct pog fkin, who chage wil Bout a milk fnow whit finct pog fkin, who chage wil foz a pepper ynke blacke r Chough chaunge be no ro Yet fall that chaunge rob For who this cafe fercheth, That as well agreeth the c As a lyke to compare in tal Dialike in colour to Demo walk diab walke. Aap(au Saleth that terine, Dow b Ind belt we laic a ftrawe b Diels this geare wyll bied If ye hale this wate, I wil Dere is god in thambay (qu Dere is the deuill in thozolo Sens this (quoth J)rathe man it in the clothe, and t Ye harpeon the ftryng, tha Your tongs ton befoze rou Dack ye, how the hitteth n And pe taunt me tpt ouer t Sens tyt foz tat (quoth ] Bet the bares bead agayn She is (quoth he) bent to f To know, that the arey m She chopth loaph. to put She hath one popute of a But wyfe.the firft poynte And holde pefaft, I ted you In your own tourne. Day Ind rather (quoth I) tak

The fecoud

#### Hot off the press

The second parte of the co[n]futacion of Tyndals answere in whyche is also confuted the chyrche that Tyndale deuyseth. And the chyrche also that frere Barns deuyseth. Made by syr Thomas More knyght.

(1533)

#### Cheten

Eher versy toethe chyselpe in fagrik be, puist and claus beith 3 ipet eo hepenete.

Bit solp here chercher is di gibbles i decreas. Tra de type des relataciones (Cherche Lando Berliner) and tra de type des relataciones (Cherche Lando Berliner) and to her poversion sado ta dispen un lyres, a sedor they to gibt soleta, assassi dos la sed Bibles to they bland topo be tendras. I bebla, assassi dos la sed Bibles to they bland topo be tendras. Companya de la sedora da la sedora da la sedora de la sedora de companya de la sedora da la sedora da la sedora da la sedora da companya de la sedora da la sedora da la sedora da la sedora da que conserva de la sedora da la sedora da la sedora da la sedora da que poversito ta tas a constante.

pool of practic generation of the processing of

Granning and good interest dual if force forces a piet to be a force provide a state of the state of the state where the state of the state of the state of the state of the works of the state of the state of the state of the state works of the state of the beyers of the state o

Sold fights an accord a transform of the former of the for

Chie sefantheatfteanner char the chryste floore te unpfehle, benn fris mahr eil of sam seb benen et ber der anze aus in byfeble. Das beite aufbeneth site fras Darrens and fafti, liey en fei fris i medjele darke gla dyre, berte tie beste an februarfie.

-

#### antereifte Contais

Com aller beräpen seher in bele obgester ber fahle ents in their entitieren ist neutrigenen, beit vier beit oprode ist date en scenigtenskoven og bete suplemens and geste oprolien hannan, of illerigte avery den is befyllte, bat der cangingelaren eftern is sensyforte.

White the Biocharon are though to be able cell to their dynamic berr a become showed many project, and to be to remer and that be that and the showed many project and the showed many berr interployed to shall be approximate borrying be for the berr provide the showed be the showed by the showed by berr interployed. Such as be merged to the show of beau berr interployed. The showed be the showed by the berr interployed by the showed beaution of the berr provide the showed beaution of the showed beaution before the showed by the showed beaution of the berr provide the showed beaution of the showed beaution before the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the showed beaution of the beaution of the showed beaution

fapeb we mite fe euery part, is a thring about fur poor byte and if suppole about but to, to make bis faringe treb.

The second secon

To an advant and the count of the section of the province of the in no more result(before an infer more the section of a count of a count of the section of the section of the section of the inferative cheer for most forte , not per toppart of a base of pyter protocourt most benchmark for a function.

aujob. Cor man to fe forströpten bette for the end fors bat pe in man to fe forströpten about his retherpare, hat pe is no thermapiertpaugh be can not entende in forte sallen not tiete englig neithert an appenent in beer be reif

イロト 不得 トイヨト イヨト 三郎

### And there's more...

- Dictionary usually only gives definition.
- Could have been nonsense meaning?
- How could you investigate properly?



#### Languages: More friends than faux amis.

#### Can your favourite language see the wood for the trees?

I can't help but feel that I can't...

▲□▶ ▲□▶ ▲□▶ ▲□▶ ▲□ ▶ ④ ●