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English for Central Europe: Interdisciplinary Saxon - Czech Perspectives

edited by
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Cuvillier

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PREFACE

This volume starts our new series of monographs entitled *REAL studies*. REAL is an acronym for "Research in English and Applied Linguistics", but it also emphasises the importance of "real" empirical studies based on authentic language material and topical linguistic debate. It thus covers a wide spectrum: from corpus-based to cognitive approaches; from pragmatic to theoretical discussions in lexicography or (second) language acquisition, etc.

This volume reflects current issues in linguistic research and the teaching of English in Saxony and the Czech Republic. In an age when English studies adapt to new challenges in the Bologna framework, such a broad and open survey appears particularly appropriate. It reports recent history and current debate, the changes to effective retraining of teachers in the 1990s, and the reorientation towards more business-oriented subjects that comprise not only topics from language, literature and culture, but also from film studies and the media, particularly the new medium of the internet. Our new series offers a forum for discussion, and we hope that experiences from Saxony and the Czech Republic reported will also encourage our colleagues to continue the dialogue in their own fields.

"English for Central Europe: Saxon-Czech Perspectives" was the first meeting of English specialists from Saxony and the Czech Republic, which was made possible through the "Sächsisch-Tschechisches Hochschulzentrum" (STHZ), a project funded by the European Union and the State of Saxony to encourage the academic exchange between Saxon and Czech universities. This meeting brought together teachers and students from both sides of the *Erzgebirge* for the first time to discuss their experience and opinions. This volume cannot render the lively atmosphere and inspiring discussions that we had during the two-day conference, but it does document the breadth of the issues covered. "English for Central Europe" comprises all aspects of English at university level: language, cultural and literary studies and methodology as well as practical language teaching. The contributors also testify to some of the discussions that have taken place within the universities over the fifteen years since the Velvet Revolution and the fall of the Berlin wall. Consequently, we were aware of the similarities (the pressures of effective financial management as well as the adaptation to the Bologna framework) as well as the differences (whereas the training and retraining of English teachers is largely completed in East Germany, it is still the major emphasis of English at Czech universities).

The conference also shows that English studies at Czech universities are once again developing. However, it has been a long time since the Prague linguistic circle influenced linguistic thinking all over the world (although Josef Vachek and Jan Firbas from Brno were struggling to carry on the great tradition until the present day). But the tradition can now be taken up again in functional as well as constructive perspectives and we hope that it can develop a new "communicative dynamism".

Of course, English has also changed. Saxony in former East Germany and the Czech Republic may have been less hit by American influences after the Second World War and the postcolonial movement from the British Empire back to the centre; but they have caught up by now and embraced the divergent movements in this vast field of study. Above all, they have experienced the arrival of the internet and in particular the world-wide web, which extends English studies to a whole new dimension.

This conference has taken stock of and, we hope, laid new foundations for better understanding in the future. The interdisciplinary discourse between German/Saxon and Czech university departments has been stimulated by the conference and by the numerous on- and off-topic discussions during the days of the conference, but it does not end there. We look forward to more fruitful co-operation and exchange of ideas in the near future.

Josef Schmied

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The Internet and English: New Perspectives for Language Learning and Research

JOSEF SCHMIED (Chemnitz)

INTRODUCTION

This contribution looks at two trends that have affected English Departments world-wide over the last decade or so.

On the one hand, the pressure of modernisation and cost-effectiveness at universities has threatened English like other humanities since they are perceived as traditional and less immediately profitable than other subjects. The view that English is not a modern subject is based on old notions of the importance of English and of what English specialists do. In fact, English caters for a wide variety of students and interests, as will be shown in the discussion. For centuries, universities have served two functions in varying proportions, allowing some students to acquire a broad general education and others to achieve more specialised job-oriented training. The German contrast between Bildung and Ausbildung (translatable freely as education and job training) can be rendered only less elegantly in other languages, but the demand remains for English to demonstrate that it can achieve a more immediate relevance than other subjects, bridging university teaching with language applications in schools and beyond. This contribution illustrates that English as a subject encourages students to combine theoretical rigour of thought and practical "employable skills". On the other hand, the internet and particularly the World Wide Web (WWW) have made many English users and others (sometimes painfully) aware of the world-wide functions of English as a lingua franca in international cooperation of government and non-government institutions, of tourist host organisations and guests, of sellers and buyers, and of many others participating in global exchange, particularly between non-native speakers of English. The main development of forms and functions of English nowadays is not among English native speakers but among the rest, since in recent years the number of non-native speakers has surpassed the number of native speakers and this has major consequences for the market value of languages and language teaching[1] (cf. Fig. 1).

[1] The predicted declining trend by L2 speakers for EFL after a few decades has to be seen parallel to the predicted increase of International English. This may change attitudes towards native speakers as models in English teaching and the importance of the WWW as a reference model for (sub-) varieties of English.

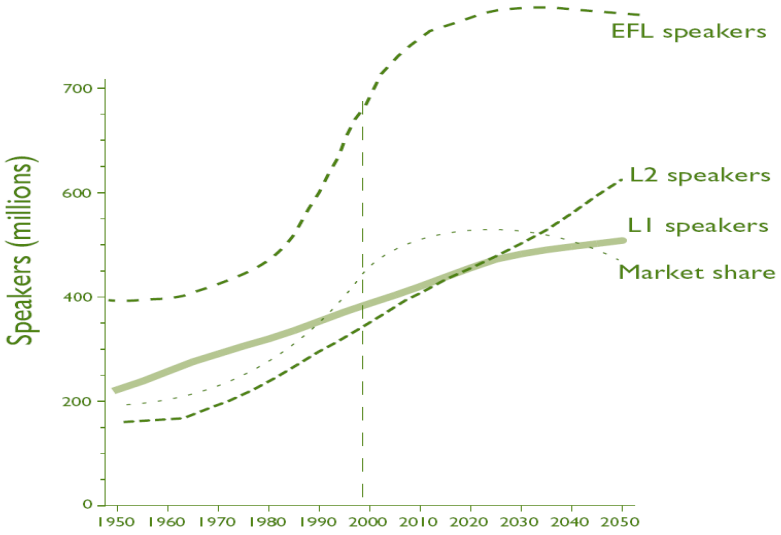

Fig. 1: Estimates of English speakers between 1950 and 2050 (from Graddol 1997: 60)

For English specialists at university level this raises the question whether they can "use" this awareness of globalisation and the internet ("we are the internet subject") to ensure that their subject is taken seriously and given a minimum of resources, at least, and whether they can use the internet for simplifying and modernising their teaching. This does not mean that English specialists have to teach their students basic internet skills and it does not mean that they take WWW materials uncritically as "the truth", either. It means rather that they encourage their students to exploit the new opportunities of global communication. This includes:

- to prepare them for the exchange of information via email contacts and to support their critical awareness of languages and cultures involved (including their own),
- to allow and encourage them to supplement their English materials from school with other materials obtained from the internet,
- to enable them to evaluate WWW material by comparing the information and presentation styles with their own experience and by cross-checking key issues on the WWW, and thus
- to combine skills of text production, reception and evaluation, which have always been at the core of language studies.

The following project descriptions illustrate the opportunities and limitations of these new perspectives for language learning and teaching. It does not demonstrate how the internet can be used as a resource, as a classroom tool, as a basis for language-learning activities and as a coursebook (like Teeler/Gray 2000, for instance), but how the internet can lead to a reorientation of the subject, enabling university teachers to demonstrate how "technical" their subject is to administrators and how "cool" their subject is to students.

As usual, the opportunity is at the same time a challenge - not only because it forces English teachers to keep abreast with their students as "web power users", but also because it challenges old language issues, like the openness and linearity of texts (cf. Schmied 2005). Thus the internet combines surface-skills of immediate use and meta-skills of long-term applications. This helps English specialists to argue that they can fulfil demands not only from those who are more interested in immediate global communicative exchange, but also from those who wish to prepare students for the globalised communication of the future. This future may be as unpredictable as the WWW was only 20 years ago, but the language principles involved can be maintained and adapted.

THE INTERNET AS A DICTIONARY

The idea that the WWW can be used as the great source of information is not new. Even the application to language studies has been common for a long time (cf. Ide/Reppen/Suderman, 2002; Volk, 2001 or Kilgarif, 2001). With the advent of powerful search engines like Google, the search for the occurrence of language forms on the WWW has become part of the daily routine of most professional language users, linguists, translators and other language service providers. For translators, for instance, the site http://www.multilingual.ch not only leads to a service provider in Ticino but gives useful hints on exploiting Google to find webpages with expressions in two languages, which can be very useful for rendering similar meanings in another language, be it as direct translations or paraphrases. Such piggybacking on Google has become popular and effective with the help of so-called Google-hacks[2], which do not use the Google presentation of results but take the Google API format and apply a Perl script to present the figures in a different form. Generally, Google provides three types of information: the frequency of occurrence of the search phrase in the part of the WWW indexed by Google, the URL of the most "relevant" occurrences, and the context lines of the search phrase from the WWW or the Google archives. This can be illustrated by "googling" for an "unknown" word like *palacinky*. It occurs over 7,000 times on the Google-indexed WWW, mostly on pages not in English, but you can easily find one that gives you an explanation and even the price, which also shows you that this may be the American tourist gaze, not necessary the Czech "native" one: "Homemade Crepes - Palacinky Filled with fruit preserves, topped w/ chocolate and whipped cream, $2.00."

However, you may overlook a lot of useful (?) spelling variants and even misleading (?) cultural variants:

> Entrees of rabbit legs and sirloin of pork were typical Mitteleuropa fare. We couldn't leave Prague without tasting the famous dessert crepes, palacinki, which the chef obligingly prepared and served with fruit, whipped cream and ice cream.

[2] Calishain/Dormfest (2003) offer a wide array of suggestions and even a webpage with many interesting proposals on http://WWW.oreilly.com/catalog/googlehks/chapter/ .

> And for dessert you will probably be recommended to try the traditional syrupy baklava or different kinds of fine pastries. A favored dessert is the palachinki- crepe stuffed with chocolate or nuts and honey. Good appetite, or, as the Bulgarians say DOBAR APETIT!

Of course, the food and language interface is usually demonstrated with other national dishes (haggis, neeps 'n' tatties) or national idiosyncracies (marmite, kippers) in English teaching today. The example demonstrates that Google is not a linguistic tool for analysis and needs to be complemented by other web-extracting software.

For linguists, Webcorp[3] has been one of the most useful applications for the last few years – and thus deserves special consideration. Like all searches for lexical strings, Webcorp can only retrieve language forms, it cannot provide specific meanings of polysemous or even homograph words (like the general meaning of fall and the specific meaning of *fall* as *autumn* in AmE), but the option to select site, newspaper and text domains helps to restrict search and processing. Site domain refers to the w3c.org categorisation of TLDs (top level domains) that are basically country-specific with well-known exceptions like .tv, which is not Tuvalu in the Pacific, or the US custom of having .com or .edu as world-wide, not specifically American domains, or the almost exclusively American .mil used by the US forces and .gov by the US administration.

Other WWW restrictions are equally language- and style-relevant. The newspaper domains are extremely useful for distinguishing between different types of "journalese", which have been established in many traditional corpus-compilations and analyses (since the Brown and LOB corpora distinguished between reportage and editorials in the press section, i.e. between informative and persuasive text types, respectively), as well as other genres used in, although not exclusively by newspapers (like narrative texts in short stories or instructive texts, e.g. on gardening).[4]

Webcorp is not only a lexeme- and phrase-retrieval tool that allows a quick selection of appropriate examples, it is also a collocation tool since it offers a presentation of key words in context and a brief statistical matrix showing lexemes in front of and behind the key words, and a list of their most significant collocates (defined here as lexemes that co-occur with each other significantly in natural texts). Of course, collocates depend on meaning and thus they can also be used for word disambiguation. The case of *fall* mentioned above illustrates options and problems: Table 1 below includes not only the adverbs "back" and "forward" and "the", but also the time-specific collocate "Berlin Wall" and the US-specific "thru" and even "fall waiting" in the collocate list, which is revealed

[3] The web interface http://www.webcorp.org.uk has been updated recently. Background information can be found on the WWW.

[4] For a discussion of the classification of the International Corpus of English (ICE) see Schmied (1990). Nowadays, web newspapers provide a wide range of text-types from reportage to letters-to-the-editor and even related chats and background links.

by a click through to the concrete sentences as occurring in the college context of "fall waiting lists". Both occur in the calculation because obviously .com WWW pages have been included in the search. The semantic continuum from BrE (*drop*) to AmE (*autumn*) can be seen in the collocation "leaf fall". "Rise" demonstrates the collocation with the antonym and the problem of capitalisation at the same time.

Word	Total	L4	L3	L2	L1		R1	R2	R3	R4	Left Total	Right Total
rise	12			11				1			11	1
back	9			2			7				2	7
Rise	7			5			1			1	5	2
cent	7				2				1	4	2	5
forward	7			2			3			2	2	5
thru	7				1		4			2	1	6
Wall	6									6	0	6
Berlin	6								6		0	6
love	6							4	2		0	6
Scotland	5	1						2		2	1	4
leaf	4				4						4	0
education	4			3					1		3	1
shoe	4			4							4	0

leaf fall concerns fall fall back fall thru fall waiting

Table 1: External collocates of "fall" in domain .uk (excluding stopwords)

The list from the American .gov administration (List 2) obviously includes not only variety-specific cases like *fall color(s)* and *fall foliage*, but also the geriatric *fall hazard/risk*, and *fall protection/prevention* for soldiers and *ash/rock fall* after explosions, etc.

ash fall rock fall substantial fall personal fall free fall fall protection fall arrest fall color fall prevention fall foliage fall colors fall hazards fall risk fall arresting fall injuries fall 2002

List 2: External collocates of "fall" in domain .gov (excluding stopwords)

The corresponding military list (3) unsurprisingly displays similar collocates, but also the rather common and long-expected *free fall* and *fall asleep*.

free fall fall protection fall asleep fall transition fall hazards fall arrest fall meeting fall back

List 3: External collocates of "fall" in domain .mil (excluding stopwords)

None of the lists above contains *fall short of* or *fall through; fall flat, fall sharply* and *fall dramatically*; to say nothing of *fall by the wayside, fall into place* or *fall between two stools*, which can all be expected in a good collocation list in a learner dictionary. *Fall for* and *fall out* occur in the general Webcorp list, however. Obviously, a lot of computer linguistic work still has to be done to measure strengths of collocation in larger databases.

FREQUENCY, NORM AND VARIATION

The applications of using the WWW as a domain-specific frequency dictionary are abundant. Of course, the frequency of certain phrases in Google varies, since new pages are added (or taken out) all the time. For variation specialists, Webcorp is interesting because it can distinguish between individual native- and non-native speaker countries (i.e. domains), but it does not display the results in comparative tables.

WebPhraseCount (WPC) uses the same principle as Webcorp, but it offers a more quantitative approach, since it presents the statistical results in comparison. It uses Google Web APIs, which have been made available recently in a beta version. This service enables programmers to develop software that accesses the Google web index, but it is limited to 1,000 queries a day.

Through a combination of queries we can either do a WPC multi-phrase search by entering two or more search phrases and comparing their occurrence in a certain domain, which is usually culture-specific (.uk for Britain, .au for Australia or .za for South Africa, for instance), or a WPC multi-domain search for the same phrase in different domains. From a linguistic perspective the first use is more language learner (EFL) related, i.e. we can find out whether a certain expression is used more commonly than another; this enables us to verify or falsify collocations, for instance. The second use is rather variation (ESL) related, i.e. we compare phrases in different countries, so that we can distinguish expressions that are country-specific (or region-specific like *ugali*) from world-wide expressions of English. Collocational analyses can be pursued in lexis and in grammar.

As an example, for the non-native speaker the question of prepositions after verbs or adjectives can be quite tricky. Dictionaries often indicate only standard prepositions after lexemes (like *different* + *from*) and may happen to show specific usage in sample sentences, but they hardly comment on frequencies or on variety and style differences. Thus, a simple WWW search for *different from*, *different to* and *different than* shows that only a fraction of the over 92,000,000 occurrences of *different* is followed by a preposition. *From* is chosen in 71 %, *to* in 8 % and *than* in 20 % of the cases; but these proportions are distributed quite differently in the British, Australian, Canadian, US Government and South African domains. The statistical measurements *intrasite share* and *intrasite*

factor offer help in interpreting the results. Of course, *different from* is the standard collocation, whereas *different than* is clearly American usage. This becomes particularly clear when we look at the intrasite factor, which takes the least frequent search phrase as 1 and displays a factor that indicates how many times more frequent the others are, because in all three North American domains *different than* is used more often than *different to*.

Similarly, a search for *Tesco is / has* in contrast to *are / have* [5] reveals very quickly that in two thirds of the cases the superstores are considered as singular, since they would like to appear as a unit that gives a standard appearance to its customers (Table 4). However, in some cases they would like to appear as a multifaceted and ubiquitous entity, which may be brought across more easily in the plural. But this does not explain why (the much less frequent) *does/do* does not follow that pattern nor why this is less extreme with other superstore names (in Table 5).

no.	**phrase**	**total sites**	**intra-phrase percentage**	**inter-phrase share**
1a	Tesco has	1,250	0.01 %	30.34 %
1b	Tesco have	596	0.005 %	14.466 %
2a	Tesco is	1,520	0.012 %	36.893 %
2b	Tesco are	581	0.004 %	14.102 %
3a	Tesco does	65	0 %	1.578 %
3b	Tesco do	108	0.001 %	2.621 %

Table 4: Singular vs. plural verb forms after TESCO

no.	**phrase**	**total sites**	**intra-phrase percentage**	**inter-phrase share**
1	Tesco has	1,250	0.01 %	40.349 %
2	Tesco have	596	0.005 %	19.238 %
3	Sainsbury's has	279	0.002 %	9.006 %
4	Sainsbury's have	198	0.002 %	6.391 %
5	Safeway has	324	0.002 %	10.458 %
6	Safeway have	171	0.001 %	5.52 %
7	Waitrose has	176	0.001 %	5.681 %
8	Waitrose have	104	0.001 %	3.357 %

Table 5: Singular vs. plural verb forms after UK superstore names

[5] The most frequent verb forms have to be used, because other verbs like *want, need*, etc. do not occur often enough for a rewarding WWW analysis.

LIMITATIONS

The Web as a corpus?

Corpus linguists know, of course, that the results of an analysis depend largely on a well-stratified sample. Even if the name Webcorp, for instance, suggests that the Web can be used as a corpus, it does not claim that it is actually a corpus in the sense that it is stratified according to productive or receptive usage or according to similar principles in all TLDs. Since it seems not quite clear whether the World-Wide Web is really stratified enough to represent a certain national variety, for instance, we have called our local research tool WebPhraseCount (WPC), which is more neutral and emphasises that the statistical procedure is more important than finding individual occurrences. Many corpus linguists have pointed out that such simple solutions are tempting because they are fast and provide masses of data, but they are also aware that these data have to be checked thoroughly, because they are always skewed in some direction. Understandably, putting cookery recipes up on the internet is not perceived an urgent need in Africa, in contrast to Europe or the US. Thus web texts are clearly culture-specific and still the web does not reflect reality or language use as a whole.

Statistical operations

Of course, the occurrence or even absolute frequency of a phrase is much less interesting than its occurrence in proportion to other phrases or in other domains. Unfortunately, the size of domains varies a lot, and for small countries like Malawi or Tanzania, the statistical basis for more than the most general words is not big enough yet. Since WPC subcategorisation is based on TLDs, the user must be familiar with them or be able to consult a list easily. Thus WPC users are able to simply click on a map to obtain automatically the TLD attributed by the WWW consortium.

Technical limitations

The program developed is relatively quick and efficient, but a few restrictions apply. The total number of sites varies constantly by as much as three percent, but this should not affect the statistics' outcome since the search words should not necessarily occur on "unstable" pages more frequently than on others.

The major limitation of WPC is imposed by Google, which specifies that not more than 1,000 search results can be obtained by a single user per day. This quota is of course used up quickly if, for instance, more than ten multi-domain complex searches with ten phrases and ten domains are carried out. Thus with WPC search results are stored in a cache and irrelevant options can be clicked away easily, so that the analyst does not have to submit all the queries again, if only a few provide unsatisfactory results (e.g. because the figures are too low).

By this method, changing display options does not use up the limited queries available.

Web language limitations

Finally it is worth summarising the limitations of the web that are specific to language studies. As mentioned above, the frequency of an English phrase can be distorted if it also occurs in other languages, even in domain sites where the vast majority of texts is expected to be published in English (e.g. information in French, which has many forms identical with English).

Whether the comparison of non-standard English in English-language web pages from non-ENL countries like Italy or Spain is very useful has to be seen. Contrastive (parallel) texts may be analysed if the language marker "+the" is replaced by others (e.g. the German articles). The relative frequency of equivalent forms like *church, uncle, school marks*, etc. could also be used in cross-cultural studies.

Obviously, the WWW is not a corpus in the sense that it is stratified according to everyday language usage. If we use it because it is so nicely machine-readable and available, we have to be aware of the text types that it is biased towards or against. The most obvious is that oral communication is completely missing, but this may be compensated for partly by including texts from discussion groups, email, chats and other exchanges outside the WWW. Then, the WWW is obviously a public domain, thus more personal pages are rare; even "personal, private" homepages are public, sometimes even exhibitionistic – and rather culture-specific. This does not only reflect "development standards" but partly also functional domains in multilingual societies, where English may only be used in more formal contexts and hence shows, as a second language, much less variation and specificity than in first-language usage.

A CORPUS FROM THE WEB?

If the ICE corpora are too small and the web is too "untidy", maybe a compromise can found. If we concentrate on text-types that are available world-wide, like different types of newspaper texts (cf. above), economic texts (like marketing and company-related texts) or academic web pages (with scholarly articles as well as student advice), we may be able to replicate the WWW with a corpus-like stratification. Such a WWW corpus would normalise the size differences between TDLs and the text-types included. This corpus could be used as a monitor corpus, against which other search results from smaller or supposedly uneven corpora could be measured. Thus the national ICE corpora of one million words will soon prove too small for collocational analyses (Schmied 2004); but a quick check in WPC and our WWW corpus would verify or falsify hypotheses quickly enough.

OUTLOOK

Many authors (e.g. Wolff/Rüschoff, 1999) have argued forcefully for integrating computers in language teaching and learning because students have to be prepared for the modern world and so-called knowledge society. In addition to that, we have tried to show that English language and the WWW offer a unique chance for English studies at university level to combine theoretical background and practical skills. This goes beyond email contacts and "clever googling skills", where a knowledge of disambiguating collocates or lexical fields and synonyms[6] may be useful for limiting or expanding search results. This emphasises inferences from evaluative markers like hedges and modality signals (modal adverbs like *probably* and modal verbs like *may* or critical keywords like *evidence*) to assess the value of a text critically. This includes knowledge of style features to retrieve the appropriate text for a special purpose or readership. Linguistic knowledge is going to become even more useful, when metatags and title tags in XML format will be standard, because then reader-specific information can be targeted more easily. When we wanted a scholarly article on *tsunami* without ploughing through heaps of newspaper reports we would simply add the respective DTD.

The internet is much too important to leave it to the computer science or the media specialists, it has a pervasive influence on all university subjects and the English specialists must be in the forefront of development so that they know opportunities as well as threats and are not left behind.

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[6] Texts on *arms* like *weapons* can be excluded if we search for *arms* plus *hands* or legs or simply the singular form *arm*. If we look for more information on *arms* like *weapons*, we have to be more specific like *arms race*, *arms control* etc.

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The Development of the Chemnitz Internet Grammar

KATRIN VOIGT/JOSEF SCHMIED (Chemnitz)

INTRODUCTION

This contribution reports on a major research project that was carried out by a research team at Chemnitz University of Technology over the last ten years or so, the Chemnitz Internet Grammar (CING). From its humble beginnings as a set of English – German translation texts, it developed into a powerful comparative database with its own retrieval mechanisms and tool box, from a contrastive research tool to a modern e-learning platform on the WWW that can be used by advanced learners of English world-wide.

Basically, the CING is a web-based learning tool addressed to anyone interested in improving his or her knowledge and/or skills of English grammar. "The target group of users consists of advanced learners of English, mainly with German as a mother tongue; thus the CING concentrates on those areas of English grammar where substantial differences occur between English and German" (Schmied 2001:514). Although the foundations of the project were laid several years earlier, its official development started in 1997 within the framework of the research project "New Media Everyday Life Applications".[1] It ended officially at the end of 2003, but it continues to be available as a research and service tool on the WWW.

Three basic ideas lie at the heart of the CING project. In the early 1990s, contrastive analysis had a revival (after the structuralist beginnings in the 1960s and 1970s) on the basis of translation corpora (cf. Sajavaara, 1996). During the 1990s various research groups set up parallel corpora on the basis of translation texts, e.g. English–Norwegian (at Oslo University), English-Swedish (at Lund University), English–Finnish (at Jyväskylä University) to name but a few. A related English–German project was started at Chemnitz and concentrated on setting up a translation corpus and studying translations and translationese (e.g. Schmied/Schäffler, 1996 and 1997).

At the same time, computer technology had developed so far that it was possible for the first time to record and study user behaviour on the screen and even over the internet. The academic discussion of old questions, e.g. how learners actually use a dictionary or grammar, was resumed and the new

[1] The research project was funded by the German Research Association (DFG) and hosted by the Chair of English Language and Linguistics. We wish to thank out colleagues in the research group, Christian Eckhart, Naomi Hallan, Birgit Ahlemeyer, Angela Hahn, Diana Hudson-Ettle, Christoph Haase, Ellen Gorlow, Denis Friedrich, Gerard Keohane, Tobias Lehnert and Isabel Heller for many interesting discussions. The fruits of our efforts can be used freely on the WWW under http://www.tu-chemnitz/InternetGrammar.

technology promised to allow a much more systematic "observation" of practical active language learning than before (cf. Schmied, 2005a).

This brought the underlying cognitive processes of learner behaviour into focus, since language theory had moved towards cognitive argumentation, which was in full swing by the mid 1990s. The basic idea for us was that structural differences between languages may set a certain frame, but language users and learners still have enough options to select their own preferences depending on cognitive, stylistic or social variables (Schmied, 1994 and 1998).

These developments in the academic as well as the technological fields led from the translation corpus to the Internet Grammar project. It was based on the German – English contrast, where despite (or rather because of) many similar cognates, many subtle choices can be made between various semantically overlapping prepositions for instance (like *with* vs. *mit*, cf. Schmied, 1998). Sometimes the choice is only stylistic or genre-specific, like the choice of modal adverbs vs. modal verbs in German, which prefers the former, and English, which prefers the latter (Schmied/Schäffler, 1996). Such choices can, however, not only be seen inter-linguistically, but also intra-linguistically. Since they are particularly important for advanced learners of English, a learning tool was developed to model such user and learner choices to combine subject-specific aspects (language analysis and language learning) in an interdisciplinary perspective with psychological and computational aspects. Over the years the Internet Grammar had to overcome multiple obstacles, user-friendliness being the most important of these, which become most obvious in a comparison of the two grammar versions, both of which are available online.

GRAMMAR DEVELOPMENT IN PHASE 1 (1997 – 2002)

Linguists working at Chemnitz University of Technology originally set up the CING to record data on "Learner behaviour on the Internet", also in collaboration with our sister project in cognitive psychology (cf. Naumann et. al., 2001a, 2001b). As stated in the project's objectives "the aim […] is to induce guiding principles for the development of interactive, learner-specific grammar programs for the internet and to produce a program based on aspects of English grammar which applies these principles" (Project Information). Furthermore, the developers wanted the CING to be "a learner-centred pedagogical grammar" (ibid.) in which the user can choose between a rule component (Explanations Section), a database of authentic language (the Chemnitz Translation Corpus), or an exercise component. What made, and still makes, the CING very innovative is its introduction of "new ways of learning" (ibid.) by offering the user a choice between a deductive (by opting for the rule component) and inductive (by working with the database) approach to each grammar topic. Moreover, the first version, CING1, focuses on "grammar problems that are especially relevant to German speaking learners" (ibid.) and intensified the contrastive approach by

presenting the user with authentic English-German examples from the database. The database (Chemnitz Translation Corpus) is a 2 million word parallel corpus (English/German) with texts from four different text types[2]: Academic Writing, EU Documents, Public Speeches, and Tourist Brochures; which the user can query directly and independently.

By choosing to develop an online grammar, the CING team wanted to enable the user "to 'click' individually through the programme" (ibid.) in a hypertext structure (cf. Schmied, 2005). The users were also offered exercises which they were to complete interactively online as well as correction of the exercises and immediate feedback on their performance.

To cater to three different user groups (linguists, teachers, and students), the developing team originally intended to include various levels of difficulty and complexity in the rule component, but this was given up later as the complexity of specific grammar subcategories can only be determined after some analysis of CING user behaviour.

This first/early version of the CING was based on dynamic generation of HTML pages via Perl scripts. JavaScript and Lingo (a MacroMedia language for interactive MM-Director animations) were also used in programming.

In practice, the CING1 was divided vertically into Explanations and Discovery Sections, which shared the examples and exercises components between them as illustrated in the scheme below (Fig. 1).

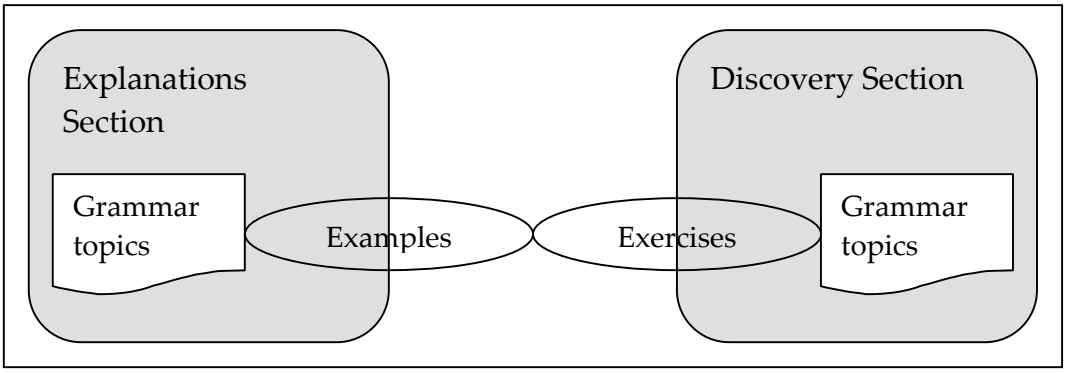

Figure 1: Vertical structure of CING1

NAVIGATION

Navigation within the system was limited to the mixed navigation and content bar on the left-hand side of the screen (cf. Fig. 2). In order to record tracking data of grammar sessions, the developers had to restrict the use of normal browser navigation features and include a CING-specific navigation bar which contained a 'Back' button, bookmark functions ('Set a Bookmark' and 'Go to

[2] The original corpus design (Schmied, 1994) had been an even wider range of genres, in particular to include literature texts, because they were often taken as the reference model in traditional dictionaries and grammars; but this proved impossible for copyright reasons, mainly on the German side.

Bookmarks'), as well as a 'Site Map'. 'Set a Bookmark' enables the users to set bookmarks for pages of interest, which they want to revisit. At any of their later visits to the CING they can then go directly to these via the 'Go to Bookmarks' function. Unfortunately, navigation was not separated clearly enough from content entries, such as 'Table of Contents Explanations Section', 'Table of Contents Discovery Section', 'Chemnitz Translation Corpus', an alphabetical 'index' of grammatical terms, and a user guide ('Help'). The 'Log Off' function closed the browser window and stopped the tracking.

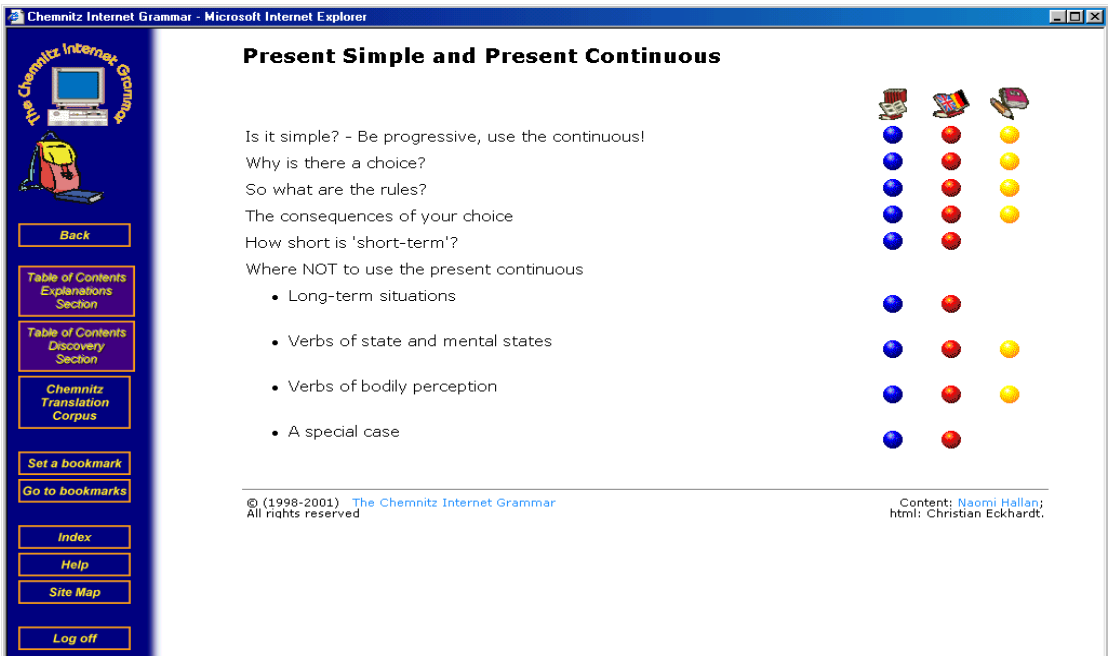

Figure 2: CING1 screenshot of the chapter *Present Simple* and *Present Continuous*

According to user feedback, the CING1 version had several flaws. The most serious weakness was the navigation through the program due to the lack of structural guidance. Users got confused and frequently lost by the links to other topics without knowing where exactly they led. The second major weakness reported was the designs' and its lack of user-friendliness due to restricted navigation facilities.[3]

As far as the rule component (Explanations Section) was concerned three of the four grammar topics, *Tenses*, *Conditional Structures*, *Relative Clauses*, and *Prepositions*, were relatively well covered. The Discovery Section was only partly completed for these topics.

A NEW WAY OF LEARNING: *EXPLANATIONS* AND *DISCOVERY* SECTIONS

As mentioned above, CING1 was designed as a research tool for collecting data about learner behaviour in an online, interactive learning environment. The

[3] A more comprehensive evaluation study of the different stages of the CING based on user feedback is provided by Heller (in preparation).

developers' main aim was to provide the user with a choice among a rule component (Explanations Section), an authentic database (Chemnitz Translation Corpus / Discovery Section), and an exercise component in order to explore "new ways of learning".

The two approaches to grammar teaching adopted in the CING1 can also be called deductive and inductive ways of learning. Deductive learning on the one hand means that the learners are presented with a rule and optional examples illustrating the rule. Deductive learning of the Explanations Section is a top-down approach from a given rule to specific examples of authentic language use.

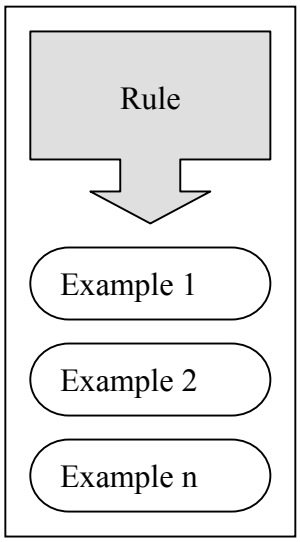

Figure 3: Deductive Learning in the Explanations Section

Inductive learning on the other hand is a bottom-up approach to a certain topic, i.e. the learners are first presented with various examples of authentic language that illustrate the topical rule/structure. Then they are asked to infer from these prototypical examples what the rule could be and check their own hypothesis against the rule. The learners are led from simple to more complicated cases and their critical awareness is raised.

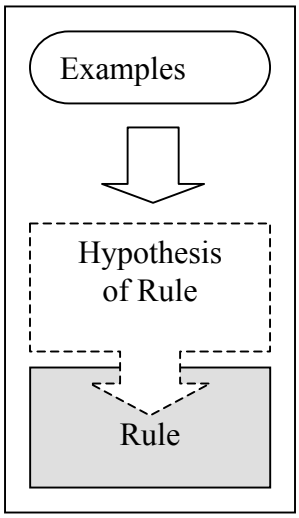

Figure 4: Inductive Learning in the Discovery Section

After completing either Explanations or Discovery Section topics the individual user is free to go to the corresponding section in the other approach or to try the Exercises. He/She can complete some or all of them online and receive immediate feedback on his/her performance.

Grammar content presentation in these two ways focuses on specific learner needs. Inductive learning offers the learner an opportunity to study real language examples in great detail and subsequently construct hypotheses of grammatical rules, that is learner-specific temporary rules which may either be supported through the process of hypothesis testing or must be modified via the same

procedure in order to resemble descriptive or even prescriptive language rules (cf. Mohammed, 1993).

Explicit (deductive) grammar instruction, i.e. well-formed rules illustrated by examples, lacks active hypothesis formation on the side of the learner, but may supplement the inductive approach by offering information for the process of hypothesis testing (Scott, 1989).

GRAMMAR DEVELOPMENT IN PHASE 2 (2003)

When the CING project was taken over by a new team of developers in March 2003, major changes concerning its design and structure took place. Although it looks very different, the new CING2 remains similar to the old version in many aspects.

The new version is based on a MySQL/PHP4 database structure and an HTML surface[4]. The backend of the CING2 is a Content Management System developed by our programmers that can be accessed via any browser. Thus, data management is very convenient and can be done from any computer via a secure server login. Compared to CING1, CING2 is based on a more stable platform and a more up-to-date design and structure.

DESIGN

According to state-of-the-art design specifications, a web-designer developed an integrated layout for CING2 that clearly divides navigation and content and offers a homogenous learning environment to the user. The new CING navigation bar at the top of the screen (cf. Figure 2) offers many functions familiar from normal web browsers. The 'Back' and 'Forward' buttons help to navigate linearly through the grammar, while a 'History' function records all pages visited during a grammar session but deletes them when the user logs off. The 'Home' button takes the user to the starting page any time, whereas the 'Set' and 'View Bookmarks' functions were already contained in the old version. 'User Manual', 'Help/FAQ', 'Search' and 'Logout' functions as well as the 'Site Map' are located in the top right corner of the screen. The user manual contains all information necessary to successfully work with the CING2. In the bottom right corner is a link to three feedback questionnaires, which help us to make the CING2 more user-friendly by providing us with feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of our CING2 version. This data is also designed to give us more detailed information about our users with which we can then focus our grammar content even more on specific user groups.

[4] The program is accessible with any browser with JavaScript and PopUp windows activated.

THE CING2 TOOLBOX

The content bar at the left-hand side of the screen contains the 'Content Menu' listing all major topics dealt with in the CING. It furthermore holds the so-called 'Toolbox', which contains useful tools for the learner. They are not directly grammar-related but might help the users to improve their knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary as well as their abstract thinking. In the Toolbox the users can choose to complete the so-called 'Placement Test'[5] which roughly measures the user's proficiency in English (grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension) based on basic principles of the TOEFL and Cambridge Proficiency tests.

The 'Corpus Search' leads the user to the Chemnitz Translation Corpus, already serving as a database for the early CING1 version.

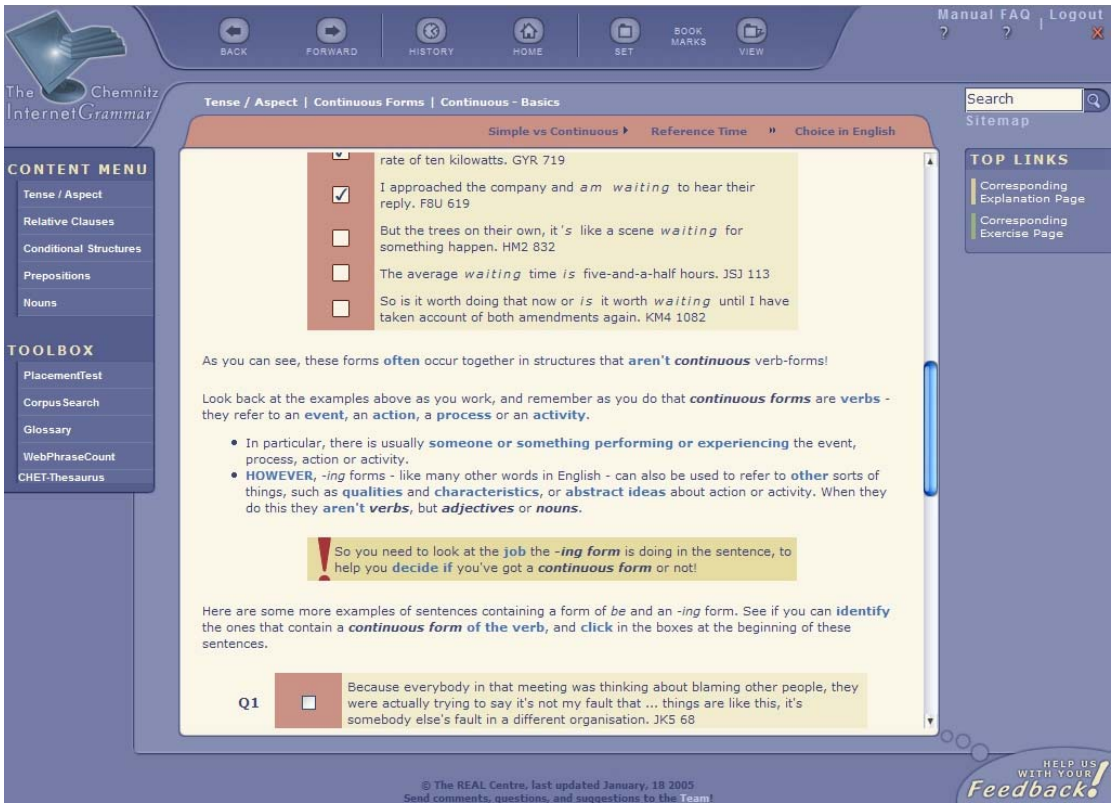

Figure 5: CING 2003 Screenshot, Discovery Page with Navigation.

The 'Glossary' contains definitions and examples of terminology used in the grammar explanations. The user can, therefore, look up terms he/she doesn't understand.

'WebPhraseCount' is another corpus tool, which uses all web sites indexed with Google as a corpus, and allows the user to investigate comparisons of word frequencies of a certain word or phrase or various words/phrases within certain

[5] During the first test phase on the internet, thousands of users visited the grammar only to find out that it was probably too advanced for them. Since we were often asked "how well do I need to know English", we included a simple placement test to classify users into very broad bands and encourage them to go on or not.

domains. It offers a restricted possibility for searching for one word/phrase in various domains, various words/phrases in one domain or various words/phrases in various domains. The default domain is usually .uk, but the user can put in any abbreviations for domains of English-speaking countries, e.g. .nz for New Zealand, .au for Australia, .za for South Africa and so on.

The *CHET-Thesaurus* extracts definitions of nouns of a given text on the basis of WORDNET. It was included partly to enable users to understand special terms more easily and partly to make them aware of other on-line learning opportunities.

NAVIGATION

In addition to the new design and the toolbox, various navigation systems were introduced to make sure the user does not get lost so easily in the CING2. We modelled these on well-known navigation aids from various sources so that we can assume the computer-literate user will recognize them from previous experience with web navigation. Above the content window the user is always provided with the path of topic levels of the CING2 which he/she has already navigated through. He/she can any time click any of these and reach the intended level immediately. Furthermore, we colour-coded each section so that frequent CING2 users are able to recognize their location at a glance. Colour-coded bars with the respective colour of the section on top of the content window show the titles of different chapters in a topic. The current location of the user in the system is always displayed in the centre with the two previous chapters to its left and the two following ones on its right. They are also clickable so that they can be reached from any point within the grammar topic. The 'Hot Links' on the right-hand side of the screen allow easy changeover between the sections.

While using the CING2, this environment will stay the same at all times, only the central window will change with the display of different content.

STRUCTURE

The CING1 division into Explanation and Discovery Sections has been maintained. The Exercises Section is the new third component of the CING2. In an attempt to make the CING available and interesting to a wider audience than just German speakers, we decided to integrate neither the English-German examples from the older version nor the English-German contrastive examples in the explanations and exercises.

Furthermore, in accordance with former evaluations we considered the vertical division of CING1 an obstacle to tracking learner behaviour. Consequently, we structured CING2 horizontally; the user does not have to decide if he wants to access the rule or corpus-based component in the very beginning but rather after a specific grammar topic has been chosen.

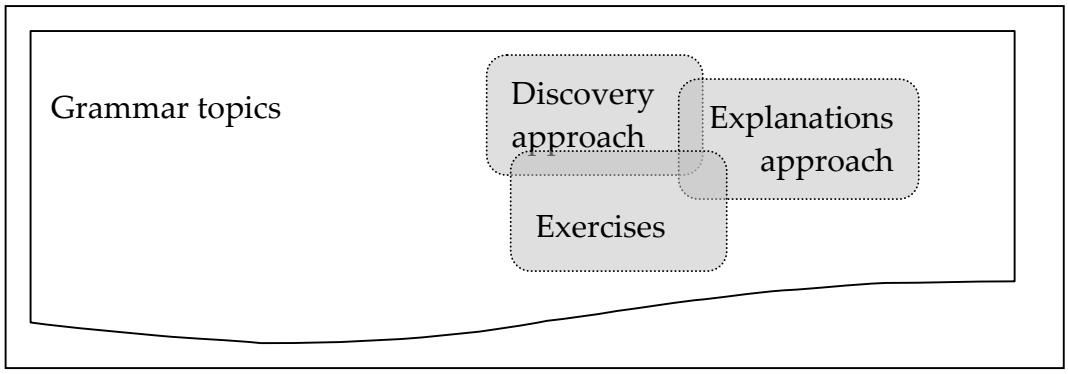

Figure 6: Horizontal Structure of CING 2003

The so-called 'Selector' (cf. Figure 7) is a means of visualizing this structure for the user. It incorporates the colours of the various sections and also presents the three components to the user in a very compact form. The Selector is designed as an image map, so that all segments work as links to the related content pages.

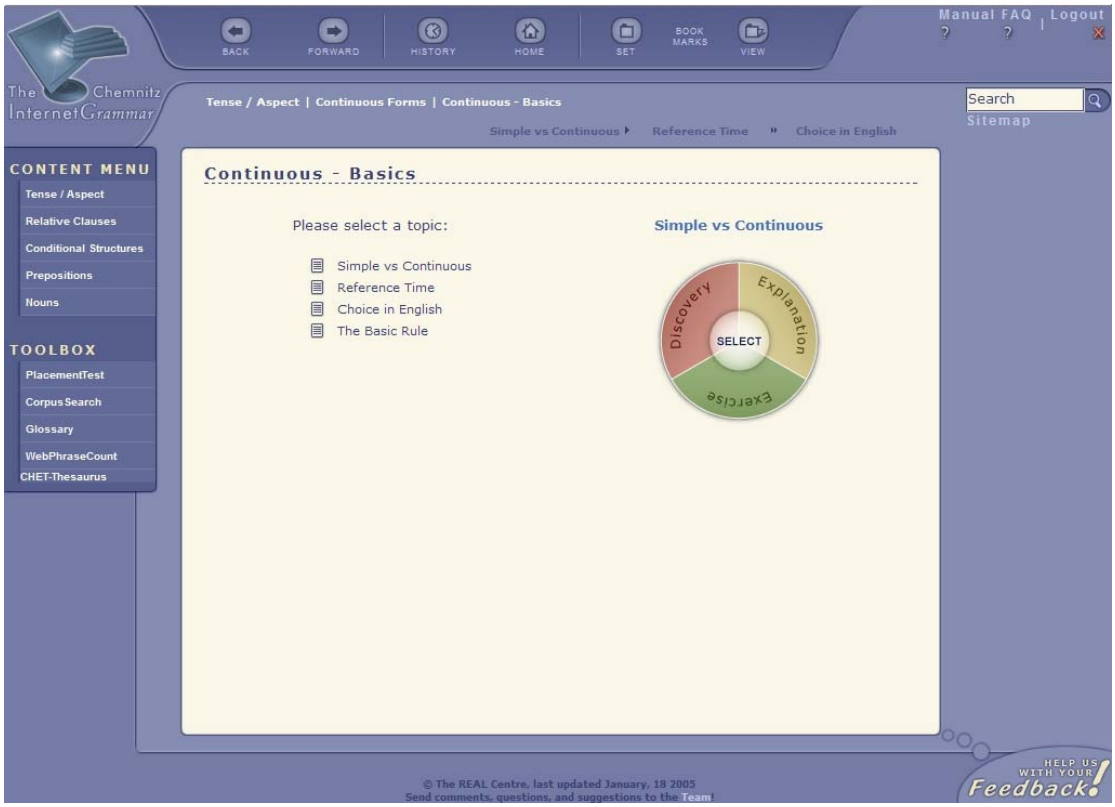

Figure 7: Screenshot of the introductory chapter to Present Simple and Continuous, Contents with Selector

In order to give the user structural guidance, we had to sacrifice some of the hypertext features of the CING1 to a more linear structure in CING2. Whereas the early version was richly but confusingly interlinked, the new version (CING2) only contains links only between the three sections within one topic and links from terms in a page to the glossary. As a further development we intended

to complement this rather linear structure with a third CING version (CING3). This version would have been more of a GrammarWeb, meaning a collection of self-contained chunks of English grammar organised (i.e. linked) within the presentation similar to the brain's organisation of knowledge (cf. Anderson/Lebiere, 1998). However, this phase has been postponed due to lack of funding.

OUTLOOK: THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNET GRAMMAR AND E-LEARNING

Although the Internet Grammar project has already achieved its main purpose of making a set of grammar sections available to different types of users on the WWW, the service and the research continue.

Currently, several PhD theses investigate concept formation in grammar and evaluate e-learning on the basis of as well as beyond the Internet Grammar. New related but separate web experiments will be pursued and further discussions will be held.

The Internet Grammar not only produces large amounts of data which will have to be analysed for specific purposes, it has also once more raised fundamental questions of reading and learning processes (Schmied, 2005).

Though the Internet Grammar will not be completely revamped into CING3 in the near future, we are planning many small additions. A possible development would be making the CING user-adaptive (cf. Brusilovsky, 1999, Brunstein et.al., 2002), in the sense that the users complete a pre-test testing only knowledge that is contained in the CING2 programme. Then they are presented automatically with those grammar chapters dealing with areas they did not show mastery of. After working through this selection of topics, they can finally complete another test to measure their achievements. Thus we will gradually move closer to customized grammar that learners can use most effectively, not only because they are given the choices which are most useful for them at a level of explanation they can digest, but because they have learned to connect concepts and verify or falsify hypotheses from data, so that their I-language more and more resembles the data base available, which we hope to be a good reflection of the target language. This would increase language skills and language awareness – and make our Internet Grammar a useful model for e-learning around the world.

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Learner Autonomy and Information Technology in Language Area Studies

ISABEL HELLER (Chemnitz)

INTRODUCTION

While the European economy is striving for more co-operation between countries, the call for its members to act flexibly in work, residence and language is strong. This development has given multilingualism and language diversity priority making language proficiency the key to a successful European (and global) community (Chambers, 2001).

While in the past a foreign language (FL) was learned to study its literature (Lessard-Clouston, 1997) the main reason for learning a language today is efficient communication with members of other languages for economic or other reasons. According to Little (Little 1991:21) this "communicative efficiency" in a foreign language depends, apart from other skills, on the learner's awareness of social requirements when using the target language. To gain this insight into the values and meanings of the target culture, some researchers believe that language learners need to take the role of a member of this culture (Byram, Morgan et al., 1994).

In practice this means learners need to be prepared well in the medium of communication (language) and acquire enough knowledge about the target culture to be able to interpret and integrate the cultural phenomena; a knowledge they often do not have (Kramsch, 1988b; Sadow, 1987).

The amount of knowledge necessary for this is steadily growing and has already transformed our society into a knowledge society, where knowledge is managed rather then retained. Computers and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) can be a great help in the accessing and managing of this, in this case cultural, knowledge, but the correct application of it still lies with the learner. 'Learner autonomy', as it was coined in the eighties by Holec (1981), is what enables the learner to independently apply knowledge and then appropriately communicate with it. In that way learner autonomy becomes more and more of a crucial aspect of today's language education and that of the future (Holec 1981:25, Dickinson 1992).

This article will suggest how language teaching, culture teaching, ICT and learner autonomy can be combined to give students a sense of the New Zealand and Australian culture in their English language learning experience.

We will look at the history of language learning theories and the importance of cultural instruction as well as the possibilities ICT offers a course that aims at culturally aware, autonomous learners.

An examination of the objectives and contents of the culture course (for advanced students of English at the University of Chemnitz) Integrated Area Studies Course: New Zealand and Australia (IAS) will follow.

Before learner and teacher activities necessary for learner autonomy or self-directed learning will be set out, an example of real **c**lass**r**oom (CR) practice of the IAS course will be suggested. This as well as the conclusion shall hint at difficulties and issues inherent in successful learner autonomy training and ICT application as well as their solution.

THEORIES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

In the history of language acquisition research, many have claimed cultural knowledge of learners to be a crucial part in the training of successful foreign language speakers. Despite that, many FL learning theories (Behaviorist, Input Hypothesis, Universal Grammar, Focus on Form, Teachability Hypothesis etc.) neglected cultural aspects of the target language (TL) in their systems of language acquisition processes.

One of the first to integrate culture as an important part of language learning was Vygotsky (1978) with a sociocultural theory of FL learning. In his view human beings are closely connected to the world they live in and use language as a "tool for thought". From this can be concluded that characteristics of the world or culture a human being is part of, will play a part in his language use, which closely intertwines Vygotsky's theory with foreign language acquisition, although he originally focused on first language development.

Constructivists followed this view and claimed that a communicatively rich human social environment presented to a motivated learner is sufficient to lead to future language emergence (Doughty/Long 2003:95). Here the learner "constructs" the new language system himself on the basis of what he sees around him (the world he/she is part of).

A more recent version of Vygotsky's view of language development and the impact of culture, the Second Language Activity Theory, claims the process of foreign language learning takes place in activities the learner is involved in; also culturally motivated activities. Thus culture can become more transparent for a learner which can make it easier for him to integrate into the culture and develop a genuine individual understanding of it (Lantolf, 2001).

Transculturalists[1] go even further in demanding a stronger search for differences between cultures and their unique characteristics, which is critical for the achievement of cultural awareness.

[1] For a definition of Transculturalism and its theories please refer to http://www.asnel.de.

ICT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

ICT is a resource for autonomous language learning. As much as researchers are theorising about language learning, this also applies to the area of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), in particular the interaction of technology and language instruction. As a result many support ICTs (computers, the internet, etc.) as a means of developing and supporting learner autonomy (Pennington, 1996) if they are used appropriately (Warschauer et al., 1996). To be able to put this argument into practice for a culture course, it is important to understand what learner autonomy is.

The two researchers David Little and Henri Holec provide us with important principles for the concept of learner autonomy (Little, 1991), or as Holec, 1988 calls it, self-directed learning.

Little (1991:4) defines learner autonomy as follows:

> autonomy is a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning.

In Holec's (1988) definition of self-directed learning, learners

- are able to define their learning objectives,
- define relevant learning contents and progressions,
- select appropriate methods and techniques,
- observe their acquisition procedure and
- evaluate what has been acquired with the help of feedback given to them

Both definitions however, do not include an application of ICT in the autonomous learning process. In that respect Littlemore, with her study of ICT and self-instruction (2001:43) presents a concise summary of researchers' opinions on learner autonomy, self-direction and new technologies.

- New technologies can be used to encourage different types of independent learning but do not automatically do so; care must be taken not to replace "teacher dependency" with "machine dependency".
- Learners need to be trained in the strategies required to make the most of the opportunities offered by the new technologies.
- It is important that learners continue to have support from their teachers. They must not simply be left alone with the new technologies.

This informative summary of opinions is held by current CALL researchers. Littlemore clearly directs ICT application to a learning environment where learners and teachers assume roles and fulfil those in the acquisition process.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Universities that have fully integrated self-access schemes and the development of learner autonomy in their curricula present the following procedure learners have to follow to achieve their individual learning goals (Littlemore 2001:48).

1) Decision with the teacher on a suitable overall learning goal

2) Decision on short-term learning goals which lead to the overall learning goal
3) Choice of appropriate material (books, multimedia, etc.) and teacher support they might require
4) Choice of activity that forms the first learning goal
5) Evaluation of what they have learned/produced
6) Revision of what they have learned/produced)

This procedure needs adjustment to be applied in individual courses, as much as for the objectives and methods of the IAS course. To provide all necessary conditions of a well designed classroom it is also necessary examine the part teachers play, who are considered the key providers of student orientation and monitoring and enable students to create their own curriculum.

Littlemore (2001:48) offers the most fitting outline of teacher responsibilities:

1) Elicitation of learner needs
2) Obtaining relevant information for the design of a study plan (e.g. educational background, learning styles and perceptions, time management, aims, etc.)
3) Provision of clear guidance and support for learner's autonomous work
4) Provision of relevant and effective feedback on the basis of monitoring learning patterns and learner progress
5) Supporting the university in the provision of appropriate language learning opportunities
6) Helping users to understand their learning progress and thus make them proficient learners
7) Acting as 'mirror' in reminding learners of their original aims and objectives
8) Helping learners to find and keep motivation

The combination of the above learner tasks and teacher responsibilities aims at a well-designed classroom providing guidance and freedom for the learner at the same time. What shape an application of these principles can take will be shown later with an example of classroom practice, but first the course itself needs to be described in detail.

INTEGRATED AREA STUDIES (IAS) COURSE: NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

The Integrated Area Studies (IAS) Courses at Chemnitz University of Technology are all part of the department's Language Practice programme, aiming above all at students' linguistic performance, while reading, listening and presenting on cultures of different English speaking countries. The focus of this article is the IAS course dealing with New Zealand and Australia.

Students enrolled in the course are required to have successfully completed basic and intermediate courses in Oral and Written production (of English), and are mainly advanced speakers of English as a FL in the final year of their Masters studies.

Therefore, the participants of the IAS course can be expected to be familiar with research for specific information (library, WWW), reading skills, general presentation skills (free speech, presentation organisation) and the general use of computers.

Despite this advanced stage, a few students are still unfamiliar with PowerPoint presentations, some are insecure speakers of English who need support in topic selection and presentation organisation.

According to the course description[2] the IAS course aims at the development of student's

- ability to understand, interpret and use correctly the aspects of New Zealand and Australian English they encounter in the course and their own research
- familiarity with the land (geography) and the people, while simultaneously gaining insight into contemporary New Zealand and Australian society
- linguistic competence through presentations and students' active participation in class discussions
- linguistic competence through the analysis of New Zealand and Australian English samples with regard to phonology and idiomaticity
- understanding of the New Zealand and Australian societies and cultures (Maori/Pakeha and Aboriginee/White Australian) by learning about the history of both countries (traditions) while at the same time improving their reading skills in selecting important information efficiently

The course contains classroom sessions and individual (teacher – student) sessions. All students have to do a one-hour presentation in a classroom session and present a written report of their presentation at the end of the course. During the preparation of their work they receive teacher support in form of individual one-on-one sessions.

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the course objectives and content, it is necessary to understand how contents can be included in an IAS course that concentrates on the development of learner autonomy and how teachers and learners will be involved.

Learners who want to reach autonomy in learning need first of all to define their individual learning goals, with the help of the teacher (see above) (Littlemore, 2001). This means the first two sessions of the IAS course will include

- an orientation on the methods, requirements and topics of the course,
- general ways of presenting topics clearly to fellow students, and
- orientation in the area of possible learning goals students will strive for.

In that way learners receive clear guidance in course topics and course requirements (e.g. presentations, final written report of the presentation). How learners construct their presentation, which learning styles or perceptions they follow is up to them, as long as they prepare their topic thoroughly with up-to-date information and present it comprehensibly to other students. Another aim of the first sessions will be a general teacher introduction to both countries, New

[2] http://www.tu-chemnitz.de/phil/english/department/documents/kovo_ss_2004.pdf

Zealand and Australia, which can also help to examine students' existing knowledge in the area.

The individual sessions will offer students the opportunity to revise their topic decision and set detailed sub-goals for the achievement of their final project. In these teacher-student meetings the teacher can especially focus on individual students, elicit possible needs they have, their interests in the course and goals they want to achieve. Thus teachers are able to support learners in their choice of short-term goals, which can help to arrive at their individual presentation step by step. What is also important is the discussion between learners and teacher on appropriate materials (books, OHP, computers, multimedia etc.) for learning and project work, which can take place in the classroom as well as in the individual sessions.

All students are required to meet the teacher at least twice before their presentation, so that the above listed student progress and activities can be regularly monitored by the teacher. Learners are also expected to implement teacher feedback in their presentation and final written reports, which will promote revision of their work.

In addition to this learner-centred work teachers need to provide appropriate opportunities for materials and language learning within the university environment, help learners with up-to-date material and ways of accessing it. Through regular student discussion of their progress the teacher can also remind learners of their original objectives, and give additional hints wherever necessary.

DISCUSSION: LEARNER AUTONOMY AND ICT

The WWW "is a multimodal medium because it can offer text, sound, and visuals" (Osuna/Meskill 1998:79) that can add to textbook material found in the library.

However, students' perception of texts and material found, especially on the internet, as well as their effective selection of their material through good strategies needs to be monitored by the instructor. Material on the internet can easily lead to an information overload since simple searches on the net with Google (or other search engines) often present the user with a multitude of useless websites and an individualised, restricted search does not always help (Rüschoff/Wolff, 1999).

Another consequence can be that learners get lost in the amount of pages presented to them and a feeling of being "lost in cyberspace" (Schmied/Haase, 2002) is the result, as pages are presented in an ill-structured way and are not clearly navigable. In this situation students can easily become "teacher dependent" or "machine dependent" (Littlemore 2001:43).

There are two ways to avoid this. Should the teacher be able to program simple webpages, he/she could restrict student searches with a selection of links (Rüschoff/Wolff, 1999) on general topics of the course. The example for the topic of History (AUS & NZ) shows how this can be done:

e.g. History: http://www.nla.gov.au/oz/histsite.html
http://www.lexas.de/laender/a/australien/australien-geschichte.htm
http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/
http://history-nz.org/maori.html

Such a database can provide learners with a basic overview of a topic and clearer objectives to focus on which enables them to select relevant material more effectively.

Should this course homepage not exist, an introduction session to the IAS course in a computer lab with internet connection can introduce learners to search engines and effective selection methods via link reading skills. For that reason the teacher can prepare keywords for searches he/she plans to conduct e.g. with students. In that way learners stay independent and can learn to deal with information overload independently. The teacher's monitoring of students while conducting those activities will enable him/her to provide appropriate feedback and advice. For the students this means receiving support in surfing the WWW pages without getting "lost in cyberspace", advice in selecting appropriate content pages and thus develop successful search behaviour.

Another implementation of ICT is the use of PowerPoint for presentations in combination with a projector. PowerPoint offers clear presentation structures with the help of layout templates as well as the inclusion of visual material like pictures, sketches and paintings (adaptable to screen size). For advanced users of PowerPoint there is even the option of adding audio files to the presentation-which would call for an appropriate loudspeaker system for successful use.

Teachers support here starts at feedback concerning layout, and, if necessary, ends with an introduction to PowerPoint. This can be of great help for students' future academic or professional career, where PowerPoint skills are needed and give them the opportunity to easily include pictures from the internet in their presentations.

More traditional methods of presentation like OHP, handouts, audio presentations via tape/CD and the use of films should not be neglected in an IAS course. Through the dialogue between teacher and students a decision on an appropriate method of presentation (or combination of methods) for topic and presenter has to be part of the student – teacher dialogue.

Through their independent work and production of information as well as discussion with teacher and peers, students will be able to experience an approach to their work from different perspectives. By independently working on their presentation "learners become producers". In the process of their

presentation production students' individual purpose (thoroughly know the topic and teach my peers) applied to the various raw materials leads to a development of active responsibility for their work (Holec et al. 1987:153). All this makes it possible for learners to replace their perception of being "consumers" of language/culture courses with that of being independent "producers" (ibid).

AN EXAMPLE OF IMPLEMENTATION

To give an idea of how a lesson in the IAS course can be organised a classroom practice example (in a computer pool with internet access) suggests how activities and methods can mirror the formerly presented principles.

The teacher announces the topic *New Zealand Society* to the class. The aim is to let students search the internet as an introduction to the individual topics.

1) The teacher starts session with a brainstorming on the aspects of New Zealand Society as students perceive them.
2) Students mention the terms Maori, Settlers, Farming, Multiculturalism, Chinese Minority, Commonwealth and Nature/ Outdoor People.
3) The teacher divides the class into smaller groups. He/she explains to the groups that each group will research one of the terms mentioned in 2), so that in the end the class is able to teach each other about their terms with presentations. He/She reminds them to subdivide the topic into subtopics that can be researched individually by group members.
4) Each group gets together and starts working on their topics (group work and internet search) with the help of a general list of internet links on the OHP (similar to the History link list above).
5) The teacher asks if there are any questions and then goes around the class to ensure that every group is able to divide their topic into subtopics that can be researched individually by students. Group members are encouraged to support each other in their work.
6) The teacher talks to individual groups about their methods of researching the topic on the internet and observes the groups' approaches to the topics and sub-topics ensuring that all proceed to a set of appropriate sub-topics.
7) The teacher will carry out step 5 and 6 continuously while students are working until 15 Minutes before the end of class time.
8) Before class ends, the teacher arranges presentation dates 2-3 weeks ahead into term. He/she reminds groups to see him/her individually about their progress not later than one week from now.
9) Additional forms of information resources (library books, films, audio materials) have been discussed in the former session, students are reminded to use these to prepare their project and carefully think which way of presenting will be most useful to their topic and content.
10) Students leave the class and work individually and as a group on the topic.
11) Individual meetings with the teacher: The Maori topic group meets the teacher and present their presentation structure, their material and content and their problems with finding material for one of the subtopics, Pakeha.
12) The teacher and students discuss how their presentation structure and activities (of research and presentation production) fit into their original topic and working

goal. The material problems with one subtopic will be discussed between teacher and student group (What did they do?, Why did the internet search fail?). The teacher discussion leads to the term Maori language, the source of the term Pakeha, which students can now research easier.

13) The students receive advice on how extensively they should research their subtopics and how they have to integrate all the information into their structure. The aim is to make them aware of the presentation time restriction and the involvement of their class peers in form of discussion, quizzes, or group work on material the presenters provide them with.

14) The students leave to work independently on the agreed presentation topics and structure.

15) A final meeting before the presentation will enable the teacher to ensure students have reached their project goal, know how to present this and are clear about the presentation media as well as possible flaws in their preparation which need improvement (One student plans on reading a 3 page text to the class as a presentation, the teacher and student agree on additional pictures to show, OHP for key words and a short reading for the class with subsequent discussion of the reading with the presenter).

During all this the teacher can support student motivation, observe their work and keep track of their research abilities, group work and project development. The presentation will be conducted entirely by the students.

CONCLUSION

This examination of language teaching theories, the importance of culture, the aspects of learner autonomy and opportunities through ICT and the CR practice with a possible way of putting all these principles into practice has shown that culture teaching and training learners to be autonomous, can be a complex undertaking. Prerequisites for success are clearly conducted learner activities and teacher duties, turning the teacher into "facilitator", "adviser", "consultant" and "co-operator" (Littlemore 2001:49), to name only a few possible roles.

In the context of the IAS course, the culture of New Zealand and Australia becomes a part of learners' individual productions and a representation of their skills and abilities. Their work with the cultural aspects of these countries can help learners to understand them better and thus, according to Little's theory (1991), improve their language proficiency.

In reality it is often difficult for teachers to fully integrate the above tasks and procedures into an already, if only partly, preset course curriculum of their institution. The CR example can only be a model to inspire and enthuse EFL teachers to teach culture and learner autonomy.

Another pitfall of the development of learner autonomy and ICT is that the skills of the teacher might not suffice for appropriate student support.

These issues show that the educational environment and existing resources have a strong impact on the implementation of theories. In this situation it is the teacher's duty to decide and implement parts or full concepts of learner

autonomy development, as much as this fits into the existing educational structures. Educators, decision makers and educational institutions should strive for structures that support active student involvement and offer access to the outer real world, especially in language teaching. Only this will provide us with culturally aware, tolerant and autonomous language users, which represent the human constituents of the European as well as the global community.

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Good *manners* in East African English: Corpus Evidence for a Problem in Lexical Semantics

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INTRODUCTION

As a current and important addition to the growing toolbox of corpus linguistic applications at the "REAL centre" (English linguistics department, focusing on Research in English and Applied Linguistics), the new and improved search engine for the International Corpus of English – The East Africa component (short: ICE-East Africa, cf. Schmied, 1990) is used to investigate phenomena from the field of lexical semantics. The phenomena concern the structure of semantic components of verbs from the vantage point of compatibility with adverbial complements (usually prepositional phrases) that carry information on other semantic components like motion, manner, path and goal of the verbal event. This study on the distribution of said items within the variety of East African English tries to systematize the components MANNER and PATH via quantitative analysis.

In cognitively related approaches of linguistics, phenomena in language are approached from the specific angle in what way they reflect more general cognitive principles and processes.[1] This view on language emphasizes that elements that are focal for human perception appear in certain and regular configurations in language. Here especially the nominalization of items and the verbalization of actions and activities must be mentioned. The cognitive processes that underlie these linguistic processes are shared by essentially all speakers of natural languages and therefore amount to recurring structures in the respective languages. These shared structures can have universal character and are considered as language universals.

How can linguistic phenomena be related back to cognitive processes? A plausible method seems to be the method of comparison as widely used in anthropological linguistics. The research methodology here involves the correlation of properties of language with phenomena and stable occurrences in culture. A well-researched field in this respect is the field of basic color terms (cf. Berlin/Kay, 1969; Rosch, 1975), another is kinship terminology (Foley 1997:131 or Duranti 2003:152). Further research triggered a whole new paradigm in cognitive linguistics: the investigation of the grammaticalization of space (Langacker, 1982; 1990; 1999). As space is the natural extension of bodily

[1] The entire research program of Cognitive Grammar may serve as an example here, summarized cf. Langacker 1999.

experience that for all speakers of all languages parallels not only language acquisition but also processes of reasoning, it became important and interesting to look at the way space is reflected in language. The perception of space is therefore pivotal to a substantial spectrum of linguistic phenomena. The embodiment of space in language leads from syntactic phenomena (the figure-ground segregation as reflected in basic word order) to semantic ramifications (space as a domain of metaphorical mapping in speech utterances like *Christmas is approaching*, cf. Haase, 2004a).

In the study presented here, space and time together were chosen to represent a principle of reality that is cognitively salient. In the course of the investigation, these spatiotemporal occurrences were taken as an example of how they could be represented in language.

Space and time coincide in the phenomenon of motion. According to pre-modern definitions of time, time is the movement of the celestial bodies. Motion as a physical parameter can be captured in the velocity of an object which is of course the distance covered divided by the time it takes the object to get from A to B. In cognitive linguistics, movement of objects is particularly interesting as it seems to be a deep-rooted phenomenon. Test subjects are able to direct their attention at moving objects on a screen without even focusing them (cf. Pylyshyn, 1999). There is a perception of moving objects without object recognition as such (a sudden stimulus leads uniformly to defensive gestures in response times that are shorter than recognition of the object and subsequent mapping of the object in a mental lexicon or visual database). This can be called a pre-semantic recognition and shows how basic and relevant spatial perception for humans is. Another example is the pre-linguistic tracking of objects in infants, (Spelke/Gutheil/Van de Walle 1995:297).

Motion events comprise therefore a substantial share of valid and relevant verb meaning. They are illuminating from a variety of perspectives. In the investigation attempted here motion events are contrasted with different ways of their grammaticalization. If some of the assumptions of cognitive linguistics are solid, the use and distribution of motion event verbs should reflect some aspects of the culture and the environment of the people who use them. In our case with East-African English a variety of English was chosen, where motion event verbs are investigated in their distribution in texts.

WHAT ARE MOTION EVENTS?

Motion events are spatiotemporal occurrences in which a linguistic entity, usually a noun in subject position, is described to change its position over time, cf. *John walks across the street*. Every speaker of English can extract meaning from this sentence and imagine the scene represented. Furthermore, every speaker could describe virtually infinite amounts of motion events from direct or

former experience. Wherever an object moves along a certain trajectory or within certain boundaries (as in static, repetitive movements like shaking) it can be grammaticalized as a simple proposition containing a subject and a motion event verb. An important cognitive principle is reflected here: the object becomes subject because it is cognitively salient. Object perception mechanisms single out the object against a background of less salient visual input. The basic ability of figure-ground segregation is therefore responsible for a linguistic effect (Ungerer/Schmid 1996:156). In a canonical figure-ground schema the figure is uniformly rendered as the linguistic subject, the ground is usually reflected in adverbials that are adjuncts to the main proposition as the prepositional phrase across the street. Subjects generally move or have the potential to move. Out of anthropological ruminations subjects are therefore overwhelmingly animate across languages. One of the more stable universals is a hierarchy of animacy in which animate and especially humans become subjects or unmarked constituents. Among basic word order types across the world's languages, SVO (subject-verb-object) and SOV are the most common (Croft, 1990). The primacy of the subject is therefore well-supported by these evidences. The following table displays the markedness of animate and inanimate nouns in subject and object position. It is evident that inanimate objects are in a similar way unmarked as animate subjects. Inversely, inanimate nouns can make awkward subjects and animate nouns awkward objects, cf. the frequency of *John took the book to the store* vs. *The book moved John (to tears)*

Human PRO	**Proper name**	**Human common N**	**Inanimate common N**	**Inanimate PRO**
(ask) him/her	*(ask) John*	*(ask) the boy*	*(drink) beer*	*(drink) it*
Ihn (fragen) (ACC) *Ihm (helfen)*(DAT)	*Tim (fragen)*	*den Fahrer (fragen)*	*den Tisch (tragen)*	*es (tragen)* (ACC) *ihm (** as DAT object?)

Table 1: Animacy reflected in case marking in English and German

The marking of the object in German is a case marking and visible for animate as well as inanimate objects. The interesting case, however, comes to light when the noun is replaced by a corresponding pronoun. Here, the inanimate *it* does not show any case marking whereas the case marking (dative case in German) even shows in English (*ask him/her* vs. *it*). The superimposed gender marking here serves

a.) to make the case marking transparent and

b.) to refer to animate entities.

Looking at how the function of the verb ties in with this configuration it becomes obvious that not all motion events resemble each other, rather, we have to distinguish between different types. First, there is motion that is triggered by some constituent – the motion was forced by some subject and would not have happened without the subject present. Other movements may be spontaneous or the reasons are not given, cf.

(1) John pushed the vase across the table vs.
(2) The vase slid across the table.

Even though the motion event may be exactly the same in the case of violated animacy (the *vase* as subject) the cause is not part of the motion event as in *John pushed*). A semantic component that sets motion events apart is therefore cause.

Comparing different verbs for the same motion event we can observe that different verbs apply on a scale of specificity, cf.

(3) John reached the moon
(4) John went to the moon
(5) John flew to the moon
(6) John rocketed to the moon

The difference here is that with growing specificity we learn more about the manner in which John reached the moon. A motion event can therefore be rendered in very generic terms and at the same time in very specific terms. This recognition leads a huge step towards a semantic classification of motion events. In traditional approaches of which most are strongly influenced by Vendler 1967 the classification usually groups motion events depending on their further modification by lexical aspect as either activities (*Mary runs*), accomplishments (*John runs a mile*) or achievements (*John climbs the hill*) (cf. Kirsten et al., 1994 among many others). The main categorizer here is a combination of the parameters of telicity and quantification. Both subdivide into those events with a homogeneous substructure (like *running*) and those with a logical telos or endpoint (like *climbing a hill*), cf. Haase 2004a:253ff.). Looking further into the semantic structure, we find the two components described above, MANNER and PATH. Typologically, this amounts to a two-way typology of languages as established by Talmy (1985; 2000): Satellite-framed languages and verb-framed languages.

HOW CAN MOTION EVENTS BE STUDIED?

So far, it has been argued that a cognitively preconditioned tendency persists and that this tendency is reified in a number of linguistic instances, primarily in the delimitation of verbal actions and events. In adopting a weakly Whorfian point of view, we believe with Wierzbicka (1996) that different lexicalization patterns correspond to different conceptualizations of their speakers. A number of effects of these differences have been pointed out, especially concerning typologically different languages. Effects during acquisition have been

investigated in pioneering research by Choi and Bowerman (1995) on English and Korean. Important psycholinguistic evidence comes from Nüse (2001) between English and German. A number of subjects completed cognitive tasks of recognizing a scene and rephrasing the scene in proper verbal utterances. The way these cognitive tasks were completed by native speakers of English and German suggested differences in cognitive processing. These differences are significant and stable among groups of native speakers of said languages and amount to plausible argumentation that different conceptualization of a scene (i.e. a spatiotemporal process) is prevalent in speakers and that different conceptualization accounts for different linguistic structures. The differences are more striking in the English vs. Korean example but turned out to be unexpectedly high for the English vs. German groups. Originally it had been assumed that English and German belong to the same type of language in a terminology based on Talmy, 1985. Talmy defined so-called event frames as universalist structures in any language that can be culture-dependent (cf. the frame "birthday party", Minsky, 1997). It turns out that a motion event can be without actual motion, or, as Ungerer and Schmid state (Ungerer/Schmid 1997:220), rendering the static use of prepositions as an elaboration of their dynamic nature. Furthermore, cause-factors of a motion event have to be considered. in all, approximately six primitive elements can be singled out: FIGURE, MOTION, PATH, GROUND, MANNER, and CAUSE with the first four comprising the central features.

The event frame is therefore defined as a "set of conceptual elements/ relationships that are evoked together or co-evoke each other; incidental elements or weakly evoked elements are outside the events frame" (Talmy 2000:3). In this new systematicity exist five types of event-frames: motion event frame, causation event frame, participant-interaction event frame, and interrelationship event frame. However, the terminological split raises the question if further reductionist attempts will take us closer to the problem of how these perceived phenomena in reality are grammaticalized in language. In nature, there is no such thing as uncaused motion (although causes an be opaque like gravity, diffusion etc.) Any motion therefore has definite and exact causes. Turning this observation around, we will also find that many "caused" phenomena involve a motion of some kind, cf.

(7) to sadden somebody means
(8) to make somebody sad which can be quite literally considered as
(9) to make somebody go from (a state of) un-sad to (a state of) sad

The metaphorical implications here are intended: many motion events in real language use involve only metaphorical motion. If Langacker's stance that grammatical items are conventionalized semantic items and semantic items are conventionalized conceptualizations (e.g. Langacker 2002:35) is true to some

extent, our way of grammar is a way of conceptualizing reality (cf. also Croft, 1991).

Talmy's universalist structures merit therefore a closer look. In the attempted empirical study, this is done in a contrastive way that compares two varieties. As a contrastive approach, a broad look at the distribution of the same or similar propositions with semantically equivalent content can therefore show whether conceptualization underlies a certain bias. If this bias exists, it should be subject to further interpretation and investigation.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The verb forms searched can be split context-free between PATH verbs that include conflation (*ascend*) and those which carry path information in their satellites (*go up*). Distribution of these has to be taken with a grain of salt for a variety of reasons:

The East-African component of the International Corpus of English is rather small (ca. 1,4 million words total). However, the selection of text types follows ICE-guidelines and is stratified according to language usage in the respective countries (Kenya and Tanzania, cf. Schmied 1990). This indefinitely skews the distribution of the items but does not pose a problem when trends within the data are concerned. Trends illustrated in the tables therefore reflect usage in a small sample of speech of East-African English. Exact figures have to be examined carefully. Especially the formal use of English (as a language of formal, administrative communication in East Africa) is reflected the corpus.

The conflated words split into words of neutral and even colloquial usage on the one hand (*enter, pass*) and "hard words" from academic or formal usage on the other (*ascend, descend*). Absolute numbers for the latter are therefore less telling than for the former considering the disproportional representation of formal usage mentioned above.

The data obtained from the ICE-EA shows a strong bias toward the PATH component. A semantic analysis of the samples returned shows that the overall majority nevertheless retains a spatial semantic component. The conclusion to draw from this figure alone is that the data are valid and comparable and can be subjected to further analysis.

		Ascend	*Descend*	*Exit*	*Enter*	*Pass*
Literal	Spatial	5	3	1	104	116
Metaphorical	Spatial	0	4	1	54	105
	Idiomatic	0	1	0	16	66
Other		2	0	2	0	10
Total		7	8	4	174	297

Table 2: Occurrence of PATH verbs in East African English (from Haase 2004b:265)

Apart from mere frequency of occurrence the semantic analysis of the items shows considerable metaphorical productivity for the non-technical verb phrases involving *enter* and *pass*. Additionally, *pass* shows rich idiomatic patterns as in *make a pass on* smbd. or *pass X to/over to* smbd. This goes to prove once again that spatial information provides a fertile background for extended metaphorization (cf. Langacker, 2002).

This leaves the question whether semantically related or synonymous path-framed verbs show a similar distribution.

		Go up	*Go down*	*Go out of*	*Go into*	*Go along/ go through*	
Literal	Spatial	3	12	5	25	5	11
Metapho-rical	Spatial	21	26	3	34	2	66
	Idiomatic	1	5	10	8	2	2
Other		0	1	0	0	0	0
Total		25	44	18	67	88	

Table 3: Occurrence of exterior PATH + generic *go* in East African English (from Haase 2004b:265)

The data in table 3 show all examples that grammaticalize motion using generic *go*. *Go along* and *go through* have been summed up for semantic reasons as both are used in the sense of *pass*. This periphrastic grammaticalization is typical for satellite-framed languages like Swedish or German.

The observed syntactic genericity is matched by a certain semantic variability. Slightly surprising is the lower frequency of such basic image schemas as *up* or *down* compared with *into*. However, these figures are explainable by the skewed nature of the sample as a substantial part of the corpus are legal protocols that involve human trajectors entering/leaving locations etc.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Any frequency of the items in a corpus is only a very vague indication for the presence or absence of a linguistic phenomenon. Whereas strict reliance on corpus data (especially of small corpora) is rather unscientific and overly simplifying, the data obtained are nevertheless useful to indicate not rule-based schemes but trends. The indication uncovered in the corpus displays East-African English as a variety that uses manner to indicate specific motion as well as metaphorical motion. Interestingly, a continuum of schematicity persists throughout the use of motion events. This shows in the flexible use of certain idioms which is typical for varieties (cf. also Croft 1999:65) sometimes under influence of hypercorrectness (e.g. in the use of *enter into* in a literal/spatial meaning with 17 occurrences in the sense of *enter into a room* as opposed to the

standard collocates of *enter into* with *enter into an agreement* etc. with only 3 occurrences).

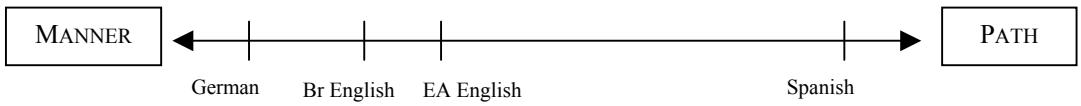

Fig. 2: Continuum of manner and path including EA English

Typologically speaking, the data obtained from the corpus suggests a productive use of all path-framed variants. East African English starts to resemble in this respect any typologically definite path-framed language. As for the interpretation, the discussed effect leaves much room for speculation. The distribution of path-framed languages and satellite-framed languages among the languages of the world shows no correlation with genetic classification schemes. As a matter of fact, the separation cuts across the typologically similar[2] Indo-European languages and separates West Germanic languages (English, German, Dutch) from Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, French). It will be interesting to investigate whether this feature correlates with other implicational universals although corpus analysis will not suffice here. The corpus examples illustrate to what extent corpus results can be informative for grammaticalization phenomena and lexical-semantic argumentation. Their explanatory power must be seen within the light of their limitations.

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[2] All are SVO, most use pre-positioned prepositions, few are PRO-drop etc.

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English as a Foreign Language Needs to be Contemporary: A Message for Saxons and Czechs

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INTRODUCTION

In a paper “English in Twenty Years" written more than 30 years ago for a linguistic conference in Luxembourg, Randolph Quirk (1970) based his speculations on the future of the English language upon assumptions outside linguistics. He predicted that, in years to come, Britain would become more and more closely involved with continental Europe – economically, intellectually and politically – and that the English language, over the next twenty years, would continue to enjoy the dominant status it held in Europe in the 1960s. He further speculated that English would most probably even increase its dominance, particularly in trade, scientific communication and everyday culture. And he suggested that this was going to happen even in countries like Germany and France, where their own native tongues are so much a part of their national identities.

These speculations may have sounded rather bold then, but time has shown that they were very sound. Of course, with Britain’s increasing involvement in Europe throughout the past decade, English can hardly have been expected to become less relevant in such an economically important country as Germany. Even in smaller and less influential language communities like the Czech Republic, English is going to be increasingly important in the everyday lives of people, whether they approve of the trend or not. That is to say, when English begins to interfere with the character or use of a local language, it may generate antagonistic feelings, such as in Czech when perfectly satisfactory phrases are unnecessarily replaced with their English equivalents (e.g. *vezměte místo* = take your seat; *být v obraze* = be in the picture; *být* “in” = *být moderní, mít přehled; mějte pěkný víkend* instead of *přeji vám příjemnou sobotu a neděli*, etc.). David Crystal in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* (1995) expected the present usage of English to expand, so that by 2000 everyone in Europe might be using, or be exposed to, English for some part of every day.

How long is this trend going to continue? Nobody knows. Linguistic history has shown us repeatedly that it is wise to be cautious when making predictions about the future of a language. If, in the Middle Ages, you had dared to predict the death of Latin as the language of education, people would have laughed in your face – as they would, in the eighteenth century, if you had suggested that any language other than French could be a future norm in polite society.

It is an indisputable fact that the English language has become the lingua franca of Europe, and indeed the world. It is difficult to learn and infuriatingly illogical, but it is very powerful and expressive. We, Saxons and Czechs, do not have a choice: if we need to communicate across borders in Europe, we need to speak English. It ought to be easier for you, Saxons, because you fed so many words into English from Old Germanic! And it is likely to be more difficult for us, Czechs, because, you did not allow us to get a lot of practice at our own language during the Hapsburg Empire, so we have been pre-occupied with re-inventing Czech.

Seriously though, it is simply not good enough for us foreigners to be word-perfect in English as it is presented in textbooks, and as it is delivered on CDs and tapes.

ENGLISH EXPANDS AND, AT THE SAME TIME, ENGLISH CHANGES

I would like to begin my paper with two quotations. Ferdinand de Saussure once said: "Time changes all things: there is no reason why language should escape this universal law." (1949)

The other quotation is by R. D. Eagleson, who said: "Protests usually provide strong indications of shifts in acceptability" (1977).

We all know very well that all aspects of language structure and use are subject to change. However, the least noticeable and least frequent changes affect grammar. Compared to sound and vocabulary changes, grammar change is an elusive process. As Aitchison (1981) points out, part of its trickiness and mystery may be because the grammar changes tend to occur very slowly, more slowly in general than other language changes. However, one of my sources feels that grammar change has gained pace in the last 20 years.

Another reason why the mechanism of grammar change seems to elude us is undoubtedly the fact that, with very few exceptions, relatively few people have studied it in any depth. Language change is likely to be due to a combination of multiple causes. In view of confusion and controversies surrounding causes of language change, it is not surprising that some reputable linguists have regarded the whole field as a disaster area, and completely ignored the situation (Bloomfield, 1933; King, 1969 etc.).

I am well aware how delicate this topic is for a non-native speaker of English because it is a feature of language which is very difficult to research. Who is to say when a trend becomes a permanent change? On the other hand, we, who have spent our lifetimes learning grammar rules from textbooks, often as esteemed as the Bible, may be more sensitive to those language changes than native speakers, who experience them first-hand and every day. I cannot help mentioning a friend's sarcastic remark that asking a grammarian to talk about grammatical change is like asking a vampire to run a blood transfusion service!

VIEWS OF NATIVE SPEAKERS

With a language that is constantly changing and with grammar books that do not always offer answers which satisfy us, British native speakers provide up-to-date and invaluable information.

I have recruited the services of several well-educated informants whose mother tongue is English to help me distinguish between errors, careless English and new developmental trends. They all are university educated fully qualified teachers by profession, aged 32 to 64. With one exception from Scotland and one from Northumberland, they all come roughly from the London area.

As I have already mentioned, it is often not easy for native speakers to distinguish changing language phenomena because the change is continuous and all around them. The fact that native users of English are part of the process seems to make it much more difficult for them to step back and view it objectively. With some of them, their natural conservatism often tends to persuade them to regard new or unusual uses of English as "lapses" or even "mistakes" rather than genuine change.

One of the most radical views was that "all these new-fangled English distortions were …what we all have to put up with these days, and it is getting worse." The accompanying comment was: "The rise of the meritocracy is not the rise of the educated." Whereas this is a general truth, nevertheless, there are still many signs that the old traditions of public school education are still important. Oxford and Cambridge universities are desperately trying to admit more state school undergraduates, e.g. by doing away with the entrance examination in favour of interviews. However, by their own admission public school pupils are still a disproportionate percentage of their intake.

One of my informants also said that I would not benefit from any examples that he might invent because the linguistic traditions encompassed in these examples were not his: "The watchwords in my schooling were clarity and style, whereas now they are brevity and flexibility, the latter often straying into invention." He referred me to the BBC radio and television, where presenters, commentators, reporters, sportsmen, etc. "regularly mutilate the language". This native speaker seems to be sure that the prevailing opinion is that communicative errors are bad because they affect understanding, but grammatical errors no longer matter if the sense is perfectly understood. Grammarians, therefore, are no longer the arbiters because "…most people have either never been taught the rules or have forgotten them. The people who do know them usually do not bother too much because it singles them out as pedantic or old-fashioned". I have been told that, in some schools, not even the majority of native English teachers are sure about their own use of grammar. For example, report writing is a nightmare for many teachers.

This native speaker thinks that what we, non-native speakers, are required to teach is a form of English that exists only in books, and which survives best in literary English, and least well in speech. Now, most reading material has been affected either by the influential Plain English Campaign or by intrusion of more and more colloquialisms. In his opinion, young people particularly can no longer cope with complex sentence structure. Punctuation seems purely random as few have any idea how to use the comma, semi-colon or colon properly, and the apostrophe is used for anything but the possessive case, often plurals. Increasingly, native users of English are going with the tide. If they take care to express themselves grammatically, the subtlety of meaning they are seeking is lost to the undiscriminating ears of today's ignorant youth. On the other hand, if they use dialect then all is clear. Their grammar might be in error, but their communication is perfect!

EXAMPLES OF GRAMMATICAL CHANGES

The data I have collected as evidence of grammatical change suggest several particular areas. I have focused only on data patterns that were found repeatedly. They seem to indicate that the standard grammatical explanations in descriptive as well as pedagogic grammars no longer apply. Others indicate that some common preconceptions do not appear to be borne out by the evidence. Elsewhere, it is likely that the rules we often find in reference books are not as fixed as it is generally believed. I have found instances where most grammars fail to account for particular grammatical structures. All my data is authentic – either excerpted from written texts or heard from native speakers. Some have been taken from sources quoted below, particularly Richard MacAndrew, *English Observed*, LTP, 1991, David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, CUP, 1995, and Sylvia Chalker, "How Grammar Aware Are You?", *The Teacher Trainer*, vol. 11, No.3, Autumn 1997. A brief look at some of these changes that have taken place in English over the past years should open up our minds to what might be happening now and to what might happen in the future. It also proves that there is no area of language that is immune to change.

COMPARATIVES

We've been ***more full*** *I must say, much* ***more full*** *in the last three weeks*. (Conversation on a train , Nov. 1987).

It's definitely cheaper and ***more fresh***. (Living Decisions: People at Home. Educational TV programme, BBC2, March 1988).

What I consider to be ***more grave*** *is the theft of child benefit*. (Neil Kinnock. House of Commons. Oct. 1988).

It's not like a job on the Stock Exchange, but it's ***more sure***. (*The Independent*, Febr. 1989).

It was ***more clear*** *than usual*. (ITN News, Oct. 1989).

Abandoning the "–er"- synthetic comparative form well established with shorter adjectives becomes more common now. MacAndrew (1991) sees as one possible reason for this change the tendency in English for inflections to disappear, which is a gradual process that began as early as in the Middle English period. He compares it with the loss of inflections in full verbs that has left only the third person singular "-s" to the present time. The disappearance of "-er" and "-est" can be seen as part of a similar process.

Another possibility is that the analytic use of "more" with monosyllables gives greater emphasis to the comparative.

Furthermore, the superlative is often used when comparing only two, e.g., "May the best team win." Contrary to the others, one of my informants, however, says that this is not new. She explains it as a cliché only used in such a situation.

ADVERBS

Adverbs form another area that seems to be in the process of changing. There is evidence that the number of adverbs of manner that are formally identical to adjectives is growing. While some 25 years ago grammar books mentioned "a limited number" (Quirk, 1972), at present it might be more proper to speak about a "large" number. Swan (1980) lists 34 and COBUILD (1990) lists 47.

It is generally believed that this may be the influence of American English through numerous American TV programmes shown in Britain. This use of the adjectival form is often seen as a decline of the correct use of the adverb. It is a practice which people seem to associate with a "lack of education". Still, I can quote examples such as:

> *The most powerful way of getting the message through* ***clearer***.(A speaker at the IATEFL Conference, Edinburgh 1988).
>
> *How do you feel when a foreigner pronounces your name* ***wrong?*** (Joanne Kenworthy, *Teaching English Pronunciation*, Longman 1987).
>
> *Please drive* ***slow****. Children playing*. (A car park notice, London 1996).

Is it possible to assume that the critics of this new development are not aware of the extent to which it is possible to use the adjectival form as an adverb?

An interesting point was made in A-Z Wordpower (*The Sunday Times*, March 1993) that *slow* is the expected form in certain idiomatic constructions, e.g. "The trains are running slow today". It is also interesting to see that if the adverb is located at the beginning of a sentence, only the wider form can be used: "We slowly skidded towards the wall."

The general agreement among my informants seems to be that the trend to abandon the "-ly" ending is gaining momentum and it is possible to suspect that in years to come the distinction between adjectives and adverbs of this type will become increasingly blurred.

Adverbs are also involved in some other frequent arguments about e.g. tautologies used for particularly excessive reinforcement, e.g. completely and totally:

***completely** finished* instead of just *finished* or
*I, myself, **personally**, as far as I'm concerned…* instead of just *I*, etc.

The use of unnecessary adverbs is growing, for emphasis again, e.g. *completely naked*, when just "naked" suffices, absolutely final, when you cannot have degrees of finality.

THE APOSTROPHE

The widespread uncertainty about the use of this punctuation mark seems to have stemmed from its long and confused history in English. It was used to mark the omission of letters (as in "can't"), the plural forms in borrowed words ending in a vowel (as in 2 comma's), and a genitive marker in the singular. Later the usage extended to the plural genitive. According to Crystal (1995) the rules laid down for its usage in the 19th century were arbitrary and incomplete, and "it proved impossible to establish a totally logical set of principles". Crystal's main argument is that the apostrophe was allowed to mark possession in nouns ("girl's") but not in pronouns ("hers"), and even this rule had exceptions ("one's"). The result is that in the present-day Britain you can find usages such as:

*Do not overtake **cyclist's** under the bridge*. (A road sign in Reading).
*The **steerings** OK*. (Pitman Examination ESOL-403. 1989).
*The Private View will be opened formally by the acclaimed actress, Susan George, **who's** book of poems "Songs to Bedroom Walls" will be exhibited…* (Invitation to Century Galleries in Henley, Oxon).
*Enjoy the best of both **world's** with a Summer Cottage Holiday* (Country Holidays brochure 1989).
***LADIE'S** HAIRDRESSING* (Sign on window in Dorking).
*You can tell a good language school by **it's** students*. (An advertisement for a language school!).
*We sell fresh **pie's***. (Sign on window in Barnstaple, 1997).
*Everyone **like's** our chips*. (Sign on window, dtto).
***Cabbage's** 25p/lb*. (Notice outside greengrocers).
***Rug's** £59* (Carpet shop window in Twickenham).
*The **Hampton's*** (i.e. Hampton, Hampton Hill + Hampton Wick (Official sign at the side of a main road near Twickenham giving motorists directions).

My informants produced the following comments:

"All these examples are common amongst the people who are not highly educated. I have seen many improper uses of the apostrophe, mainly by the under 40s who were not taught English grammar at school. My generation (born in 1943) was the last to have formal grammar lessons."

"I'm convinced that the apostrophe's misuse is simply because people are ignorant of its use. Not one of these is in any way acceptable to me."

"In my opinion, people are simply lazy and do not bother to use the apostrophe."

At this point, we can also mention the use of the apostrophe with proper names. Crystal (1995) claims that the bias is definitely towards its omission, especially in place names (such as *St. Anns Bay* in Cape Breton Island). Around the turn of the last century the apostrophe began to be dropped from the names of many British banks and large businesses (e.g. Lloyds, Harrods). Today, in Britain it seems to be almost always omitted in shop signs, placards, and other similar notices. In shopping centres notices like "Ladies wear" and "Mens shop" are commonly found. According to Crystal, many present-day sign writers and typographical designers leave the apostrophe out because they think it looks fussy and old-fashioned; and in most cases the omission causes no ambiguity, as the context makes it clear whether the "–s" ending refers to number or case, and whether it expresses a singular or a plural genitive meaning. In my opinion, there may be one more reason for omitting the apostrophe in these instances: the form looks unusual and attracts attention.

LIKE AND AS

There is considerable antagonism to the use of *like* as a conjunction in formal spoken and written English. Usage manuals recommend *as* instead.

*Do **like** I told you* becomes *Do **as** I told you*.

*They act **like** they have money to burn* (Crystal, ST, March 1993).

The "like"-forms are common in informal speech and writing, however.

Crystal claims that fear of misusing "like" often causes writers to replace it by a form of "as" wherever it appears.

THE SPLIT INFINITIVE

*I should like **to formally propose** an amendment*. (Crystal, ST, March 1993)

Usage manuals reserve some of their strongest criticism for the insertion of an adverb between to and the verb. The opposition stems from the belief, fostered by the early grammarians of English, that the infinitive construction should preserve the same kind of structural unity as it enjoyed in Latin, where the infinitive marker was an ending attached to the verb stem. Because the infinitive form in English is shown by the particle to, it was felt that this word should stay close to the verb at all times. Although the construction is widely used in speech, and is quite often found in literature, criticism has made it a sensitive issue.

My informants believe that, sometimes, it can be difficult to avoid using a split infinitive without causing a highly unnatural style. An example is "Do you want

to really help them?", where placing "really" before "to" or after "help" leads to awkward results. (Crystal, 1993).

My wife told me ***to probably expect*** *you* (CCEG, 284).

Vauxhall are attempting ***to really break*** *into the market* (CCEG, 284).

In *The Cassell Guide to Common Errors in English* Harry Blamires quotes the following example:

She was determined to ***proudly rebuff*** *him* (p. 282) and comments on it in this way:

It is possible to say either: a) *She was determined proudly to rebuff him* or

b) She was determined to rebuff him proudly.

From this example it should be clear that the split infinitive often provides a more satisfactory sentence than does evasion of the construction. Version a) is unsatisfactory because the adverb proudly attaches itself to the verb determined instead of to the verb rebuff. Version b) is unsatisfactory too because the word order sounds unnatural. According to Blamires (2000) there are indeed occasions when the split infinitive sounds awkward, "but these occasions are not numerous enough to justify a general judgement against the split infinitive. Sensitivity to what is natural in word order is a better guide in this matter than any rule."

The Dangling Participle

By "dangling participle" or "misrelated participle" we mean the use of a participle, or a phrase introduced by a participle, that has an unclear or ambiguous relationship to the rest of the sentence. If taken literally, the sentence often appears nonsensical or laughable:

Driving *along the street, a runaway dog gave me a fright*" (Crystal, 1993).

To avoid such undesirable effects, manuals recommend to remove or to replace the participial construction: "When I was driving along the street, a runaway dog gave me a fright."

The meal was a little disappointing. ***Cooked*** *on an open fire, John felt his sausages were rather dry.* (Supplied by a native speaker, 1999).

This construction seems to be gaining in frequency.

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

*If we'****d have found*** *an unsafe microwave oven, we would have named it. But we haven't found an unsafe microwave oven*. (Daily Mail – verbatim report on a talk on the BBC TV in 1989).

*If I'****d've thought****, we could have done something else*. (Informal conversation, 1987).

*If he'****d've been*** *there, she'd've gone her own way more often* (Informal conversation, 1985).

If she ***had have told*** *you she was giving up Sir Allan Walters, you would have stayed*. (The Walden Interview, ITV, 1989).

*If you'**d have tested** me, you'd have said I was a smoker*. (A member of an anti-smoking pressure group, reported in the Sunday Telegraph, Dec. 1994).

*If you'**d have seen** the mess, you'd have said I was right to punish him*. (A native speaker, Bishop's Stortford, 1999).

All these examples are spoken English, all spoken by educated native speakers. Reference books do not make any mention of this structure in conditionals.

Of ten grammars consulted, only Jespersen (1932) recognized these forms and quoted some examples from Shakespeare and J.B. Priestley. Quirk et al. (1972) made no mention of such variants. Two other reference works, Partridge (1978) and *The Oxford Guide to English Usage* (1983) acknowledged their existence but took a prescriptive attitude and condemned them as being "incorrect". The item was included in the new edition of Quirk et al.'s grammar (1985) and described as representative of "informal American English speech".

With the little information we get from grammar manuals we can say that this particular usage is informal, of American origin, almost entirely used in spoken English only, and now increasingly used in the speech of native speakers.

One of my informants devised and ran an acceptability test among six formers (16-18 year olds) at Leeds Grammar School and the results largely supported three hypotheses:

1. The variants have a fairly high level of acceptability among the population as a whole.
2. The use of the variants is not confined to uneducated speech.
3. The variants are more commonly used in speech than in writing.

***Were** it not for his wife, who had a calming influence on him, he would have gone under months ago* (Supplied by a native speaker in 1999).

In the above examples we had an extra auxiliary in a conditional structure; here we have tense-simplification *were* instead of *had been*. Some more examples of the same nature:

*I wish I had seen it for myself. **Had** I a camera I would have taken the photo of the decade.* (A native speaker, 1999).

"***Had** I the wit at the time I would have made sure I got this patent and took all the royalties*." (A British artist claiming that he had invented the bikini in a 1938 watercolour.)

WORD ORDER

Traditional grammars maintain that in the indirect, i.e. reported questions the direct word-order should be retained, e.g. "She asked where the goods came from." This seems to be in direct contradiction with examples like:

*You work out what **are the new ideas** that will benefit your customers*. (Mark Brown, The Dinosaur. Element Books).

He asked where ***was the engineer*** (Gerald Seymour, Home Run. Fontana, 1989.)
I will never forget what a genius ***was your sister*** (ibidem).
They work out exactly how much food ***should these giraffes have*** *every day*. (Informal conversation, 1990).

Quirk et al. (1985) admit the possibility of S-V inversion in an indirect question, but they do not go into any details. This area still seems to wait for further exploration.

FEWER/LESS

You can probably get away with ***less*** *than 10 mistakes and still pass the exam*. (A native speaker, 1999).
Less than 8 items (A notice at supermarket check-out tills).

Many people use *less* instead of *fewer* before plural nouns, especially in informal style. Some people condemn this usage, but it seems to be steadily making its way into the standard language. It is increasingly common, mainly in speech, even among educated speakers. It can be assumed that it will gradually spread to the written language and become accepted.

There is evidence that seems to indicate that the standard grammar explanations in descriptive as well as pedagogic grammars no longer apply for the verb phrase either. It is likely that the rules we often find in reference sources are not as fixed as it is generally believed.

VERB PHRASES

Choosing between Tenses

Sometimes it is possible to choose more than one tense, and this choice makes no perceptible difference to meaning.

Past Simple or Past Perfect Simple? If we want to talk about a past event that occurred before a particular time in the past, we use the Past Perfect Tense.

After I had returned from Perth, I cooked my meal.
After I returned from Perth, I cooked my meal. (A native speaker, 2001)

The Simple Past is often used in similar situations as the order of events is completely clear.

Study the sentences below. What is unusual in each case?

1. *Sir Robin Day has ended his 20-year marriage in the London divorce court yesterday*. (The Guardian, 8.11.1985)
2. *I'm owing you £2.20*. (Conversation in a supermarket, 16.10.1987)
3. *I'm needing this glass of water after that experience.* (The Beano. D.C. Thomsom and Co. Ltd., 12.12.1987)
4. *We've got a pile of letters which have been being typed since I don't know when*. (Conversation with a colleague, 7.12.1988).

5. *By Vanbrugh's death in 1726 the West Wing was still unbuilt*. (Castle Howard Brochure, 1988)
6. *I've been to the British seaside last Sunday*. (BBC 1, Paramount City. 19.5.1990)

These are my native informants' comments:
Ad 1) The Present Perfect is not normally used with past time markers such as *yesterday*.
Ad 2) The Present Simple would be more usual, describing the state of the speaker.
Ad 3) The Present Simple would be more usual for the same reason as in No. 2.
Ad 4) The Present Perfect Continuous passive is unusual.
Ad 5) The Past Perfect is more usual with expressions involving *by a certain time in the past*.
Ad 6) The Present Perfect is not normally used with past time markers such as *last Sunday*.

However, R. MacAndrew, the author of *English Observed* (or *The Shock of Real English*) thinks that these examples demonstrate an important point – speakers set out to create meaning. They do this by combining words and structures spontaneously to make their meaning clear. They do not do it by creating sentences on the basis of learned rules. He says literally:

> English grammar, just as much as vocabulary, contributes to the meaning of what is said or written. If a speaker wishes to express a particular **meaning** they choose the grammar which helps them to do this. The important thing is that language expresses the speaker's meaning, and is comprehensible. It is not a matter of applying rules. It is important to realise that native speakers speaking their own language never try to "get it right", they try to say what they mean. It is only the foreign learner, doing an exercise for language learning purposes, who is "trying to get it right". The same learner, trying to use language for a real purpose outside the classroom, immediately stops worrying about getting it right and concentrates on communicating meaning. Hence the importance of "communicative" approaches to language learning. (MacAndrew, 1991)

IRREGULAR VERB FORMS

Are these sentences right or wrong?
1. *Inside the glass enclosure Joel lighted a cigarette, thinking about what he was going to say*. (The Aquitaine Progression, Robert Ludlum, Panther Books, 1985).
2. *Drivers weaved their way around fallen trees*. (BBC 1, Nine O'Clock News, 16.10.1987).
3. *I've just waked up to the kind of imbecile nonsense that my life has become*. (Joyce Cary, The Breakout, The Penguin Book of Short Stories, Penguin, 1967).

My native informants have claimed all these forms to be unusual and preferred *lit, wove* and *wakened up* respectively. In fact, research in several dictionaries shows that all these statements are correct.

Some verbs have more than one past form or past participle form. For example, the past form and past participle of *spell* can be either *spelled* or *spelt*, and the past participle of *prove* can be either *proved* or *proven*.

Some verbs have two forms which can be used as either the past form or the past participle. Here is a list of these verbs. The regular form is given first, although it may not be the more common one.

burn – burned, burnt
bust – busted, bust
dream – dreamed, dreamt
dwell – dwelled, dwelt
fit – fitted, fit
hang – hanged, hung
kneel – kneeled, knelt
lean – leaned, leant
leap – leaped, leapt
light – lighted, lit
relay – relayed, relaid
smell – smelled, smelt
speed – speeded, sped
spell – spelled, spelt
spill – spilled, spilt
spoil – spoiled, spoilt
wet – wetted, wet

Here is a list of verbs with two past forms:
bid – bid, bade
lie – lied, lay
wake – waked, woke
weave – weaved, wove

Here is a list of verbs with two past participle forms:
bid – bid, bidden
lie – lied, lain
mow – mowed, mown
prove – proved, proven
swell – swelled, swollen
wake – waked, woken
weave – weaved, woven

ACTIVITY

Now test your own past tense and past participle forms and see how you would complete the table below:

INFINITIVE	SIMPLE PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
light	*lit*	*lit*
lighted	*lighted*	
weave		
wake		
lean		
shine		
swell		
dive		
prove		
blow		
hang		
beseech		
spell		
bet		
quit		

Now check your answers in the table below and compare them with my native informants' comments:

weaved, shined, speeded, hanged are only possible with certain meanings of the word
waked – this usage is either archaic or American
dove, proven – American usage
blowed exists but only in idiomatic expressions, such as *Well, I'll be blowed*.
betted, quitted – Cobuild gives only *bet* and *quit*. Three of my native informants prefer *quitted*

Independently of these comments, we can say that all the variants are equally possible.

But it is true that some (e.g. *spelled, spelt*) are reasonably common, but others are less so. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* lists over 50 verbs that have varying forms in either the simple past, the past participle or both. Academically speaking, *cleave*, for example, has four possible simple past forms and three possible past participle forms. How many can you think of? (*clove, cleft, cleaved, clave, cloven*).

GERUND AND INFINITIVE

The decision as to whether to use a gerund or an infinitive is a constant nightmare for many English students. There are examples of native speakers producing some rather unusual sentences in this respect:

1. *Eventually I anticipate* ***to be*** *almost as swift as your good self.* (Jonathan Gash, Gold from Gemini, Arrow 1987).
2. *His back is toward you. But you could not reach him without* ***he heard*** *you.* (Ronald Hardy. Wings of the Wind. Wm Collins 1987).
3. *Sybil the cat was not amused* ***to be*** *disturbed. (*Spot. BBC2 – Children's TV programme, 24.10.1988)
4. *Ambulance services are shortly* ***to refuse*** *transporting more essential cases.* (BBC 1 News, 26.10. 1989)
5. *There's nothing legally we can do to make her* ***to*** *come home (* BBC 1. Eastenders. 24.1.1990)
6. *We must* ***to*** *watch out.* (Mark Brown. The Dinosaur Strain. Element Books)

Native speakers admit to the possibility of No. 3, but official reference books, such as Quirk et al., Swan, COBUILD, etc., do not allow for any of them. MacAndrews suggests that these examples should be accepted as being interesting and possibly isolated instances. At the same time, they cannot be ignored because they have been produced by native speakers and in every case they were found as written examples (those that were spoken were all scripted). At this stage it is difficult to determine if they might be the start of a language change or if they are just an awkward linguistic quibble unlikely to happen again.

In present-day English, the infinitive is sometimes attached to a noun to supply a description: *Nancy Walker had a talent to make people laugh*. (The Times) This should be: *Nancy Walker had a talent for making people laugh.*

The Cadbury Committee guidelines to improve corporate governance are inadequate. (The Times) should be: *The Cadbury Committee guidelines for improving corporate governance... .*

Alternatively, the infinitive could be made legitimate by being attached to a participle: *The Cadbury Committee guidelines designed to improve corporate governance are inadequate*.

The first report from the school-teachers' body under Sir Graham Day shows some fresh **thinking to improve recruitment and retention**. (The Times) should be: … some fresh thinking about improving recruitment.

So far, we have replaced infinitives by gerunds, but sometimes the replacement by a relative clause is the best solution: *Courses to qualify as a speech and language therapist usually require a mixture of three science and arts subjects at A level*. (The Times). This should be read as: *Courses which qualify one as a speech and language therapist....*

This course costs GBP 7,500,- ***to include all lectures****, extensive course manual and data sheets, two nights accommodation and all meals*. As *to include* here does not attach properly either to the verb *cost* or to any noun, a relative clause is required again in order to qualify the sum: *This course costs GBP 7,500,-, which covers all lectures.*

Sometimes we can even come across the so called wandering infinitives, i.e. infinitives which are not anchored to anything at all: *Bedfordshire has a lovely collection to go and explore*. (In Britain). The correct wording should be: … *a lovely collection for you to explore*.

If the weather is too wet and windy ***to get out*** *there* ***and grapple*** *with the seasons..* (Practical Gardening). This sounds as if the weather wanted to get out there.

It is necessary to detach the infinitive *to get ou*" from *the weather*: … *too wet and windy for you to get out there*.

She has spent six years away on duty with the WRACs and it appeared too long a gap to have any hope of reviving Coed Gwydr. (Best of British). As it is not the gap that lacks hope, the infinitive must be detached from gap:… *too long a gap for her to have any hope*.

In addition to the examples given, observation reveals interesting data in other areas: e.g.

NATIONALITIES

Choose a word or phrase to complete each sentence:

1. *A look at the work of ... architect, Lucien Kroll*. (The Independent. 23.12.1989)

a) Belgian b) Belgium c) Belgium's

2. *The Home Secretary has made an exclusion order against a ...* . (BBC 1 Nine O'Clock News. 8.1.1990)
a) Northern Irishman b) Northern Ireland's man c) Northern Ireland man

3. *Can we take it the... government is serious on this*? (BBC Six O'Clock News. 11.4.1990)
a) Iran b) Iran's c) Iranian

4. *.... umpire Shakoor Rana made a controversial return to the international arena yesterday.*
(The Leader (a local newspaper) 1.9.1990)
a) Pakistani b) Pakistan c) Pakistan's

Compare your answers with the key: **1b 2c 3a 4b**

In the examples above, the country clearly stands as an indicator of nationality. None of the usual reference sources allow for this. This seems to be an increasingly common feature in contemporary British English which may become a norm in the future.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Textbooks say that a collective noun should be followed by a singular verb unless it clearly indicates individuals of the collective.

The audience was large.
vs
The audience were shouting and stamping their feet.

When the word "council" is used for a public body, it may be followed by a singular verb or a plural verb according to the context, but consistency must be maintained.

Kingswood Borough Council have won the good dog award for its outstanding progress in the promotion of responsible dog ownership. (Dogs Monthly).

Here the plural *have* gives place to the singular *its*. One or the other should be used consistently: … *have won the reward for their outstanding progress…,* or …*has won the award for its outstanding progress….*
The government have delayed its privatisation plans. (Radio 4) should be: *The government has delayed its privatisation plans.*

It is important to learn any language well if you wish to communicate unambiguously and achieve mutual understanding. In a united Europe, we are going to be judged, whether we like it or not, on the precision of our English as much as by the nature of our opinions.

Let us then accept the fact that grammar change as well as the change of meaning are commonplace and fundamental phenomena in any living language.

English is no exception in that respect. Teachers should be aware of these matters because they constitute omnipresent pitfalls for their students.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL TEACHING

The aim of this paper was to raise our awareness of some trends in English language usage over the past few decades. As English teachers we must also be aware of how language is really used rather than just how we are told it is used. It seems that many academic debates of "right or wrong" are not quite appropriate. There are "grey areas" where teachers need to have flexibility to deal with and keep pace with contemporary usage.

There still remains the question which students should be made aware of the information discussed above, and in what manner. It depends on our students' level, on their age and maturity. But the more advanced should – to some extent at least – be made aware of the fact that the language native speakers actually use is more varied than reference sources admit.

The main drawback of giving students this awareness is undoubtedly the uncertainty it brings about. In any way, the problem needs to be tackled with sensitivity. If we come across a piece of language that seems strange, we should first check. It might well be quite acceptable, even quite likely, but merely outside the realm of our experience. Students who are used to a black-and-white, right-or-wrong approach may find it difficult to accept grey areas in language.

That is why we must consider carefully

- whether it is acceptable to teach students rules which are contradicted by current use,
- whether we should teach a structure in question as passive or as active knowledge and to what level of student respectively,
- whether we should correct the structure when the student produces it,
- whether we should penalise students who produce the structure in a test or an exam.

It is definitely important that teachers and grammarians continue to pay attention to developments in the use of English and the language change that is continually taking place around them. They should be prepared to adapt their teaching to take these new observations into account.

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Some Linguistics-Oriented Courses and Their Contribution to the Preparation of Future Teachers of English

RENATA POVOLNÁ (Brno)

My contribution concentrates on some linguistics-oriented courses offered to future teachers of English at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in Brno and tries to suggest what should be included in their syllabi. Moreover, it offers some results from the questionnaire carried out among students and university graduates from several different faculties of education and arts in 2002 by one of my colleagues (For more details about the investigation and its results, see Hanušová, 2002).

At present as we witness a gradual introduction of two-stage university study, most subjects are studied in two stages, a three-year bachelor study and a two-year master study to follow. At the same time, courses offered to students of a particular subject, such as a foreign language, are subdivided into compulsory, elective, and optional courses. Students are given greater freedom in what they study because they can choose some of the courses they are offered, and thus they have more control over creating their own study programme for a particular subject.

First of all I would like to mention *Phonetics and Phonology*, which is both a practical and a theoretical course usually taken by students in the first year of their studies. It is not, however, the only course in which they can acquire good English pronunciation. Apart from Phonetics and Phonology and the Practical English course, which is compulsory in all the first three years of their bachelor studies and in which some attention is also paid to pronunciation, students can attend in the second year of their studies an elective course labelled Pronunciation Practice. Its aim is to improve students' knowledge of English rhythm and intonation.

It is important to emphasize that the syllabus for *Phonetics and Phonology* is to a certain degree connected with that of Practical English. For pronunciation practice, reading aloud and transcription, students use texts taken from *Inside Out*, their textbook in the Practical English course. The emphasis is on correct pronunciation of individual sounds in the context of the whole text. Methods of how to teach pronunciation at primary and secondary schools are also included. Students learn various types of practical exercises designed for pronunciation practice. Moreover, those interested in the teaching of pronunciation can take a special course labelled *Teaching Pronunciation*, which is concerned with ways of teaching the most difficult English sounds to Czech learners of English. Students prepare their own lesson plans, teach at primary or secondary schools under the supervision of their phonetics teacher and analyze their lessons afterwards.

All the courses connected with pronunciation are frequently evaluated by both undergraduates and graduates as very important, especially from the point of view of personal growth. (*Phonetics and Phonology* is assessed as the second most important course after Practical English.) However, from the point of view of their future teaching career, *Phonetics and Phonology* occupies only the fourth position, preceded by *Practical English, Methodology* and *Grammar*. It is interesting that *Phonetics and Phonology* is here considered less important than Grammar, especially by university graduates. It seems that there is still an overwhelming tendency to give preference to grammar over pronunciation in foreign language teaching.

Another course I want to concentrate on is Grammar. It is usually subdivided at Czech universities into two courses, namely *Morphology* and *Syntax*. At the Faculty of Education in Brno, grammar is taught in three successive courses, usually with a two-hour seminar and a one-hour lecture per week. It comprises Normative Grammar in the first year, Syntax in the second year and *Functional and Communicative Syntax* in the third year. Apart from these compulsory courses, students can also attend an elective course labelled *Syntactic Analysis*.

As already indicated, students become acquainted with the grammatical structure of English in five successive terms. Normative grammar, which takes two terms, helps them to master - apart from the basic terminology - all individual word classes with an emphasis on the system of the English verb. This course is important both for students' practical knowledge of English and for their future profession. Both undergraduates and graduates consider Grammar as one of the most important courses they take, usually even more important than *Phonetics and Phonology*.

Syntax is usually regarded as one of the most demanding courses by the overwhelming majority of students and that is probably why it occupies a much lower rank in students' assessment than Grammar, both from the point of view of students' personal growth and their preparation for their future profession. Students learn about the structure of the simple sentence, modal verbs and nonfinite verb forms, all in contrast to students' mother tongue, Czech. They also become acquainted with basic sentence types and discourse functions. A detailed analysis of the compound and complex sentence is included, with an emphasis on individual types of subordinate clauses and cohesive means. A lot of attention is devoted to the thematic structure of the sentence and it is important to emphasize here that all language means are studied in context, as one of the textbooks used in the course indicates. It is *Grammar in Context* by Gethin (1992).

As for didactic aspects of the courses included under the term grammar, students are offered a didactically oriented course in which some attention is also

paid to the teaching of grammar. Nevertheless, even if there were a course devoted entirely to teaching grammar, some didactic aspects should also be included in the Grammar course itself because students usually do not realize how a good and thorough understanding of the grammatical structure of a foreign language can help them in their future career. That is why it is considered appropriate to include in individual grammar courses some aspects of so-called pedagogical grammar, a course that can be offered as a separate course in the future (For more information about pedagogical grammar, see for instance Parrott, 2001).

Another course I want to discuss here is *Functional and Communicative Syntax*. Although it is not clear at first sight from the title itself, this course should be very useful for students' future career. A good knowledge of the correct use of the grammatical system of a foreign language in context can be a useful aid when answering often rather tricky questions asked by curious pupils. The same applies to the teacher's awareness of the differences between spoken and written varieties as well as the differences between formal and informal ways of expression. Similar to the other courses mentioned above, *Functional and Communicative Syntax* has its didactic aspects, notably in the permanent emphasis on individuals features and the usefulness of their application in students' future profession.

The elective course *Syntactic Analysis* is designed for students who want or need more practice of the mostly theoretical knowledge they have gained from the study of English syntax. They can themselves influence the content of the course itself to a great extent by their needs and requirements. Owed to the fact that the course is mostly taught by a Czech teacher, the possibility of comparing English and Czech grammatical structures enables students to acquire independent linguistic thinking while preparing them to answer tricky questions asked by their pupils.

The aim of the compulsory course *Introduction to the Study of the English Language for Teachers*, recommended to students in the first term of their bachelor's studies, is to introduce students to the basic terminology of other linguistics-oriented courses studied at university and to give them a complete survey of the past as well as current research into English, both in the students' mother country and abroad. An introduction to social and geographical variation in English forms an important part of the course syllabus. Owed to the fact that neither undergraduates nor graduates usually consider this course important either from the viewpoint of their future profession or that of their personal growth, it seems appropriate to aim this course more at the target group of future teachers rather than philologists in general.

Students who are interested in geographical variation in English can enrol in the last term of their bachelor's studies on an elective course called *Dialects in British English*, in which they can learn more about non-standard forms of British English.

As for the course labelled *Lexicology*, it is usually studied at the same time as Functional and Communicative Syntax, i.e. in the fifth term. It can be viewed as both a theoretical and a practical course, which concentrates in particular on word-formation processes, comparing the English and Czech languages, and on the development of the English lexicon. Semantic relationships between lexical units, for example synonymy and antonymy, are an important part of the course syllabus, giving a useful introduction to some didactic aspects in an otherwise rather theoretical course. *Lexicology* is one of the courses that distinguishes between the university programme for secondary school teachers and that for primary school teachers, in which an almost identical course is offered only at the master's stage.

The last two compulsory courses I want to mention in connection with the bachelor's stage are *Text Analysis* and *Historical Development of the English Language*. The former is offered to future teachers of both secondary and primary schools, whereas the latter, being included only in the programme for secondary school teachers, is one of the main distinctions between the two types of study.

The emphasis of *Text Analysis* lies in work with authentic texts, in the understanding of their structure and cohesion and, last but not least, their usefulness in the teaching process. It is a course which to a certain extent brings together students' knowledge from all the previously studied courses with their main orientation towards the grammatical structure of English. Consequently, it should help students in their preparation for final bachelor's examination in linguistics.

Historical Development of the English Language provides an introduction to the development of the English language, above all ways English has taken en route to its present state and foreign influences on its development. Texts from different stages, Old English, Middle English, and early Modern English, are analyzed. This course, however, is the only one which, according to some students, should be entirely excluded from the study programmes for future teachers, as the results from the above-mentioned investigation indicate.

Apart from the mostly compulsory courses listed so far, students can take in the third year of their studies an elective course called *Introduction to the Theory of Translation*, in which they can compare texts written in a foreign language

with translations into the students' mother tongue. The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to problems connected with translations from English into Czech and, moreover, to enhance the development of students' skills and abilities in the area of language and cultural competence. Although this course was not included in the investigation quoted above, it can be stated that it is considered very useful by students, which is evidenced by the numbers of students that take it every year.

As for master's study of English, future secondary school teachers at the Faculty of Education in Brno are offered only two compulsory linguistics-oriented courses, namely *Pragmatics* and *Stylistics*. There is a difference between secondary and primary school studies. Future primary school teachers study *Lexicology* only at the master's stage of their studies because it is not included at the bachelor's stage and, moreover, *Pragmatics* is not included in their studies at all, thus representing another distinction between the two types of study.

Pragmatics is a course that is quite popular among students, probably because it is seen not as a theoretical course but rather a practical one. Students acquire a background in such notions as Grice's cooperative principle, Leech's politeness principle, positive and negative politeness strategies and preference structure. During the course they are offered many practical examples from real-life situations; they have to simulate such situations and consider the use of language from the viewpoint of both the speaker and the listener. *Pragmatics* is one of the courses which has been listed among those that should be included in the study of English at university in the investigation mentioned above.

As for *Stylistics*, it is taught in a similar way to *Functional and Communicative Syntax*, with a two-hour seminar and a one-hour lecture per week. The course presents a review of the distinctive features of the individual functional styles in English and focuses on the stylistic means available in English at phonetical, phonological, graphemical, morphological, syntactical, lexical and semantic level. Samples of authentic texts of the administrative style, publicism, scientific prose style, the language of conversation and stylized dialogue are analyzed.

Moreover, students who are especially interested in the spoken language can take a special course labelled *Conversation Analysis*, which deals with face-to-face as well as telephone conversation and in which students analyze authentic corpus materials while using, for example, *A Corpus of English Conversation* by Svartvik and Quirk (1980) or *A Corpus of Formal British English Speech* by Knowles, Williams and Taylor (1996). It is clear that this course is quite popular with students because many of them take it every year. In addition, those who want to attend some other linguistics-oriented courses can enrol on special

courses, such as those which concentrate on the language of publicism (Special Linguistics Seminar 1) or the differences between the English and Czech lexicon (Special Linguistics Seminar 2). Another optional course, *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, provides students with some basic notions from the social study of a foreign language.

At the master's stage of their studies, students can also continue their translation studies, namely in a two-term course called *Translation Practice*, in which they analyze some texts taken from contemporary British and American literature and in which they can further improve their language and cultural competence in English. As with the Introduction to the *Theory of Translation* course offered already at the bachelor's stage, this course is often taken by many students at the master's stage of their studies because they consider it useful, especially for their personal growth.

The final course I have to mention is *Academic Writing*, which is a compulsory course for those who want to write their final theses in English.

At the end of my presentation let me emphasize once more that an awareness of the differences between a foreign language and a student's mother tongue and an introduction to at least some didactic aspects in the teaching of all linguistics-oriented courses taught to university students of English are necessary conditions for their successful preparation for their future teaching profession.

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The Rise and Fall of ELT

MARY HAWKER (Praha)

INTRODUCTION

This presentation is essentially meant as a starting point for an exchange of ideas and experiences between teachers from Saxony and the Czech Republic. While the comments are intended to be thought provoking, they might turn out to be merely provoking, for which my apologies.

A GENERAL PICTURE

In discussing the ups and downs of English language teaching at the English Department of the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague after the fall of the Berlin wall, we cannot avoid first defining the main forces that brought about changes of attitude to the discipline. We shall go through the influences one by one, namely, the presence of foreigners in the country, the possibility to travel abroad, The British Council, the media, Internet, new coursebooks and the educational authorities. In the second part we shall examine how these influences directly affected the department I work at.

The development was by no means steady and straightforward. There was a change of course clearly detectable in each one of the factors around the mid-nineties. In what direction the development changed differed from one factor to another and we shall therefore mention this as we go along.

The Influx of native English speakers

In the early nineties Czechoslovakia was Eldorado for young people, idealists and adventurers, with nothing better to do. Some were sent in by respectable organisations like the Peace Corps, the British Council or Education for Democracy. Some were experienced English language teachers; others had been given a crash course in language teaching.

Our Department had two excellent teachers, fully qualified in ELT, from the British Council and two Fulbright scholars, one of whom was an experienced teacher trainer. There were however also those who drifted in with no qualifications and found it rather easy to pick up a job teaching English.

After 1995 this began to change. And not only in the Czech Republic, as witness the article from the *Guardian Weekly*, dated October 13, 1996. “Ten years ago, the situation (of English teachers) was different. In virtually every developing country, and in many developed countries as well, being a native English speaker was enough to get you employed as a Tefl teacher. Now employers are much more discriminating and will only look at teachers who have

the knowledge and the attitudes to teach English effectively." (*Guardian Weekly*, 1996)

It was around that period when the school authorities in the Czech Republic started waking up to the fact that being fluent in a foreign language was not a guarantee of successful language teaching. They were looking in the first place for educators; preferably for those with an understanding of the local context.

This trend of rejecting native speakers in favor of experienced educators, albeit Czechs, goes against the idea advocated by Reinhold Freudenstein of Marburg University "to let native speakers take over language instruction exclusively in European schools. For the traditional language-teacher profession, this is, as you can imagine, a very unpopular view, but in a future United States of Europe it seems to be a realistic perspective." (Freudenstein, 2001) For the time being, that dream has been put on the back burner.

Nevertheless the flood tide of native English speakers has left its impact. Our applicants, graduates of secondary schools often from small remote towns, have as a rule been taught by native speakers, if only for a few conversation classes a week. English for them is a living language, spoken by real people, not just teachers. In the provincial towns these native speakers were perhaps more rare, but all the more valued and pampered, taken into families and pubs. Thus making use of an excellent opportunity to take the English conversation out of the academic setting and into the real world.

Meanwhile, the students in Prague were becoming rather blasé about the presence of English visitors to the point of saturation. What might have seemed like an unfair advantage, the ample opportunities in the Capital to strike up a conversation in English compared to the meager chances elsewhere, was no longer fully exploited. This was brought home to foreigners who had lived here before the Velvet Revolution and stayed on or came back after. Old friends were no longer available to them at the drop of a hat. In fact, they were often gone altogether, skipping across the open border for a long dreamt of visit to an English speaking country.

Trips Abroad

Unlike the presence of English native speakers in the Czech educational system, which has been on the ebb since the mid-nineties, the presence of Czech learners of English has been on the rise in English speaking countries, not just in terms of numbers, but also quality. The European Union and US institutions have been opening up more meaningful exchanges to students and teachers at the university level.

Young people are now also better informed on how to use the Internet in order to find a job in the desired country. Many of our applicants have taken advantage of this possibility. The benefits are obvious. They do not come primarily, as

might be expected, in the guise of improved language proficiency. The applicants have tested their affection for the English language on the spot. They have been in real face to face contact with people in the USA and Great Britain, their culture and way of life, and still are prepared to embark on a life long career in English.

They have made an informed decision. Their feelings about the language are based on knowledge not intuition and should therefore be more reliable and lasting. We know that affective variables are a very important factor in second language acquisition because Comenius implied as much nearly 400 years ago.

The British Council

The British Council has played an important role in reshaping English language teaching in our country. It concentrated its activities in two main areas: language teaching and teacher training. With remarkable insight, it understood that if there was going to be any improvement in the general knowledge of the English language, the changes must start at the elementary and secondary school level.

Teachers of English, many of them retrained teachers of Russian, were offered teacher-training courses both in the Czech Republic and in the UK. Degree courses in Tesol at universities in Britain were organised and fully financed through the British Council. The Council brought together teacher trainers from the whole Republic at conferences and workshops. The latest developments in teaching methodology were imparted and shared.

A change in the official policy toward the end of the last century meant a gradual withdrawal of the British Council from these activities. Summer teacher training courses ceased. The two excellent teachers, fully qualified and skilled in ELT were withdrawn, much to our regret, from our Department. The underlying belief was that the changes in English teaching were sufficiently under way to carry on without the help of the British taxpayers' money. It was time to move further East. This was to some extent true.

The Media

Film, television and the radio offer further opportunities to expose the learner to samples of authentic spoken English. Most films, apart from those intended for children, are shown in the original version with subtitles. In the Communist era they were mostly dubbed, partly controlling the content of what was being said and partly securing employment for many top Czech actors. Now the state TV, cable TV, satellite TV and videos all provide excellent listening comprehension practice for the learner of English.

A good part of the practice is, admittedly, in low register slang. This meant added attraction in the beginning, but has since become too commonplace to

shock. (A very interesting study on swear words in the school environment was presented by Petra Kolesova at a conference in Plzen in 2001) We have, similarly, become resigned to the various varieties of English that replaced the Received Pronunciation on the BBC.

After all, the Queen herself allegedly no longer speaks Queen's English, if the Daily Telegraph is to be believed (Derbyshire, 2000). Insisting on RP is considered politically incorrect. Whether the learners' receptive skills, i.e., listening comprehension of Scottish, Irish, American and Estuary English, can and should develop into productive skills, is not clear. Can we expect our students to switch between these politically correct varieties?

Far more to my dismay as an English teacher is the fact that the BBC World Service in the Czech Republic is increasingly broadcast in Czech. It is setting a good standard for Czech radio programs, but it is shortening the potential time of exposure of my students to spoken English. I am convinced it is this natural exposure to the language through spoken media that explains the Scandinavians' good proficiency in English in comparison to other nations of Europe. It is a shame to deprive Czech listeners of this opportunity.

Internet

This is the area in which I feel the least competent to speak and therefore have the greatest misgivings. No doubt other contributions from more qualified speakers have set things right. I have already mentioned the positive effect the Internet has had on employing our applicants and students in English speaking countries. The Internet has also opened up access to sources which were hitherto inaccessible. Students can download an infinite amount of information on any given subject. And they do. Sometimes they unwisely try to pass it off for their own creation.

They get writing practice by emailing pals at the other end of the world. They generally pick up the unfortunate spelling habits and limited vocabulary of their correspondents. Thus "Do you" becomes "Du u", for example.

What I am mostly worried about, however, is the addictiveness of this means of communication. I see students lining up to use the email in our computer center. Instead of adding to the variety of learning techniques as it at first possibly did, it now seems to be taking over from book reading, listening to the radio or even engaging in face to face conversations.

Coursebooks

The change in this area was swift and indicated the degree to which students of English were dissatisfied with the materials imposed by the Communist leadership. Anything was better than the old textbooks featuring the exemplary Prokop family and replete with references to the glorious construction of

socialism. Publishers of English language coursebooks designed for international audiences had themselves a ball.

It did not take long, however, for teachers and learners alike, to discover that textbooks written for all were in a sense written for nobody. They could not deal with the specific problems of the Czech learner. They were also based on a methodology that Czech teachers were not familiar with. Many schoolteachers were frustrated by the lack of grammar and translation in their communicative coursebooks. They soon got busy inserting their own grammatical terminology and writing up lists of words for their pupils to memorize.

This is where the British Council stepped in. It was most helpful in acquainting teachers with the new approaches in language teaching. Opening a dialogue between expert teacher trainers from the UK and English language teachers in the Czech Republic meant a useful reflection on the most effective use of new coursebooks could take place.

Ministry of Education

The most useful intervention on the part of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education in English language teaching following the Velvet Revolution was to stop all intervention. Suddenly, after years of strict directives and close observation, it was up to the directors of schools, language teachers and parents to decide what coursebook should be used, how the knowledge should be imparted and how tested.

The decision, sometimes sadly, became guided by financial considerations. So where the Ministry of Education and ultimately the Party used to have the last say, now it was the school's and the parents' pockets.

Again the change of atmosphere came toward the end of the nineties. Efforts have been made to curb this freedom of choice and bring greater uniformity into the educational system. A center has been created to develop a universal method of assessment of foreign language learners at the secondary school level. These attempts have been unsuccessful. Secondary schools continue to set their own final exams and the reputation of each school continues to differ.

This may not be to the detriment of educational standards. Nation-wide exams, administered on a mass scale, must inevitably give preference to entirely objective, easily scored testing. A language test, which is fully objective, easy to mark and at the same time valid, is yet to be invented. "When testing is carried out on a very large scale, when the scoring of tens of thousands of compositions might seem not to be a practical proposition, it is understandable that potentially greater accuracy is sacrificed for reasons of economy and convenience. But it does not give testing a good name!" (Hughes, 1989) The multiple-choice test has been proved inappropriate for language testing. Yet this is the technique favored by the creators of the universal school leaving language test.

Moreover, in setting a universal standard for all secondary schools, we will of necessity need to lower the level of the final test. It will help mediocre students pass and will suppress all information about the gifted students. This may be good news for the advocates of egalitarianism, but is no incentive for improving the general language level in the country.

An even more unfortunate intervention on the part of the Ministry came in 2001. It announced that it intended to lower the age at which languages would be introduced in primary schools. In the near future pupils all over the Republic will start compulsory language instruction in the third form, i.e., at the age of 8. This is foolish squandering of resources and in addition an unrealistic endeavor, as I will try to illustrate.

The decision does not take into account the total lack of qualified language teachers and the lack of financial incentives to become one. If unskilled teachers start drilling our children at a tender age in English pronunciation, grammar and idioms, we will have a hard time ridding those pupils of bad habits later on. It will only make the work of secondary school teachers more difficult; having to repair the damage inflicted on the children's tender minds by hastily employed language teachers.

Moreover, even in an ideal situation, in a dreamland populated with an abundance of perfect language teachers with a loving attitude to unruly children and armed with all the patience it takes to teach them, it would still not be a good idea. I have spent decades teaching what are nowadays called young learners.Whenever one of our children started attending kindergarten, I offered to introduce songs and games in English to their class. It was an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Until one day, when our youngest was 9 and had reached the fourth form, the teacher in the parallel class asked if I would be willing to teach her class as well. I was delighted. I had had problems persuading teachers to let me disturb their classes with these extracurricular activities.

The experience was a veritable eye-opener. The pupils in this parallel class were total beginners and thus filled with enthusiasm. They were so highly motivated it was a joy to teach them. Their intellectual capacity allowed them to pick up the language with great ease. I had not realised how much unnecessary effort I had been exerting with the younger children. Within months these beginners caught up with our daughter's class, with children who had had English for five years and were by now taking it for granted. It became clear to me that those five years, as enjoyable as they had been, had been wasted.

My personal experience was corroborated by a document published in 1998 (Blondin et al, 1998), which lays out all the fundamental arguments against teaching very young children. It is a publication of the results of a lengthy and costly inquiry into the benefits of early language teaching. A team of researchers

from six countries of Europe, led by the distinguished Prof. Michel Candelier, came to the conclusion that early language instruction is not only a waste of money, it is not advisable. They found that students beginning language instruction at secondary level in classes with those who had an early start managed to make up the difference in the matter of months.

The team went on to stress the dangers of the early start. The number of languages offered at the lower stages of schooling will inevitably be limited. This would in its final effect mean a reduced variety of languages taught at schools generally.

Cutting down on the choice of languages offered in the educational system goes against the philosophy of the European Union, which advocates multilingualism. Nonetheless, it has chosen to ignore the conclusions drawn by the team of experts and continues to advocate compulsory early language teaching. The Czech Ministry of Education cannot be blamed therefore for taking a political decision which pleases both Brussels and Czech voters at the same time. As long as parents remain misinformed about the desirability of forcing languages on their young children, they will vote for a government that makes such misguided decisions.

ELT AT THE CHARLES UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE

The Language Proficiency of our Applicants

As a result of the influences discussed above, the profile of the learners applying to study at our Department has radically changed in the last 13 years. Their level of mastery of the English language is such that the entrance examination has had to be set at a much higher standard. Students graduating before or immediately after the fall of communism would probably not be admitted at present into the first year of English studies. These students had attended 9 terms of practical language, two seminars a week, at the most highly esteemed center of English studies in Czechoslovakia, and yet their communicative skills were limited.

Nonetheless, in the early nineties, the Department was seen as one of the few institutions in the Republic where one could acquire a high degree of proficiency in the English language. Our Department was flooded with applications. For many the enthusiasm for English was kindled by their hatred of the Russian language, the language of the oppressor. Studying English was a form of rebellion, like going to church.

The percentage of students with this attitude was enhanced by an official decision to give priority to those applicants who had been discriminated against by the previous regime. They had been thirsting after university studies, were now advanced in age, and it was one of their last chances to join the student body. Many made enthusiastic and brilliant students.

By the mid-nineties the situation was beginning to change. Ideological incentives, learning English as the language of freedom and democracy, were giving way to more practical motivation. The knowledge of English opened doors to better jobs. Applicants still quite mistakenly turned to us primarily in hopes of improving their practical language skills. Yet as the name of our Faculty indicates, a mostly philosophical relationship to the language and its literature dominates our curriculum. The theoretical subjects are at the heart of our interest. Practical language has always been seen as the necessary evil, which cannot, moreover, guarantee the instructor's path to glory.

The Status of Practical Language Instruction

In the distant past, when practical language took up most of the teaching load, all the members of the Department up to the level of reader/assistant professor had to be involved in it. Alongside their literature or linguistic courses they would teach a couple of hours of practical language a week. As the applicants' level of English increased, the time devoted to improving it after enrollment decreased, so that the practical language course now extends over two terms instead of nine. There is no need to call on unwilling theoreticians to help out with language classes. Thus they are free to devote their time to their real professional interests.

At the same time English became the language of instruction in all theoretical subjects, whether linguistic or literary, taught by our Department. On the one hand this proves that our students are capable of following complex lectures in English. On the other hand it gives them additional practice in listening comprehension.

This development took place naturally, without premeditation, in response to changing circumstances. With hindsight, however, it bears out Krashen's Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) about language acquisition being a more effective strategy than language learning, if not the only strategy, for becoming a proficient foreign language user. Our students are to an ever-growing extent 'picking up' the language rather than receiving classroom instructions in grammar and usage.

Changes in the Practical Language Courses

In accordance with these changes - the higher standard of applicants' English, the reduced amount of time devoted to practical language classes and English becoming the language of instruction - changes had to appear in the practical language classes themselves. Objectives, as well as content, had to be reconsidered.

For some years after the Velvet Revolution we continued to use the old textbook of English for philologists. It was based on the Grammar/Translation

method with a few functional exercises thrown in of the 'Asking if someone approves, saying that you approve' type. (Peprnik, 1990) Students found the book boring and used the few scattered references to Marxism to get rid of it.

Headway Advanced, which replaced it, was certainly more reader-friendly. It also allowed native English speaker at our Department to teach with it. Eventually, when practical language was reduced to one academic year, Headway had to be discarded. It was not possible to cover the book in one year and making cuts into it was not practical. By then writing skills were taught within British Studies. This is a content-based course, which teaches summary and essay writing on the basis of reading authentic texts from British newspapers and books.

The practical language course focuses on translation from and into English with emphasis on accuracy. Grammar explanations are tailor-made in response to the particular needs of the students. The use of a coursebook has been abandoned. The joy of discarding a prescribed coursebook was described by Prof. Petr Rakos, an outstanding Hungarian scholar: "A certain very intelligent young dozent, full of good intentions, but endowed with somewhat peculiar educational principles, recently dramatically exclaimed in a controversial newspaper column: "When will a textbook which a student can rely on with full confidence finally see the light of day?" For my part I hope the answer is 'Never'.

> There must never be an infallible textbook.
> There can't be.
> There is none.

It is in the teacher's best interest to be allowed to teach his own way, not bound in the straightjacket of a single officially approved textbook" (Rakos, 2002).

Our students, however, do not share my enthusiasm. After a decade of being fed the communicative diet, they are clamoring for grammar and a coursebook. So perhaps we will go back to the Grammar/Translation method and Peprnik's coursebook. Coming full circle.

After all, the zeal for inventing new language teaching methods seems to have died down. Years of shifting interest from teacher to learner (Richards, 1986) has brought us to the conclusion that there is no universal key to language learning or teaching. Every learner has a different style of learning. We are still very far from knowing what precisely goes on in the mind of the learner when acquiring a language.

The great educator, Caleb Gattegno (Gattegno, 1988) traced the human cognitive processes to the moment of birth. His message to parents and teachers alike is: 'Do not underestimate the mental powers of a baby'. His Silent Way, a unique teaching method, places the entire responsibility for learning on the

learner (Gattegno, 1976). The emphasis on learner autonomy has dominated teaching methodology in recent years.

At about the same time, Michel Thomas (Thomas, Internet) came to the opposite conclusion. He had been provoked by 'a negative statement made by a psychology professor at the Sorbonne: "Nobody knows anything about the learning process of the human mind". This statement 'drove him to devote his life to probing the learning process' (Thomas, Internet). Unlike Gattegno (Gattegno, 1976) he takes on all responsibility for the learning process. He insists that his students put themselves entirely into his hands and let themselves be guided. Apparently with equal success. No wonder weariness and skepticism is the dominant mood of foreign language teaching theory.

The death of Communicative Language Teaching, the most recent great fad in applied linguistics, is heralded in a Guardian Weekly article of September this year. Entitled 'Why communicative rules have missed the context' it argues that 'CLT, although called an approach rather than a method, none the less encourages a focus on teaching method above everything else'. The author, Stephen Bax, goes on to point out 'that methodology is not the magic solution, that there are many different ways to learn languages, and that the context is a crucial determiner of the success of learners'. The key aspects of the context 'will include an understanding of individual students and their learning needs and styles' (Bax, 2003). So we might as well return to good old Grammar/Translation.

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Teaching Practice as a Motivational Factor

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of my contribution I would like to say that I have been supervising student-teachers (or trainees) at their teaching practice for about ten years.

Over the years I have developed a certain belief that teaching practice represents an important milestone in the trainees' lives. Having completed at least the first stage of their teaching practice in their fourth year, or even in the course of the first stage, they seem to change their attitudes to both their further learning and their further teaching. It means that especially their attitude towards their own learning changes. They start taking their learning much more seriously. They co-operate much better in both language and methodology seminars. Even those who used to be mostly silent become more willing to communicate in the target language, they do not mind sharing their ideas with their teacher and their peers, they contribute to discussions, ask questions. Most students become interested in language teaching methodology, which is definitely not a popular subject at the beginning of the course in the third year. They start attending lectures (which are not compulsory), borrow books on teaching and also new coursebooks. Even those who had believed they would never teach change their minds and start giving private lessons or teaching various courses. Does it mean that in their fourth year of studies they have simply matured, or does the teaching practice really mean a certain stimulus for further learning and teaching? It seems to me that teaching practice functions as a sort of motivational factor - for both learning and teaching.

After (or in the course of) their teaching practice the students find out they need to improve their English and at the same time their pedagogic knowledge and skills. During their teaching practice they realize what level of language proficiency is needed. In secondary schools they have to be truly proficient speakers to be able to cope with the basic requirement to conduct the whole lesson in English including grammar presentation. In basic schools the language level of the learners is rather low, which requires other language skills on the part of the teacher. He or she should be able to use English as much as possible to provide the learners with comprehensible input and thus enhance language acquisition. The teacher has to be able to use simplified language for the learners to understand and he/she should also create natural situations in the classroom which can be exploited linguistically. All this requires an adequate language

proficiency but also, or primarily, a very good level of pedagogic, or teaching, skills.

The trainees also realize that they somehow lack the knowledge of grammar which is needed at school level. Very often their knowledge of English grammar is too academic. It is often a surprise for the trainees that the learners are not able to cope with basic grammatical categories in theory and do not understand the metalanguage the trainees use when talking about grammar. The trainees realize they have to deal with grammar in very simple language, they have to rely more on examples than rules. Having realized this in practice (they should know it from theory, but this, naturally, does not suffice) the trainees begin to view grammar also from a different angle: the one of the learners, which the trainees find is at a much lower level than they had expected. They usually start looking for activities which would help the learners in understanding particular grammar points and also in practicing grammar. The trainees become quite interested in teaching because they seem to have found out that teaching is an interesting, creative activity which represents a certain challenge for them.

Last but not least they have a much higher level of empathy with teachers than they had before their teaching practice. Before, they were only learners of English, now they have become teachers. Even their social status has changed. They are very happy when they are accepted by the class as “real teachers”, which is usually the case. Their higher empathy is probably also the reason for their higher willingness to cooperate in their own learning sessions at the university.

The question is whether all the change in trainee motivation is reality or whether it is my private, personal feeling which comes from the fact that we spend much more time together during the teaching practice than just at lectures and methodology sessions before.

ORGANIZATION OF TEACHING PRACTICE

To find out more about the issue I contacted 16 trainees I had supervised during their teaching practice over the academic year and I asked them to fill in a questionnaire. Before presenting the findings obtained through the questionnaire survey, I should explain the system of teaching practice at our university.

We are a pedagogic faculty preparing future teachers of various subjects. The study programmes are always designed as double-branch courses. In case of English it means that the trainees will become teachers of English plus another subject, usually another language (French, German, Spanish or Czech). Our main aim is to educate teachers for middle school level which means teaching children from the age of 11to the age of 15. In practice, however, the teachers find jobs in secondary schools as well. The teacher-training course lasts five years.

The English language teaching methodology course begins in the third year, in the fourth year the students undergo a serial school practice, which is followed by a block of teaching practice in the fifth year. For the serial school practice our university cooperates with various local schools, both basic and secondary.

Basic education in the Czech Republic comprises two stages: primary and middle. The primary school provides education to children from the age of six to the age of eleven. At that age, after the fifth grade, children can either go on to the middle school and finish the basic education at the age of fifteen, or they have a chance to leave the basic school and, if successful at entrance exams, they can go on to secondary education, which then lasts eight years. This type of school is called gymnazium and provides general education to those who would like to go on to tertiary education, (see graph).

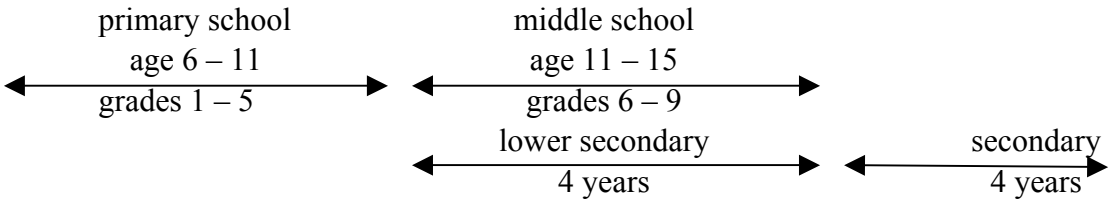

Fig. 1 Basic education

It is obvious that talented children leave basic school for secondary school at the age of eleven and thus basic school teachers complain that the best pupils have gone and that they have to work only with weaker learners. The system of the elite schools has been strongly criticized from both inside and outside the country as undemocratic but there does not seem to be enough political will to abolish it.

Our university students can do their teaching practice at both types of schools - either middle or lower secondary - as they both provide education to children from the age of 11 to the age of 15. It is obvious that the schools represent a different experience to the trainees.

For the serial school experience the trainees are usually divided into groups of four and they are allocated to a particular school. They go to the school once a week for one lesson over one semester, i.e. 14 weeks. The trainees cooperate with the school teacher and also the university methodologist, the supervisor of the group. The supervisor and the trainees decide together on the organisation of the teaching practice period. If I am the supervisor I usually ask the trainees to observe the first three lessons to become familiar with the class. The trainees observe the school teacher teaching, they learn about the textbook used, about the level of the learners and they usually learn about learner differences in the particular class. After the lesson the school teacher is available for one hour to discuss the lesson with the trainees but the trainees also have a chance to discuss

the lesson with the supervisor. After the first three lessons, when the trainees have become at least a bit familiar with the class, they start teaching. If they do not feel ready to teach the whole lesson, they can divide it between two or three of them and share the responsibility. This is similar to microteaching but the trainees teach a real, authentic class. Sharing the lesson with their peers gives them a feeling of security but on the other hand requires a very good level of team work. In case the trainees have already had some sort of teaching experience, they prefer to teach their own lessons from the beginning. To plan a lesson the trainees have to cooperate with the school teacher, who tells them what to do. The teachers are normally very helpful. They usually decide on the topic or grammar point to be taught but they leave enough space for the trainees' creativity. The trainees themselves decide on the methods and materials to be used. Preparing for the lesson the trainees can work individually, using the university library, or they can ask the supervisor or the class teacher for help.

The trainees then teach their lessons, observed by their peers, the class teacher and the supervisor. Immediately after the lesson they are provided with feedback. The feedback session usually takes place in the school and includes all the people involved - the peers, the teacher and the supervisor. Sometimes the feedback is very short because the trainees prefer to discuss the lesson only with their peers and the supervisor in the more private atmosphere of a café.

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Normally I supervise two groups of trainees per term. To find out more about the relationship between teaching practice and trainee motivation I asked the four groups of trainees I had supervised over the academic year to fill in my questionnaire:

The questionnaire included 15 questions. I asked the trainees to think of various issues, not only those connected with their motivation. I wanted to use the results for the improvement of various aspects of the teaching practice.

Quotations from what the trainees have written down are presented in italics.

Lesson Planning

To find out more about the main focus of their lesson planning the trainees were asked what they had to pay special attention to when working on their lesson plans. Was it grammar, vocabulary, preparation of effective activities, etc.?

Obviously the trainees had to prepare the content - grammar to be explained in the particular lesson and also vocabulary necessary for the particular topics to be covered, e.g. I had to make sure that I know all the vocabulary needed for the lesson, especially the problematic words.

The trainees paid a lot of attention to the choice of activities and games which would be interesting for the learners, which would not be boring and which would thus be motivating for the learners. (I primarily thought of activities and games which would be interesting for the pupils. Or: I especially thought of how to motivate the learners.)

They had to think about teacher language:

I had to prepare questions which are normally asked in the classroom. or:

I had to prepare classroom language to be able to conduct the whole lesson in English.

and also the structure of the lesson, ways of presentation, but also more deeper issues of results, effectiveness and meaningfulness, e.g.:

- *I had to think about the organization of the lesson to present the new information clearly, to make the lesson beneficial to the learners, to give the learners room to express themselves and last but not least to make the lesson interesting to the learners.*
- *The big problem for me was to integrate all activities into a meaningful whole.*
- *I had to think of timing, I was afraid I wouldn't have enough material for the whole lesson.*
- *My main concern was the organization of the whole lesson, its general weighting, to make the activities, to think of the aim of each activity and whether it will be effective enough.*
- *To prepare the lesson was very difficult for us as we didn't know what the learners already know, what they are like, what their needs are.*

After the Lesson

I also inquired whether the trainees spotted any mistakes they had made, whether their mistakes motivated them to consult the dictionary or a grammar book and whether they had to clarify for themselves some points covered in the lesson which might have caused problems for themselves.

Surprisingly most of the trainees said they had not checked anything after the lesson. Some of them said they had asked their peers immediately after the lesson, others had asked the supervisor and in case they had not, the mistakes they made during the lesson were explained to them later at the feedback session. Some trainees said they had not had to check anything because they had prepared for every possibility before the lesson.

Only a few trainees admitted they checked the right form or usage:

- *I checked the right pronunciation. I realized that I pronounce a word in a different way than the learners. I realized it was my mistake and I admitted it.*
- *I had to look up some classroom English expressions I was not sure about in the lesson.*
- *I was looking for more examples of words the learners mix up (e.g. lend and borrow, say and tell).*
- *I was not sure of spelling of some words and the use of articles. I did look this up.*

To conclude this issue I would like to quote one of the trainees, which shows her process of reflection: *I try to make everything clear before the lesson. After the lesson I try to improve the plan for the next lesson, I try to avoid the mistakes I had made and try to include anything that I think was missing in the previous lesson.*

The trainees were asked whether their first teaching experience motivated them to improve any aspect of the knowledge needed by language teachers. They were offered some options. The results can be seen from the following table:

The teaching practice motivated me to…	***Number of students:***
improve my grammar	6
widen my vocabulary linked to a particular topic	7
improve my pronunciation	4
improve my spelling	2
become a more fluent speaker of English	6
look for interesting activities	12
look for new, interesting coursebooks and materials	9
learn more about language learning principles	3
improve my pedagogic skills	4
learn how to attract attention of the learners and how to maintain classroom discipline	8
gain more teaching experience	7

Again, I would like to sum up this issue by a quotation of one of the trainees' thoughts: My first, not very successful lesson motivated me to manage the following lesson much, much better.

The serial teaching practice provides the trainees with the first exposure to real learners and real classroom situations. What have the trainees learned about knowledge and skills needed by the language teachers? I asked them what sort of knowledge or skill they should gain to become good teachers. What did the teaching practice reveal?

The knowledge and skills mentioned by the trainees can be divided into three main categories:

a) language
b) teaching skills
c) establishing good relationship with the learners.

As far as the language is concerned the wish of many trainees is:

- *to improve the knowledge of the English language itself and also*
- *to be confident in grammar and be able to explain it clearly and in a simple way to the learners.*

Although the trainees in the previous section of the questionnaire did not think of teaching skills as being crucial for them, in this part they seem to link their future success as teachers with a good level of teaching skills.

The trainees particularly wish to manage timing of the lesson and also

- *to be able to plan the lesson well, on the other hand not to spend too much time on lesson planning.*
- *not to hurry, be consistent, be able to adapt the plans to the circumstances, react spontaneously.*
- *to make the lessons interesting and effective*
- *not to panic if something goes wrong*

To establish a good, fair relationship with the learners seems to be extremely important for the future teachers.

They wish to learn how to: involve all the pupils, be fair to everybody, know what the children can know and what they cannot, not ask them questions they cannot answer, understand what their thinking process is like, speak to them in a simple language. They also want to be able to :

- *keep attention and maintain discipline*
- *be friendly and fair*
- *set clear rules from the very beginning*
- *be strict from the beginning, keep distance from the learners.*

One trainee says that it is necessary to have enough teaching practice, to gain enough experience to be able to take decisions in the classroom.

Another student teacher believes that what she will have to do to become a good teacher is to adjust herself to the role of the teacher.

The last question of the questionnaire inquired whether the trainees somehow changed their intention to teach or not to teach in the future. Did the teaching practice motivate them to choose the teaching profession or the other way round?

Three people said that their decision whether to teach or not had not been influenced by the teaching practice, e.g.: teaching practice with an unknown class cannot influence the decision whether to teach or not. It is influenced by many other factors.

Another trainee, in spite of a positive experience, does not want to teach:
I haven't changed my decision not to teach in the future. I am afraid of the learners. Even though the teaching practice was a positive experience, I think it was only by chance.

Another student said: *the teaching practice did not discourage me from teaching but I am not that keen on it any more*.

Quite a few students are scared of the idea to become basic school teachers:

- *I have always wanted to teach but I have made sure that I do not want to teach at the basic school. I do not want to solve discipline problems.*
- *I would like to teach but not at the basic school and not for the rest of my life, only for some time.*
- *I will never ever teach at the basic school, as I have always known.*

- *I decided to teach but not at the basic school, preferably at some sort of alternative school.*

Why is teaching at basic school so unpopular among the trainees? Teaching at basic school means teaching children of lower level of language proficiency, sometimes of lower motivation or teaching children with various learning problems. Teaching at basic school definitely requires a very good level of pedagogic knowledge and skills, experience and confidence.

I am very happy to say that the teaching practice influenced others in a positive way, e.g:

- *I didn't want to teach but after the teaching practice I changed my mind.*
- *The teaching practice strengthened my intention to teach.*
- *I have always wanted to be a teacher.*
- *I have learned that not all children are naughty.*
- *I feel a challenge. I want to be able to attract the learners. I would like to develop in the learners a good relationship to the English language and to learning languages in general.*

I will conclude the questionnaire survey by another quotation. A future teacher says: *I have always had the opinion that teaching at the basic school is a very difficult and challenging job, which brings a lot of problems. The teaching practice showed that there is also a pleasant side of it and motivated me very strongly to become a teacher in the future*.

CONCLUSION

What can we see from the results of the questionnaire survey? Naturally, we cannot say that teaching practice is the only stimulus for further learning and teaching of the trainees. There are many more aspects to it. On the other hand we can say that teaching practice is extremely important and I am very happy to say that it fulfills its aims. During their teaching practice the trainees realize what it means to be a teacher, what kind of knowledge and skills are needed on the part of the teacher. Even though they know about it in theory, they have to experience it in practice. This "experiential knowledge" (Wallace, 1991) brings more responsibility to the trainees. They feel much more responsible for their own learning but they also accept the responsibility for the learning of their own learners, which is extremely important. Learners, with all their feelings, needs and their motivation seem to be in the center of the trainees' attention.

As we can see from the answers, teaching practice (or, in other words, experiential knowledge or knowledge-in-action) promotes reflection. The trainees think very seriously of what to avoid, what to repeat and what to improve in their classes.

I think I can say that teaching practice represents a certain stimulus for further learning and teaching of the trainees because it represents a stimulus for reflection. The trainees' ability to reflect can be perceived by the university tutors

as certain maturation and also as higher motivation to become a professional teacher.

From the survey we can also see that the trainees oscillate somewhere between being a teacher and being a learner. It is a difficult position. They are aware of the fact that establishing a good relationship with the learners from the very beginning is extremely important. But they should also be aware of the fact that teaching is a never-ending process of learning. The more teaching experience the trainees gain, the more secure and confident they will feel in the teacher's role. If we want to motivate the trainees to become teachers, we have to provide them with sufficient teaching experience and challenge, but on the other hand we have to provide them with sufficient support of all the people involved.

We cannot think that all the trainees will become teachers. The positive thing is that those who want to teach know what the job is about, they are able to reflect on their practices and improve them. It gives us a chance that our graduates will become good teachers.

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Encouraging Teachers of English to Use *Problem-Based Learning Strategies* with Students of Different Levels and Age Groups

ANNA KINOVIČOVÁ (Ústí nad Labem)

INTRODUCTION

The provoking title of the Conference "English for Central Europe 2010" makes us think about a great number of issues that have been occupying our minds for the last decade, namely in connection with the rapidly changing world and the changing conditions of a united and globalised Europe. Not only will a "knowledge-based society" require a generation of young people well-prepared for their future career, but it will also look for more profoundly educated people who will cope with problems in a great number of individual, highly specialized spheres of industry.

Thinking about the numerous possibilities of enhancing these changes in the sphere of English language teaching and learning, we have to take into account the accelerating use of IC-technologies that contribute to speeding up and extending the processes of learning among young people all over the world. While ordinary people may ask whether these children will still need a teacher in the future and to what extent future education will be possible without the teacher's assistance, educational specialists all over the world realise that the process of education in the future will not be possible without a new quality of teacher involvement.

The recent pedagogical survey in the Ústí Region (Northern Bohemia) revealed that young and well-prepared teacher trainers do not start their career in the educational system. Czech primary and secondary schools have to face the problem of giving English teaching jobs to a great number of unqualified teachers (at present there are approx. 73% unqualified teachers of English at primary schools and 64% at secondary schools in Northern Bohemia). Neither are we surprised to hear that the situation in some other countries of the European Union also require radical improvements. The OECD Education Database, for instance, indicates that even in several advanced countries in Europe (including Germany and Sweden) the percentage of teachers 50 years of age and older has been increasing over recent years, reaching as high as 42-46%.

Leaving aside the most serious problems of many educational systems, such as the "greying" of the teaching profession, its feminisation, low salaries, and the declining status of the profession, which are the main reasons for the above-mentioned difficulties in language education in our country, we realise that it is necessary for our educational systems to intensify and improve the preparation of our teacher trainees by giving them a chance of acquiring knowledge and learning necessary skills under new conditions, making use of the most efficient

strategies, instead of being instructed only in a traditional way. By new strategies we mean those developing and strengthening the skills required in their future career – i.e. skills based on a cooperative style of work, a series of social skills that are so much required for their future career. They also include the following thinking skills: synthesizing, classification, division and generalization.

THE SNOWBALL STRATEGY

We realise that it will be necessary to prepare excellent teachers of English that will contribute to the process of learning by bringing the best and most efficient strategies – namely those based on the mutual cooperation of students inside the class, their interdependence and their ability to solve much more complex projects, tasks and problems, and on the strategies that will encourage co-operation. We will necessarily have to take into account a great variety of methods; their selection being determined by the strategic goals, the educational content and the student himself.

For this reason, this paper and the subsequently described workshop stress the application of a strategy based on strong algorithms that enable the structuring of the problem assigned to the class and at the same time give students an opportunity to work in different team arrangements (as individuals, in pairs, small groups of four students, larger groups and finally in the whole class). This "snowball strategy" will be used here to demonstrate the possibility of preparing students to use different thinking skills and at the same time learn how to cooperate with or depend on other members of the team. For the purpose of learning we are going to develop this process of the "growing snowball", which is, in fact, a metaphor for the development of the new quality of students' thinking.

The recent radical and massive introduction of new "powerful" learning/teaching strategies abroad should also provoke our teachers to apply problem-based ways of teaching, which were predominantly used in technical subjects in the past. The workshop should introduce and solve one of the sample problems showing the individual steps, their most important principles and the positive results for the development of students' thinking processes, imagination, all types of skills, as well as creativity. The workshop will also focus on real-life problems used in ELT classrooms. Finally, in the form of worksheets it will suggest how to apply a few steps/stages of learning to concrete language learning tasks. The attached tables of real/authentic solutions to a similar problem may inspire teachers to create their own rich selection of problem tasks. In the final part, the participants will be reminded of a wide range of tools of evaluation, often neglected in our schools.

FIVE STAGES OF THE STRATEGY

Each of the stages is characterised by a certain type of organisation, method, and learning activity that gradually leads students to the solution of the problem. This method is often used to simulate a research activity. When it is applied at school, students experience cooperative methods of learning.

During this workshop we will apply the strategy to the solution of a real life problem in the area of TOURISM. Thus the main aim of the lesson will be to raise students' awareness of the topic of TOURISM and by solving a more complex problem (Elaborating a Plan for the Development of Tourism in the Border Areas of the Czech Republic and Germany/Saxony) to develop an extensive vocabulary that will enable students to communicate more easily in more difficult situations. At first they will map the situation on both sides of the border, think about the possibilities of radical improvement in the area of tourism in the Ústí Region and finally propose a plan for radical changes. The pedagogical purpose hidden behind the authentic topic is focused on the improvement of students' vocabulary and their ability to use the language of tourism (new English terms from the sphere of tourism) in conversation, for developing arguments and counterarguments.

STAGE NO. 1 – DEFINING THE PROBLEM

On the one side we have a class or a team, on the other side a precisely formulated problem. The participants of the steering committee meet in Plauen. After a few words of warm welcome they are informed about their responsibility to act as representatives of their regions in future negotiations concerning the strategic plan that should radically change the development of tourism in these Cross-Border Regions. Their main task will be to propose strategic goals regarding the development of tourism, priorities and measures that would ensure the required changes.

At first the participants of the strategic meeting are asked to look at the following areas of tourist development in our border regions and select only three of them – the issues they will deal with in their future research.

The following seven topics have been proposed:

1) Sources and Products of Tourism of and the Image of Tourism in Cross-Border Areas of our Region
2) Publicity Materials and Creating the Image of the Region
3) Sale of Tourist Products
4) Price Policy of the Region
5) Human Resources
6) Organisation and Management of Tourism, Conditions for Tourism,
7) Sources of Financing

The next part of the workshop will focus on the three underlined areas of tourist development. The participants of the meeting decided to deal with items 1, 2 and 5 at this session.

The work starts by the "teacher's" eliciting opinions (the teacher plays the part of a representative of the regional authority) from individual members of this "international team of experts". Each member of the expert team is provided with three small pieces of paper and is asked to jot down his ideas (brainstorming) connected with all above mentioned topics: No. 1 – Sources and Products of Tourism, No.2 – Publicity Materials and the Image of the Region, No. 5 – Human Resources. His task is to think about numerous pros and cons, positives and negatives, advantages and disadvantages, hindrances and threats to tourism in the region where he lives; he is expected to comment on both strong features and weaknesses that appear in these three spheres of tourism. He can also make some proposals for the future improvement of tourism in his region. Thus each member of this team should bring ideas that will be taken into consideration in the assigned problem-solving task.

This activity should last approximately 8-10 minutes under real classroom conditions. The method of brainstorming allows the use of deductive thinking. The participants of the meeting will map several areas of the problem. The organiser will collect written ideas (answers, comments, notes, etc.) of individual members of the team and divide them into three different piles (I, II and V; classification). The whole class is then divided into pairs and their work opens a new stage of the strategy.

STAGE NO. 2 - PAIR WORK

Pairs of students/conference participants will have approximately ten minutes for the completion of their new task. They will exchange basic information in pairs, comment on the ideas written on the sheets. One member of the pair (the speaker) is then asked to go to the blackboard (or the flipchart) and briefly record the results of their brainstorming. He usually writes down a list of basic/most important ideas and comments on them in a brief oral presentation. Thus the pair work usually results in defining and analysing the main problem spheres of the respective topic. The pair may also set standards for choosing the best solution.

STAGE NO. 3 - GROUPS OF FOUR PERSONS

The organiser then forms groups of four persons dealing with the same topic. They assemble in front of the board/flipchart with the lists of generalised items. Now their task is to select the best solution paying attention to all necessary measures that will have to be taken into account with each item of the problem recorded on the flipchart. They can also set goals and output types, or target groups of population, sources of financing and possible ways of implementation.

They may propose several solutions available and focus on recommending one of them - the best solution.

STAGE NO. 4 - GROUPS OF EIGHT PERSONS

This time the group will grow into a larger team of at least eight persons. This stage will make use of the accumulated knowledge acquired in the previous problem-solving steps. Inside the team the discussion may be longer and again one representative of the larger group (the speaker) will be selected to report on the final results of the discussion.

Members of this team define and analyse the problem again, set standards for the best solution, identify possible solutions. In a real classroom situation it would be ideal to give them more time (two or more weeks) for the implementation of the best solution, which will later be brought to the classroom for the final synthesis. Individual solutions of several teams of experts are discussed and the final solution is submitted (in the form of an oral presentation or written report supported by a series of tables and charts).

STAGE NO. 5 - THE WHOLE CLASS

The whole class reports on the solution, difficulties, the course of the solution, and the material used. Individual members of the team are expected to assess the task and the teacher will assess the work of the whole class. The final stage also includes the process of self-evaluation of individual members within the team (each member's contribution to the final solution, description of shortcomings and difficulties that occurred throughout the problem solving process).

The time required for presentation of the whole 5-stage algorithm: Minimum of 2 teaching units, which will enable the teacher to show how the algorithm works in the classroom. The real problem-solving task may be assigned for a longer period.

APPLIED TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

At first students are expected to acquire and improve:

- principles of efficient study skills and reading
- techniques of advanced research work with the aim of finding answers to problem questions.
- methods of efficient cooperation/collaboration of problem-solvers

The teacher who decides to make use of problem-based learning must not forget to use a great number of strategies that will meet the needs of a variety of learners. The process usually begins with the teacher's direct instruction addressed to the whole class or small groups. Individual stages of solving the problem then focus on exploiting numerous strategies of co-operative learning. Students make use of Internet searches (in this case the Internet offers hundreds of websites of travel agencies, as well as sites of local and regional authorities

planning such changes that are aimed at enhancing tourist development). The final stage of presenting the product of problem solving may include the following strategies: oral presentations, multimedia presentations, written reports, mind maps, tables (graphic organisers). During the whole problem-solving process there will be numerous opportunities for participants of the course/workshop to use all kinds of information technologies, such as computers, video and digital cameras, scanners and the above-mentioned Internet.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

One of the most important tasks connected with the application of PBL is the continuous checking of the problem-solving process by the teacher. At the very beginning the teacher consults students' strategies by applying the well-established technique of "brainstorming", which usually reveals quite a wide range of topics covered by the learning team. The second possibility is to apply the method of "heuristic discussion" based on the teacher's skill to control the whole investigative process by a series of relevant questions. The teacher applying this wide range of questions becomes a facilitator who does not help to solve the problem but makes students compare facts, complete information or check the solution, and if necessary lead them away from the wrong path. These questions therefore must be formed carefully to lead students to the confrontation of facts or doubts about the solution at the moment when they cannot prove the accuracy of the problem by a sufficient amount of facts or material.

The student derives required experience from his own research activity. The teacher's regular feedback is necessary. The sooner the student learns the result of the teacher's assessment the better he realises his own growth in the process of learning.

During the application of the heuristic strategy, students behave as specialists in their field. In their search for a solution to the assigned problem they become researchers, presenters of the products of their research activities, while the teacher facilitates and supervises their process of learning and, if necessary, guides them. This type of learning leads students to create new roles and scenarios that require efforts of both individuals and the whole working team.

Therefore, the application of PBL also requires new forms of evaluation. Students, assuming new roles, will have to learn completely new ways of evaluating their work. The previous experience shows that students who are not used to new evaluation techniques often neglect the role of self-assessment. As a rule, they do not approach this problem seriously and are not objective when assessing the work of their peers.

If this method is used for further development of research and investigative skills, for the development of the student's talents and for solving real- life problems, it becomes a positive aid in educating young people.

DRAWBACKS OF THE APPROACH

If the teacher exceeds the framework of his duties by offering advice or giving a hand, he enables his students to solve a problem without their contributing or taking pains. If he gives advice on how to solve the problem, we do not speak about a stimulus; it should be an example and the whole procedure should be characterised as a model situation.

For each student this means being equipped with the skills that will enable him to master the reading or studying of a wide range of materials with understanding, analyse these materials and confront them, learn to use the thinking processes of analysis and synthesis, create hypotheses and look for hypothetic and deductive solutions to a problem. It is also necessary for each problem solver to generate problems in his team and assess the solution within the same team.

The insufficient authenticity of a problem can be included among hindrances to the learning strategy; the work is not reasonable, unless it takes place in the context of the real world. In connection with language learning we have to stress the fact that students' language skills have to be at a high level that will enable him to think in this language, supply arguments, and present results of their work. Another problem in this area can be connected with the lack of time for mastering the required skills.

The student who works and acquires new items of knowledge and experience in the above-mentioned manner, will be much better prepared, will acquire the precious ability to use the same method and techniques in his future career – it means that the teacher will lead his students to acquiring new facts on the basis of their own experience provoked or triggered by an interesting problem.

CONCLUSION

Problem-based learning encourages students to develop reasonable and independent work that can bring satisfaction and become a strong motivational factor. As shown above, this is a deeper form of learning. It takes place in the constructivist environment and places an emphasis on students' independent learning and their gradual formation of managerial skills.

Students will acquire new habits and new ways of behaviour that lead to solving problems. The approach makes use of the fact that students within a group acquire the responsibility for the solution of the problem. This process will be effective in situations where students will be capable of defining their own learning tasks. The most difficult task in this process, however, is the effort to define real or authentic problems.

Learning based on solving problems is now understood as a complementary approach to traditional methods. It enables the teacher, with the help of numerous

research methods, to come closer to problems of a more complex character. Each authentic task or project should also connect the student's knowledge and skills with his own experience.

APPENDICES: CHARTS AND TABLES, AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

Teaching/Learning Strategies

(Applied to Problem Solving)

Strategies	Student Groupings
▪ Brainstorming ▪ Classifying ▪ Collaborative/Co-operative Learning ▪ Direct Teaching	▪ Individual work of students ▪ Work in small groups /in large groups ▪ Students working as a whole class

Peer Assessment Sheet

Peer Assessor:

For each student in your group, please circle the appropriate number in each of the columns.

1 = fair

2 = satisfactory

3 = good

4 = excellent

Student's Name	Co-operation	Developed Efforts	Oral Communication/ Presentation	Written Work
	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

SWOT Analysis

(Examples of Questions for an individual or group; used before and after a task)

Strengths	What are/were my/our advantages? What do/did I/we do well?
Weaknesses	What could be improved? What should be avoided? What was not done well?
Opportunities	What are some of the things, conditions, times that are in my/our favour?

Threats	What obstacles or barriers do/did I/we face? Is anything changing around me/us that should cause me/us to work differently?

The Ústi Region SWOT Analysis

(As a Source of Material for Problem-Solving Tasks
and a Source of New Vocabulary from the Area of Tourist Development)

Strong and Weak Points

Topic No. 1

Sources and Products of Tourism	
Strong Points	**Weak /Points**
The Role of the Location of the Region in the Trans-European Corridor	Vast Damage to Landscape and the Environment
Natural Potential of the Region – Great Number of Protected Areas	Dilapidation of Attractive Cultural and Historical Sights
Number of Attractive Cultural and Historical Places	Tradition, Local Culture
Existence of Spa/Resort Centres (Teplice, Dubí, Mšené Lázně)	Quality of Services in Tourism
Possibility of Making Use of Some Weaker Points of the Region (Industrial Tradition, Landscape Damage) for the Development of Tourism	Offer of Additional Services

Topic No.2

Publicity and Image of the Region	
Strong Points	**Weak Points**
The Tradition of Tourism in Czech Switzerland	Reputation as a Region of Coal Mining, Production of Energy and Chemistry; a Region with a Devastated Environment.
Active Participation of the Ústí Region in the Czech Republic Fairs	Insufficient Positive Promotion of the Region
Abundance of Information Brochures and Materials	Negative Image of the Majority of Frontier Crossings of the Region (e.g. E55)
Sufficient Number of Information Centres in the Region	Inconsistent Promotion of the Region
Functioning of Some Information Centres	Insufficient Use of Information Technology, namely of the Internet.
	Uncoordinated System of Visitors' Monitoring

	Non-Uniform Standardization of IC Services and Non-Existence of their Categorization

Topic No. 5

Human Resources	
Strong Points	**Weak Points**
	Entrepreneurial Activity
	Level of Education/ Professional Level of Employees in the Sphere of Tourism
	Weak Inhabitants' Identification with the Region
	Residents' Hospitality
	System of Professional Education

Topic No. 6

Organisation, Management of and Conditions for Tourism	
Strong Points	**Weak Points**
Efforts of the Region for Conceptual Development of Tourism (Implementation of the Regional Development Programme and Elaboration of the Strategy Concerning the Development of Tourism)	Cooperation of Entrepreneurs in Tourism
Cross-Border Cooperation	Less Effective Cooperation of Municipalities within the Territory of the Czech Republic
Existence of Interest Groups/Associations in Tourism (DELITEUS, PIC)	Cooperation between the Private and Public Sectors within the Territory of the Czech Republic
	Weak Links between Tax Income of Municipalities and Intensity of Business Undertaking within the Territory.
	Generally Low Income of Municipalities – from Fees Based on Intensity of Tourism in the Municipality (e.g. Accommodation Fees)
	Lack of Financial Funds for the Development of Tourist Infrastructure
	Inaccessibility of Credits for Projects in the Czech Republic

Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities	**Threats**
Support of Tourism by the CR Government	Low Support of Tourism by the Czech Rep. Government
Legislature of High Quality in the Area of Tourism	Impacts of Terrorist Attacks
Ability to Make Use of Support from Structural Funds in an Efficient Manner	Inertia of the Negative Image of the Region
Support to the Development of Cross-Border Cooperation by the CR Government and the EU	Lack of Financial Funds for Co-Financing Assistance from Outer Funds
Helpful Policy of the Czech Republic towards Foreign Tourist	Drain of Qualified Labour Out of the Country or to More Attractive Tourist regions
Increase of the Volume of Leisure and Growth of Demand for Leisure Activities	Strengthening of the Czech Crown in the Area of Tourism and Loss of Comparative Advantage of Low Costs
Formation of the Regional System of Management and Organization of Tourism based on Cooperation of the Public and Private Sectors	Supply of Higher Quality in the Area Tourism in Competing Regions (the Labe Region, Karlovy Vary, Saxony)
Formation of the Educational System in Tourism	
Building of the National Information System in the Czech Republic	
Continuing Reclamation/Revitalisation of Landscape	
Support of Diversification of Activities in the Country (Landscape Maintenance, Development of Agri-tourism)	

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Prospective Teachers' Professional Development through E-mail Communication

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INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt today that the internet and e-mail in particular, should be inseparable components of any EFL classroom – in a primary or secondary school or a higher education establishment.

The pedagogical benefits of e-mail are indisputable and as summed up by Gonglewski, Meloni and Brant (2001) are as follows. E-mail may:

- extend language learning time and place
- provide a context for real-world communication and authentic interaction
- expand topics beyond classroom-based ones
- promote student-centered language learning
- encourage equal opportunity participation
- connect speakers quickly and cheaply.

In the last decade foreign language methodology has suggested many innovative ideas for the use of e-mail in the foreign language classroom (Dudeney, 2000; Warschauer, Shetzer & Meloni, 2000). A series of collaborative e-mail projects was reported in the literature recently (Mello, 1998; Van Handle & Corl, 1998; Orlová, 2000; Shulman, 2001) Though designed and conducted for students of different countries (Germany, Brazil, Russia, USA), the projects in question were mainly designed to enhance the linguistic and cross-cultural competence of university students who study English in the frame of English Speaking/Writing classes.

My target audience are future teachers of English as a foreign language. Since the students whom I teach have to know how to incorporate the tools in question in their own teaching, I believe the best way for them to acquire the appropriate skills is through a specially organized e-mail communication project.

During my presentation, I am going to share the experiences gained through the recent successful implementation of the two rounds of the Prospective Teachers E-Mail Dialogue project. It was incorporated into the class in Methodology (modules 1 and 2) that is traditionally taught to third- and fourth-year students majoring in teaching English as a foreign language. I discuss the methodological aspect of the project, the aims, objectives and its results as viewed both by the organizers and the students who were involved in the project.

PROJECT DESIGN

The first round of the Prospective Teachers E-Mail Dialogue project was a joint effort by the Pedagogical Department of the University in Ústí nad Labem, the Czech Republic (class of Natalia Orlová) and the Philological Department of Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, St. Petersburg, Russia, (class of Mila Devel). The second round united via e-mail the students of Seattle Pacific University, WA, USA., (class of Kate Nemtchinova.)

I will first briefly introduce the aims of the project in question. We, as EFL/ESL professionals, know very well how meaningful and enriching it is to our development to communicate and collaborate with colleagues from other cultural and educational contexts. Sharing our experience on new ways of teaching, discussing similarities and differences, are the main reasons for attending conferences and conventions. Although teacher-trainees have not yet had much involvement in the teaching process (this is purely a matter of experience to be acquired in the future) they already have the knowledge of insiders on the teaching system, in which they are currently placed. This means that they know about its curriculum, objectives and contents of this system, and this knowledge might serve as a good starting point for learning about EFL teaching as well as the system of prospective EFL teachers training in other countries. Moreover, if prospective teachers of English start developing contacts with their counterparts while at the University, it may help to develop their international contacts with colleagues in the future.

Therefore, speaking about the super goal pursued by the organizers, it is possible to define it as building cultural links and bridges that create understanding and foment learning between prospective EFL teachers from the Czech republic, the USA and Russia by using media of electronic communication. The project was designed to contribute to the development of the following competencies, which according to Balbi, 1996 should in synthesis include:

1) Competence in the target language and in the target culture
2) Methodological competence
3) General competence as a teacher

It is obvious that each of these interrelated and interdependent areas includes many complex sub-skills mentioned. In terms of academic objectives, the project aimed at achieving the following goals:

1) To discuss the differences and similarities that exist in different educational systems and countries;
2) To compare the training systems for prospective teachers of English;
3) To enhance the language proficiency of prospective teachers of English by providing them with an extra opportunity to use the knowledge and skills gained

in class, in the process of intense communication with their contemporaries in other countries

THE PROJECT

Each round of the project comprised these three stages. The first stage was a preliminary one and lasted about two to three weeks for each round accordingly. It included discussion via e-mail, the logistics of the project with its coordinator. It was necessary to agree on an equal number of participants from each side, to discuss the timing, and to agree on the requirements for the participants. Since each coordinator was pursuing her own objectives in the project skills, we had to work out a different set of requirements to be implemented during the project, (for example, the coordinator from Herzen University put the emphasis on improvement of computer skills and discussion of internet resources).

The first round between the Czech and Russian teacher trainees started in September 2002. The first week of communication was allotted to writing and exchanging introductory "Hello letters", designed by the organizers. The questions included into the questionnaire provided both the organizers and the participants with some preliminary information about the partners' profile. For instance, 50% of the Czech students admitted (see question N 5 in Questionnaire 1) that it was their first experience of corresponding by e-mail. The other half either used to have or was having a regular e-mail correspondence with students from the USA, Great Britain or their home country.

The second stage of the project was the e-mail communication itself, which lasted nine weeks. During this stage, the participants were encouraged to discuss on a weekly basis some problems related to EFL teaching in general and in particular, prospective teachers' training in their home countries. The questions designed for discussion between the students are given in the Appendix. They relate to different areas in the system of schooling. Assignments for discussion during the second and third weeks were aimed at discussing some aspects of primary and secondary education in general. For example, the students were supposed to elicit from their partners information on the following questions: At what age do children start going to school in you country? How long does primary/elementary education last? Do you have bad or good memories about your first school years? From what age is education compulsory? Which subjects are compulsory and which ones are optional? How is knowledge tested (tests, papers, exams) at the end of each year and at the end of secondary education?

Assignments during the three weeks that followed were aimed at discussing issues related directly to teaching foreign languages. The participants were supposed to share their views on the attitude of society in their country about learning foreign languages. They had to learn about foreign language programs

existing within the school system as well as about the textbooks that are most often used. The students were also asked to share with their e-mail partners how they personally started learning a foreign language and what steps they took to improve their foreign language skills.

While formulating questions for discussion related to the future profession of our students – weeks 7-9 - I intentionally planned a limited number of questions during one week, since I wanted to leave some space for personal discussion, that would start, as I hoped, during the project.

At the conclusion of the third stage of the project, the students were required to give a presentation in class on what they learned in the course of the project – whether the differences and/or similarities in the two systems of education were huge and profound.

The participants were also asked to fill out Questionnaire N 2, (see the Appendix) that contained nine questions. Five out of the nine questions (NN1-3, 5-7) presented the students with a multiple choice of four or five options, while the remaining four (NN 4, 8, 9) questions were open ones and required the explanation of the participants' point of view.

I would like to briefly mention the results of Questionnaire N 2. I would like to start with the answer to question 1 (*Was it interesting and useful to correspond with your e-mail partners?*) The moderators were glad to find out that 55% of the respondents answered as "very much," while 45% chose the option "yes."

For question 2 (*Did you learn anything new about the system of education in the country of your e-mail friend?*) 20% answered "very much" and 80% chose the option "yes."

I have to admit that the answer to another question with a multiple choice answer (*Did the correspondence help to improve your English?*) was rather unpredictable for the moderator. 90% chose the option "somewhat" and 10 % circled the option "I am not sure." In my view, the main reason or reasons for this result lie in the fact that though the participants were using English as lingua franca and thus were further developing their skills in writing, their partners for the first round were not native speakers of English. The Czech students were not sure if they could rely on and learn from the expressions which were used in the e-mail messages from their counterparts.

The most valuable information, which provided the moderator with food for thought for further research, was received from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. In their answers to question 4 (*Could you please specify what topic was especially interesting for you?*), the majority of students agreed that the system of training prospective teachers and its curriculum were the most interesting aspects in the course of communication. Several students mentioned that it was interesting for them to discuss their own experience of learning a

foreign language. A few Czech students also reflected that they were discussing with their partners the problem of finding a good job after graduation.

The answers to question 5 (*Could you please specify what was the most interesting and unexpected in your correspondence process?*) touched upon different problems. Let me quote some of the questionnaires, leaving the grammar of the original unchanged.

> "It was my first opportunity to correspond in English, it was both enriching and useful"
>
> "I was pleased by the level of English of my e-pal and her good sense of humor. I enjoyed myself."
>
> "…sometimes I had difficulties comprehending what my partner wrote."
>
> "At first, when I signed up for this project I didn't think that I would become so interested in it. I was also surprised at my e-pal's enthusiasm and her interest in my country. "

The data gained through the questionnaires and interviews with the students suggest that the project achieved its main goal - building cultural links and bridges that create understanding and foment learning between prospective EFL teachers.

It is also possible to admit that it reached some of the academic objectives pursued by the organizer, mainly those that contributed to the development of the methodological competence of prospective teachers. They are:

- to discuss the differences and similarities that exist in different educational systems and countries;
- to compare the training systems for prospective teachers of English.

When planning the project the organizers predicted that the most challenging things would be in the technical sector. And we were correct. The majority of both Czech and Russian students did not have computer practice at school. On the other hand, all of them were clearly aware about how necessary IT skills are for their future profession.

The majority of the students used either university computers or Internet clubs. Sometimes this caused a delay in communication. The best situation existed for those who had a computer at home and could choose a convenient time to communicate with their e-pal.

Another difficulty I would like to mention, is the area of cross-cultural communication. Naturally, both Czech and Russian students took for granted the knowledge they possessed, so when it came to describing the educational systems, they were simply translating culture specific words from their native language into English word for word, not being aware that the meaning of the notion is fully or partially changed.

CONCLUSION

In the course of the project, I arrived at the conclusion that for the success of any e-mail dialogue, the following conditions should be fulfilled:

1) All e-mail should be done on a regular weekly basis
2) Only volunteers, who are interested in communicating with their foreign peers should take part in the dialogue
3) Apart from the topics recommended by the instructors students should feel free to communicate problems that are close and interesting to them personally
4) The level of English of the participants should be approximately similar
5) The project coordinators themselves should stay in touch regularly in order to quickly "cure" the problems that appear in the process of communication between the students

The project organizers also managed to implement e-mail communication as a three-sided project. From February through April, the students involved in the project e-mailed prospective teachers of EFL/ESL University in Seattle. Results of this communication still need to be thoroughly analyzed.

In summary, the main result of the project would be the development of closer relationships between young professionals from the two countries. The students wrote "colleagues can find common basis with each other". The students involved in the project made friends with their partners and they continued to e-mail each other even after the end of the project. Hopefully, one day they will be able to meet in person.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE N 1

Please fill out the following questionnaire and send it to your e-mail partner.

1. What is your name (last name, first name)?
2. How old are you?
3. How long have you been studying English?
4. Do you have any experience in teaching?
5. Is this your first experience with e-mail correspondence? If not, how many e-pals do you have and from which countries?
6. Do you think it is important to know how to correspond via e-mail for your future profession?
7. Will you be corresponding from the university or from home?
8. Do you think it is important to your future profession to know how to correspond via e-mail?
9. Do you think you will use a PC and access the web when teaching EFL in the future?

Assignments for the participants:

Week # 1. Writing Introductory "Hello letters" and exchanging different versions of a filled out questionnaire #1designed by the organizers.

Discuss with your e-mail partner the following questions:

Week # 2. At what age do children start going to school in you country? Are there any special requirements for children, i.e. should they be able to read/write before school? How long does primary/elementary education lasts? Do you have any bad or good memories about your first school years?

Week # 3. In what form does the secondary education/high school start? How long does it last? Till what age is education compulsory? What subjects are compulsory and which are optional? How is the knowledge tested (tests, papers, exams) at the end of each year and at the end of secondary education?

Week # 4. What foreign languages are traditionally taught in your country? What is the attitude of society in general to learning foreign languages? In what form/grade do pupils start learning a foreign language? Are there cases when a foreign language is being studied in a pre-school?

Week # 5. What foreign language programs exist within the school system in your country? How many hours a week is a foreign language taught? What textbooks are mostly used? What is/are the dominant method(s) and approaches of EFL teaching at school?

Week # 6. Could you please share with you e-mail pal how you personally started learning a foreign language? Did you study it at school, evening courses, with a tutor? Did you go abroad to improve your foreign language?

Week # 7. Ask your partner questions related to the system of higher education. Learn what entrance exams exist there. Is it possible to submit one's documents to different universities simultaneously? Is it possible to have an undecided major after being accepted to a university?

Week # 8. Discuss with your partner the system of training prospective teachers of foreign languages. What subjects do they study within the program? How many hours per week? What subjects are taught in English and in their native language? What changes would you like to introduce into the system of training?

Week # 9. What is the attitude of university graduates towards the teaching profession? Please, specify your point of view.

QUESTIONNAIRE N 2

Please fill out the following questionnaire. Circle only one option. When asked for an explanation, please try to elaborate as much as possible. The results of the questionnaire will only be used for research purposes. Thank you!

1. Was it interesting and useful to correspond with your e-mail partner?
a) very much b) somewhat c) yes d) not in the least e) other
2. Did you learn anything new about the educational system in the country of your e-mail partner?
a) very much b) just a little bit c) yes d) not in the least e) other
3. Has your awareness about the specifics of the educational system in your native country increased after the project?
a) very much b) just a little bit c) yes d) not in the least e) other
4. Could you please specify what topic was especially interesting to you?
5. Could you please specify what was the most interesting and unexpected experience in your correspondence process?
6. Did the correspondence help improve your English?
a) yes b) somehow c) I am not sure d) not in the least e) other
7. Would you like to continue corresponding with your e-mail partner after the project is finished?
a) yes b) no c) I am not sure d) other
8. Students from what countries would you like to have a similar e-mail correspondence with?
9. What would you recommend to a novice who is going to take part in a similar project next semester or year?

Student-Centred Teaching of Literature in English: The Application of the Reader-Response Model in the Czech Republic

MARKÉTA HEZINOVÁ (Praha)

INTRODUCTION

Literature forms a compulsory part of the Czech English teaching curriculum. However, the prevalent teaching approach in the Czech Republic at present, namely Communicative Language Teaching, leaves little space for the teaching of English literature on the grounds that it makes no contribution to the learning of English for practical use. For this reason, both students and teachers find themselves in a difficult situation, because communicative language classes do not provide the students with skills that are necessary for reading and interpreting literature in a foreign language.

In the pedagogical practise, students usually come across a few literary texts only at the last two years of their secondary school studies. Otherwise, the classes of English literature are usually based on lectures and on memorising facts about English writers for the sake of the secondary school examination. Nevertheless, in my opinion, literature has much to offer to the English language students, especially when they do not have an opportunity for direct contact with the native speakers and the culture of the target country.

In both my theoretical and practical research I have tried to find out whether the Reader-Response Model based on Wolfgang Iser's Reader-Response Theory could represent a suitable model for the teaching of literature in English in the Czech Republic.

My research comprises of a theoretical and an empirical part. I will deal with the theoretical part just very briefly, because I want to focus more on the current state of teaching in the Czech Republic, which presents the main topic of the theoretical part.

THE THEORETICAL POINT OF VIEW

In the theoretical section of my research, I tried to find out in what way literature could contribute to ELT within the framework of the foreign language teaching approach in the Czech Republic, namely the Communicative Language Teaching. From the results of my research it is apparent that even though this approach focuses mainly on practising authentic communication, it includes a variety of principles, some of which could prepare groundwork for the incorporation of teaching literature, to mention a few: emphasis on a meaningful context for communication; integration of different language skills; sequenced

talking; focus on the content, function and meaning; and the accentuation of such exercises that maintain interests of students.

In other words, the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching approach offer on the one hand the use of literary texts as a source of cultural information and on the other hand as a material for stylistic and discourse analysis.

As for the teaching of literature itself, many parallels can be found between the main principles the Communicative Language Teaching and the five principal approaches towards studying literature, namely teaching literature as content, language-based approach to using literature, the use of literature for understanding a different culture, the use of literature for educating the whole person and the power of motivation.

The Reader-Response Model combines all the five approaches I have just mentioned. According to this model, these five approaches form essential and inseparable components of processing of the textual meaning.

What is more, the Reader-Response Model adapted for the needs of foreign language students, presents a particularly convenient model for teaching literature in English, because it also promotes the learner-centred attitude, which is nowadays regarded as the basic principle of education by modern education theory.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Method

In the empirical part of my research I examined closely the conditions for the application of the Reader-Response Model in the Czech system. My aim was to examine the present state of teaching literature in English at public schools, and to find out which steps would be necessary for the application of the rest of the Reader-Response principles.

Regarding the teaching of literature at public schools, my analysis was directed at the examination of the teaching factors that influence the process of reading English literature in the original in the Czech Republic. Among the factors examined in the presented thesis are: time, aim, subject matter, teaching methods/techniques, teacher, learner, and materials.

Concerning the research of the present state of literature teaching at Czech public schools, I analysed “Učební dokumanty pro gymnázia” (1999) - the official documents issued by the Ministry of Education. Further I interviewed several teachers from selected public school. Finally, I conducted two independent surveys based on two questionnaires, one for the teachers and one for the students, to elicit information regarding the teaching factors mentioned above.

Findings

I will not deal in detail with all the factors I have analysed, my aim is to present only the most interesting findings. As for the analysis of the Czech curriculum for teaching English as a foreign language, I found out that clear-cut objectives concerning the teaching of English literature are completely missing, which concerns all the teaching factors mentioned above, apart from the factor time. Nevertheless, it is possible to find many parallels between the aims of the Czech curriculum and those of the Iser's Reader-Response Model modified for the needs of foreign learners. Apparently, the employment of the Reader-Response Model contributes to the improvement of student's linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural and study management competence, which present the principal requirements of the Czech curriculum.

As for the teachers' and the students' survey, the research was conducted at six public schools. Nineteen teachers took part in the teacher's study and the sample for the student's survey included ninety-two subjects in their last year of secondary school studies.

The purpose of the teachers' and students' study was to examine the current state of teaching literature at public schools from the point of view of the teachers and students. The data obtained from these questionnaires was also examined from the point of view of the Reader-Response Model. Research addressed the following questions:

1) What is the aim of teaching literature in the original according to the teachers?
2) What techniques do the teachers use when teaching literature?
3) What materials are usually used in classes of English literature?
4) Which other factors influence the teaching of literature (teacher's education; student's attitude; student's and teacher's and main problems with teaching literature, etc.)?

The learners' survey reports the investigation of student's attitudes and opinions about the study of literature in the English classes. The research project was designed to shed light on the following questions:

1) Do the students see some connection between reading literature in English and improvement of their English proficiency and cultural knowledge?
2) What are the student's opinions about the aim of literary classes, selection of literary texts and teaching techniques?
3) What is their main problem related to reading literature in the original?
4) What suggestions do students have about the possible improvement of English literature classes?

As for the results of the two studies, it could be said that there are no irreconcilable differences between the student's and teacher's aims. According to the questionnaire, students in general view the factor of usefulness as crucial; their main aim is to improve their English proficiency, namely vocabulary,

grammar and speaking. As for more specialised tasks of literary instruction, they want to acquire a concise overview of British and American literature and cultural information. Regarding the teachers, they share the students' opinions about using literature for acquisition of information about a different culture. A problem may arise from the students' and teacher's different opinions about the overview of British and American literature. Both students and teachers consider it vital, nevertheless, students would appreciate a more concise form of the overview. Another major difference between the students' and teachers' aims was found in using literature as an inspiration for discussion; far more students than teachers view it as an essential part of literary classes.

From the point of view of the Reader-Response Model, the fact that the teachers did not mention as their teaching aim to help the students to acquire the reading and interpretative skills that are necessary for independent reading can be considered as an essential shortage. In addition to that, the teachers also did not consider the emotional development and the personal growth of students as one of the main goals of teaching literature in English, which presents a problem not only from the view of the Reader-Response Model.

Considering the teaching factor learner, according to the students' questionnaire, the learners are in general open to activities related to the reading of literary texts. Nevertheless, their attitude towards independent reading and preparation for literary classes at home is rather negative, and reading in the original still causes many problems. For this reason, teachers have to give a special emphasis on motivating and interesting activities focused on facilitating the initial stage of reading literature in English.

Concerning the factor teacher, only 36.8% of the instructors had an opportunity to try out various teaching techniques useful for teaching literature at public schools. In an interview, several teachers who gained their experience of English literature at university level admitted that what they had learned, mainly about the techniques of literary analysis, is of little use for teaching at secondary public school.

Because of their lack of education in the area of teaching literature at a secondary school, teachers have to rely to a great extent on the accessible material. I analysed the teaching materials mentioned in the teacher's questionnaire from the point of view of the Reader-Response Model. From the results, it is apparent only one book meets the majority of the requirements of the Reader-Response Model. In relation to the teaching materials it is worth mentioning that the problems that teachers have with finding suitable literary texts and inventing exercises based on these texts often occurred in the teachers' questionnaire.

Another factor that is closely linked to the factors education and teaching material is that of teaching techniques. The results of the research conducted

suggest that in the pedagogical practice, teachers use literary texts alongside other authentic texts mainly to practise reading comprehension. However, little attention is paid to providing students with cultural information. Moreover, language activities aimed at facilitating later reading are almost totally neglected. As for the literary information, it is usually provided in a form of lecture about an important Anglo-American author, his or her life and works. In general, it seems that the techniques teachers most often use are mainly teacher-centred, which means that teachers present to students ready-made information and propose just a single "correct" interpretation of a literary work. This approach forces the students to accept passively what they have learned and to memorise information in order to meet the examination criteria. In other words, the teacher-centred approach leaves little space for the employment of the learners' experience, for their active perception of language in an authentic context and for their individual interpretations of literary texts. In sum, a shift from the teacher-centred approach to the learner-centred approach one would be necessary for an application of the Reader-Response Model in the present pedagogical practice in the Czech Republic.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, findings suggest that as there are no clear-cut objectives concerning literature teaching in the Czech curriculum, literary teaching depends to a large degree on the teacher. However, from the research discussed here it is apparent that only a small number of teachers had the opportunity to attend courses on teaching literature in English at secondary schools, and that very little teaching material they currently use satisfies the principal requirements of the Reader-Response Model. For this reason, we would consider it particularly useful to make it possible for the instructors to attend courses, which would offer them the opportunity to try out various techniques related to literature teaching, to get acquainted with different approaches towards literature and to learn about useful materials. The Reader-Response Model, according to the conducted research presents a particularly convenient model for the teaching of literature in the original in the Czech Republic, because it encourages integration of several fields of human interest, namely history, literature, linguistics, and sociology. What is more it puts into the centre of attention the students, their activity and their all-round development.

Teaching and Learning Children's Literature

KAMILA VRÁNKOVÁ (Plzeň)

INTRODUCTION

Teaching language through literature, including children's literature, has become an inseparable part of teaching methodology. Children's literature does not only enrich the foreign language education, it can also contribute to the pupil's general knowledge, to their intellectual, social, moral and emotional development.

At the English Department of the Pedagogical Faculty of the University of South Bohemia, Anglo-American literature for children is taught as both an obligatory (courses for primary school teachers) and an optional (courses for lower-secondary school teachers) subject.

OBJECTIVES IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The courses in English children's literature have three different objectives: to provide a general cultural overview; to develop students' ability to make substantial, confident and independent critical judgements about books (not only children's books); and to respond to the demands of language teaching (especially the improvement of speaking and reading skills).

The first objective, presenting children's literature as a part of cultural heritage and educational sciences, may be attained partly from the course reading. With respect to the wider study programme, the syllabus follows up with the courses in history and culture as well as (with lower-secondary school teachers) the courses in English and American literature. The students' familiarity with literary concepts and terms (e.g. allegory, fable, parable…) contributes to a deeper understanding and a greater skill in evaluating the texts.

The second objective, the ability to make an independent critical judgement, means that students can apply the concepts and insights they have obtained, in order to discuss books read in class and, eventually, other books not covered in class. In their response to particular texts, students deal with matters like syntax, plot, structures and the like. Childrens' books are, in fact, particularly useful for developing independent critical judgement, since they are not usually weighed down so much with the generally accepted critical opinion.

The third objective, the encouragement of the students' language learning, is closely linked to both previous aims. Moreover, there is a great number of techniques and activities aimed at practising various language skills through literature, and in this concern the childrens' literature courses relate to those in didactics and methodology.

Specifying the objectives of the course in childrens' literature allows us to explain both its relationship to other fields and its specific place within a literature programme.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE CURRICULUM

Childrens' literature, in fact, can be dealt with as comparative literature. It can be thought of across cultures, in many historical periods, and in relation to other fields such as psychology, education, philosophy, or fine arts. Childrens' literature exists in diverse cultures, reflects them and mirrors something of their values, beliefs, fears and anxieties, as well as general concerns. Sometimes the same stories (especially folk tales) reappear in different countries and historical periods, undergoing interesting transformations in time, space and medium (for example, "Cinderella" or "Snow White", moving from the German Romantic brothers Grimm to Walt Disney; or "Little Red Riding Hood", with its countless variations, acquiring new contexts and assuming new forms).

The integrity of childrens' literature within the curriculum is well seen in its distinctive relationship to psychology. Through introductory seminars and lectures, both integral to the course, students learn about the differences in attitudes towards childhood within a historical framework. In particular, they become acquainted with some of the ideas of Rousseau and Freud, two key figures in the shift of perception about childhood. The psychological aspects of childrens' stories can be discussed with respect to the authors like Bruno Bettelheim, Marie-Louise von Franz, or Erich Fromm.

As for the interaction with fields such as philosophy, religion, anthropology, sociology and ethics, the literature for children, perhaps more than any other literature, brings up the philosophical and the ethical concerns of those who think about it. The notion of social relevance seems particularly interesting to those who deal with books for children. The manner in which children's books mirror or establish social relationships is of extraordinary concern to many people, perhaps because of a feeling that children are especially vulnerable, that their moral values can be easily and unnoticedly disturbed. Thus the values, especially the hidden values of childrens' books, inspire considerable discussions.

Finally, childrens' literature is closely connected with the area of the graphic arts and the craft of bookmaking but also the art of animation (from cartoons to animated puppet films) or the art of film-making.

The lower-secondary school teachers' course focuses on the analysis of particular works in a wider literary context. Thematic concerns and formal aspects are discussed against the background of literary theory and criticism, with regard to the ways children's books respond to the literary tradition and reflect the changes in the cultural or social values as well as in the conceptions of the child and childhood. These themes link in with studies on the Middle Ages,

the Age of Reason with its authoritarian perspective as well as on the Romantic idealization of childhood in Blake, Wordsworth and Dickens, and on literature both for and about children, which has flourished particularly since the mid-19th century.

APPROACHES TO THE READING AND ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

In accordance with Wellek's and Warren's definition of the basic types of reading, students can pursue various approaches to the work.

1) Socio-cultural: It is possible to consider the links to the social reality, the questions of tradition and convention, norms and symbols, the sociology of the writer, the social content of the works themselves, and the influence of literature on society. In the case of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, for example, we can find many comparable expressions in adult books of the same time, reflecting the fear of totalitarian regimes, the problems of liberal education, the loss of religious faith, etc.

2) Psychological: The study of the psychological types and laws present within the works, the role of imagination, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology). In this respect, Lewis' heroes can be discussed as literary embodiments of individual attitudes to moral challenges. It is also possible to consider the author's intention to turn the reader's attention to the question of eternal values.

3) Biographical: The work can be viewed in its relation to the personality and the life of the author, to his moral, intellectual and emotional development. Again, we can deal with C.S. Lewis, his letters and autobiographical statements, his religious conversion and the celebration of a personal religious experience in his stories.

4) Mythopoeic or archetypal: There is a number of recurrent themes in literature, and so *The Chronicles of Narnia* may be thought of within the larger context of tales of the world's beginnings. Particular motifs (e.g. the garden, the island…) may be discussed with regard to the biblical and mythological imagery, while Northrop Frye's idea of "the main archetypal space" may be employed.

An important part of literary study is the analysis of the form (diction, syntax, the figures of speech, the structures of narrative, the shape of children's books, illustrations, etc.).

The knowledge of intertextual relations enriches the analysis of the most frequented subjects: home and family (Alcott, Coolidge, Edgeworth, Burnett, Nesbit, Dahl), friendship (Mark Twain, Aldrich, Ballantyne, Lewis, Rowling), school (Dickens, Sue Townsend, Rowling), social problems (Dickens, Kingsley, Alcott, Townsend), nature and animals (E.B. Potter, Burnett, Kipling, Grahame, Seton), adventure (Cooper, Twain, Ballantyne, Stevenson, Blyton, Ransom),

mystery and magic; wonderlands (both traditional and modern fairy tales, the works of Barrie, Carroll, Baum, Tolkien, Lewis, Rowling).

The variety of genres, forms, themes and attitudes makes children`s literature a very wide area of study. The course draws on comparative reading, which allows us to observe the links to the classical canon, and to the mutual relations between children's books and the literature for adult readers.

The students compare the language, the techniques of narrative and the treatment of themes in two or more books and of different authors. They observe the ways children's literature inspired the authors writing for adults (Perrault's fairy tales and Angela Carter's *Bloody Chamber*, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *Secret Garden* and D.H.Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Ballantyne's *Coral Island* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Milne's *Winnie-the Pooh* and the number of "philosophical works", e.g. Benjamin Hoff's *The Tao of Pooh*) as well as the ways children's literature reflects the influence of the books for adults (*Beowulf* and Tolkien's *Hobbit*, Spencer's *Fairy Queen* and Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and J. Gardam's *Summer after Funeral*, Zola's *Fall of Father Mouret* and Burnett's *Secret Garden*, Hawthorne's *Dr. Heidegger's Experiment* and Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*).

The developmental transformations of adventure and imaginative prose are studied with respect to the older epic tradition, including ancient myths, national epics, popular ballads, and, of course, adventure novels. A great number of children's adventure stories find their model in the form of the so called Baroque novel (Bakhtin, M.M. (1980) *The Novel as a Dialogue*. Prague), drawing on the contrast between the idyll of introductory scenes and the excitement of the plot and developing the theme of trial. This structure is employed in the Gothic novels or in the historical novels of Romanticism but also in many stories for children (*Peter Pan, The Wind in the Willows, Hobbit, The Chronicles of Narnia*).

These stories can be also discussed with respect to the theme of innocence and experience. The Romantic idealization of childhood and home can be considered as well as the process of initiation through the experience of loss, failure or estrangement, which is popular especially in modern children' fiction. This theme may inspire discussions on typology (e.g. the frequent image of a forsaken child or an orphan), on the problem of good and evil and on the relativity defining this relationship.

Students also deal with the frequent theme of the supernatural and its role in the development of the plot (J.R.R. Tolkien, Ted Hughes, Roald Dahl, Joanne Rowling), with the image of monsters and with the mixture of imagination and reality in modern children's books.

Special courses are devoted to the reading of poetry. Children's verses are frequently discussed by the students preparing for primary school teaching, who

also learn how to work with picture books, lift-the-flap books, look-again books, primers, nursery rhymes and fairy tales.

A number of students have chosen children's literature as the subject of their diploma thesis (*Tradition and Innovation in Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales*, *Tolkien's World of Imagination*, *Heroic Ideals and Christian Message in The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Picture of School in Harry Potter*, *The Image of Garden in Anglo-American Children's Literature*, *The Theme of Courage and Cowardice in Ballantyne and Golding* etc.).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study of English children's literature can offer a number of interesting opportunities to enlarge and deepen one's knowledge of literary development, to exchange opinions, to improve one's language skills, and to learn more about particular popular stories that have gained an important influence on European and the world culture.

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Louis George Alexander – A Portrait

VERONIKA NOVOTNÁ

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this contribution is - on the basis of my diploma thesis *A Portrait of Louis George Alexander. His contribution to the Theory and Practice of the FL Textbook* - to briefly introduce the personality of Louis George Alexander as well as to comment upon several issues which are not only closely related to this topic, but are also of great importance to the current TEFL discussions.

The issues concerning the foreign language textbook theory and practice as well as the syllabus design range among the most urgent in ELT. Among other reasons, we considered it important to write a portrait of the personality of L.G. Alexander since he belonged to the most original and most influential authors and highly respected authorities on textbook and syllabus design in the last century.

In the following section only the most important facts about L.G. Alexander's life will be mentioned. Throughout the work on the diploma thesis our goal - to collect as much information about the author as possible - was made difficult by the fact that hitherto no university research on L.G. Alexander has been done. Therefore, it was often difficult to obtain the information concerning both his life and work. It was also problematic to get hold of all his works since there are not many of them – the most recent in particular – available in the sources of the libraries in the Czech Republic.

L.G. ALEXANDER'S LIFE

L.G. Alexander was born in London in 1932. In the 1950s he started his teaching career in Germany. From 1956 to 1965 he was the Head of the English Department of the Protypon Lykeion in Athens. In 1965 he embarked on a life-long career as a textbook writer. In the 1960s and 1970s he published many supplementary teaching materials. Nevertheless, the climax of this period is marked by publishing *New Concept English* (1967) – one of the most famous and most innovative of all L.G. Alexander's works. From 1968 to 1978 he was an adviser to the *Deutscher Volkshochschulverband* and contributed to the design of two important English examinations in German Adult Education. Of great importance is L.G. Alexander's cooperation with the Council of Europe. L.G. Alexander was a member of the Council of Europe committee on Modern Language Teaching, and (together with J. van Ek) was one of the authors of *The Threshold Level* (1975) and *Waystage* (1977).

In 1979 *Follow Me* was published which was an international television course for adult beginners, owing to the co-operation of L.G. Alexander, Longman and the BBC. It was one of the first major ELT courses to contain a significant video component. It became the most widely-used course in the world.

From 1986 to 1988 L.G. Alexander was an adviser to the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) for the Cambridge Certificate in English for International Communication.

From 1988 to 1993 he wrote five grammars and grammar practice books and several integrated courses.

Louis George Alexander died after a great battle against leukemia in the French Alps on June 17, 2002.

L.G. ALEXANDER'S WORK

Since L.G. Alexander published approximately 140 titles (all for Longman Publishers) it was, as suggested above, impossible to collect all the works of the author. Nevertheless, we succeeded in composing two lists of his works in the diploma thesis - one is alphabetical, the other is chronological. The aim of the first one is to present L.G. Alexander's production in its entirety. The aim of the latter one is to provide an easier orientation in his works. Out of all these titles 57 titles and four magazine articles have been studied for the diploma thesis.

The aim of the analysis of the selected works by L.G. Alexander, which formed the main part of the diploma thesis, was - as the title of the diploma thesis suggests - to explore the author's contribution to the foreign language textbook theory.

The author's works were, for the sake of lucidity and logical connectedness, divided into two major groups – the integrated courses and supplementary teaching materials. The latter group is subdivided into two subgroups: textbooks focusing on one particular language skill and textbooks focusing on one particular language form. A smaller part was devoted to non-textual teaching materials.

Integrated courses

L.G. Alexander's integrated courses for children, teenagers and adults include the following textbook series: *New Concept English: First Things First, Practice and Progress, Developing Skills, Fluency in English* (1967); *Look, Listen and Learn* (1968); *Target* (1972); *Mainline: Beginners, Progress, Skills* (1973-1978); *Follow Me* (1980); *Excel in English* (1985-7); *Plain English* (1987); *Direct English* (1997).

The term integrated is referred to in the sense as it was used by L.G. Alexander – it explains the approach of teaching the four basic language skills understanding (L.G. Alexander's term for listening), speaking, reading and writing relation to each other. It had always been the author's aim as a course designer to create an integrated and, above all, teachable system, which was to develop all four skills.

In this short summary of the results of my research it is certainly impossible to give a complete account of all aspects underlying L.G. Alexander's integrated courses. However, every single aspect from the point of view of the universal textbook evaluation scheme that was applied in the analysis has contributed to the foreign language textbook theory and practice. Thus, integrated courses – *New Concept English* and *Follow Me* in particular – represent an inexhaustible source of inspiration for course designers, teachers and learners worldwide.

Complementary teaching materials focusing on language skills

The complementary teaching materials focusing on one language skill are written so as to treat understanding, speaking, reading and writing as creative activities. They should help the students to focus on the particular skill they want to improve for the ability to communicate can be the only true objective of language-learning.

Textbooks focusing on understanding and speaking include *Question and Answer* (1967), *For and Against* (1968) and *Make Your Point* (1975), etc. In *Question and Answer* and other works L.G. Alexander uses his favourite metaphor and compares learning a foreign language to playing a musical instrument. According to him both activities require much training, drill and exercise. In spite of the diversion from *The Oral Approach* and *The Audiolingual Method*, drills were never fully abandoned from L.G. Alexander's works, which is highly inspiring for today's teaching professionals.

Concerning listening, L.G. Alexander stresses an important methodological implication. He emphasises the need for intensive listening-practice with a variety of foreign language speakers. Thus, learners should be constantly confronted with different varieties of spoken English ranging, in L.G. Alexander's terminology, from the native (American, British, Australian, Canadian) to the non-native accents (Frenglish, Gringlish, Spanglish, Chinglish, Czenglish, etc.). This is closely connected to one of the foreign language teaching objectives according to which learners should be trained to understand more than they can produce themselves, they should also be able to guess the meaning of unknown elements from context. This means that they will have to be trained to get the gist of what people are saying by, for instance, being presented with materials which are beyond their productive command.

A large part of L.G. Alexander's production is devoted to developing reading. L.G. Alexander was a General Editor for *Longman Structural Readers*. He was one of the first writers to create this type of supplementary teaching materials which are based on the systematic control of both vocabulary and structure. L.G. Alexander's Readers show an obvious influence of the Audio-Visual Method in their arrangement. The pictorial arrangement of L.G. Alexander's textbooks significantly contributed to the development of textbook design. The pages in his textbooks ceased to be cluttered with information. On the contrary, students' books were seen not as a vehicle for conveying information, but as an aid for practising the language. Therefore, they should be pleasing to look at and attractively laid out.

From the point of view of practicality, students' books should be interleaved in the teacher's book as this relieves the teacher of the tedious task of having to work from two different books. L.G. Alexander's books are widely considered to be tasteful, witty, well-arranged and systematic. The format of L.G. Alexander's textbooks must be extolled as well. In comparison with the textbooks, workbooks and teacher's books common at present the books were much smaller (A5) and less heavy, and therefore much more convenient.

As it is clear from what was mentioned before, a very important role was assigned to pictures since, according to L.G. Alexander, images are a power aid to learning. In connection with the role of pictures, L.G. Alexander appreciates the role of John Amos Comenius who was the first scholar to recognise the power of images as an aid to learning in his *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*.

Several other titles are devoted to writing. They include *Sixty Steps to Précis* (1962), *A First Book in Comprehension*, *Précis and Composition* (1965), *Essay and Letter Writing* (1965), *In Other Words* (1976), *Guided Composition in English Language Teaching* (1971).

L.G. Alexander paid much attention to guided composition and accepted the idea as axiomatic that composition can be taught; that the student must be prevented from making mistakes; and that originality in the early stages is undesirable. Guided composition should at more advanced levels enable the students to express their ideas in writing creatively, and thus communicate confidently and correctly.

The author also suggests writing dictations of passages that have already been covered with the students. We wanted to stress the importance of this type of technique since dictations are, unfortunately, nowadays very often neglected even though they represent a very effective activity concentrating both on developing language skills (listening, writing) and language forms (spelling and vocabulary).

In the part of the presented thesis devoted to language skills, the role of the mother tongue in ELT as well as L.G. Alexander's approach to this problem was

discussed. His ideas concerning translation were explained in the example of his works *Survive in…* (1980) and *Direct English* (1997). After a radical exclusion of translation in reaction to the Grammar-Translation Method, a tendency to a sensitive restoration of its role in ELT can be observed.

Complementary teaching materials focusing on language forms

The section dealing with language forms has brought many of L.G. Alexander's proposals concerning teaching of grammar in particular. Apart from *Longman English Grammar* (1988), which is one of the best pedagogical grammars now available; further works on grammar include *Longman English Grammar Practice for Intermediate Students* (1990); *Step by Step 1-3* (1991); *Longman Advanced Grammar* (1993); *The Essential English Grammar* (1993); *Essential American English Grammar* (1995).

L.G. Alexander's grammar books were written after his lifelong precise linguistic investigation, however, the presentation of grammar is not 'academic' at all –they were written for students not for academic purposes.

One of L.G. Alexander's central ideas connected with the treatment of grammar is that of text-exploitation. Even though using texts is a well-tried technique, texts won special status in L.G. Alexander's textbooks. He always emphasised the authenticity of the texts. Wittiness, swiftness and surprising endings are typical characteristics of L.G. Alexander's short initial texts. Generally, texts enable the textbook author to present grammatical items in a meaningful context – new structures must always be contextualised. The texts are also irreplaceable in teaching vocabulary. Presenting the words in context and guessing the meaning from context play a crucial role since, as L.G. Alexander points out, context makes language memorable.

Explanation is another crucial term in connection with teaching grammar – L.G. Alexander asserts that a brief and to the point explanation is the only method for teaching grammar, which is not mutually exclusive with the inductive approach to teaching grammar. The role of grammar explanation, however, is assigned a different role at different levels.

METHODS AND SYLLABI

A crucial section of the diploma thesis deals with methodology and syllabus design which are approached both from the historical point of view and from the point of their relevance to L.G. Alexander's textbooks.

The following methods were subjected to a brief analysis: The Oral Approach (also Situational Language Teaching); The Audiolingual Method (also Aural-Oral Method or Mim-Mem Method); Communicative Language Teaching (also the Communicative Approach); and the Audio-Visual Method (also Structural Global Method). L.G. Alexander's production more or less copied the

development and the trends in ELT. However, by discussing some aspects concerning these methods we aimed at verifying the hypothesis that the author's works symbolise a synthesis of all the contributing aspects of both the traditional and the current methods. Clearly, his works bear features typical of all the above-mentioned methods in accordance with the time when they were published. However, L.G. Alexander never neglected anything only because it was out of the momentary ELT 'fashion'. In the 1970s a clear shift towards the Communicate Language Teaching can be observed in his works, however, in L.G. Alexander's opinion there existed no single best method. The author rather suggests proceeding eclectically, using a wide variety of methods. Thus, each activity, student's level, age group, character type, culture background, etc. needs a particular method. The selection of such a method is determined solely by the primary objective, which is to bring more effectiveness to ELT and to meet the learner's needs.

L.G. Alexander's conception of syllabus design is equally contributing to ELT theory as his approach to methodology. In his articles he repeatedly characterised and evaluated various types of syllabuses, the main types of which are the structural, the situational, the functional, the functional/structural syllabus and the functional/notional syllabus. L.G. Alexander was deeply interested in the evolution of syllabuses, the account of which he gives in one of his articles.

Syllabus design is closely connected to the notion of grading since both grammatical structures, vocabulary and situations can be graded according to various principles of the particular syllabus. We distinguish between the sequential or linear system, which is highly appropriate at the beginners' level, and the cyclical system which is to be used at the pre-intermediate level and which was widely applied by L.G. Alexander. At more advanced levels new language items are rather acquired through a process of random accretion.

There is again no ideal syllabus since various criteria of the teaching process must be taken into account. However, the most suitable syllabus for adult zero beginners, a category, L.G. Alexander was primarily concerned with, must be both structurally based and communicatively oriented. Thus, it must exploit situations, topics, tasks, functions and notions with the aim to help the students to do things through language, i.e. to use the language that is not only grammatically correct, but also socially appropriate in any given type of discourse. A closely related central objective is that students should be able to establish and maintain contacts in the foreign language. Thus, students must be taught a foreign language in such a way as to be able to transfer the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom to real-life situations. To put it in L.G. Alexander's often quoted words: '"Defective but effective communication" is a worthy aim for us all and infinitely better than nothing!'

As for syllabus design, two works by L.G. Alexander are crucial: *The Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools* (1976) and *English grammatical structure. A general syllabus for teachers* (1975). In terms of the functional syllabus the former highly influential title describes the level of ability in speaking a foreign language (communicative ability) to be reached by beginners. The latter work provides an inventory of sentence patterns and grammatical structures and was designed for textbook writers as a guide in the planning of curricula, textbooks and readers or for teachers wishing to select examples to illustrate a lesson on a specific grammatical problem.

PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH

For the needs of the research on the personality of L.G. Alexander a pedagogical research was carried out at secondary schools, language schools and universities with the aim of monitoring the usage of textbooks, grammars and other teaching materials by L.G. Alexander in the Czech Republic and to survey teachers' experience with these materials. We also aimed at drawing conclusions from the teachers' answers applicable in the foreign language textbook theory and practice.

43 teachers of English took part in the research, which had a form of an anonymous questionnaire. The results suggest that the majority of the participants (76,7%) know L.G. Alexander. *Developing Skills, Right Word Wrong Word* and *Longman English Grammar* are the most widely known titles. Our hypothesis was that more members of the older generation would know the author. This was partly verified, however, the author seems to have captured the attention of English teachers of all generations.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen L.G. Alexander approached language in its complexity – no language skill or language form was left out. The achievements of British structuralism were successfully combined with the communicative method.

If we were to evaluate L.G. Alexander's works in general we must on the one hand agree that 'of course, the perfect textbook does not exist' (Grant 1991: 118), on the other hand, we dare to say that L.G. Alexander approached this ideal. His works have been evaluated by generations of both students and teachers who actively used them, thus, no doubts about their quality can occur. *New Concept English*, for example, has been reprinted for thirty years. The author's textbooks represent timeless, quality, and classical foreign language textbooks. However, L.G. Alexander also employed modern technology in ELT – cineloops, cassettes, videos, computers, CD-ROMs, etc.

From the point of view of the learner the textbooks are learner-oriented, they initiate creative treatment of language, emphasise students' moral development, are sensitive to cultural background, and are full of humour and empathy, etc. Thus, they contribute not only to foreign language teaching objectives, but also to the overall educational objectives.

From the point of view of the teacher the textbooks are written so that 'the teacher is the master, and not the slave, of the textbook' (Harmer 2003: 121).

Nevertheless, as McArthur explains 'Louis' most significant innovation is the least visible. He created the notion of the textbook as a classroom artefact or learning tool, something we take for granted today' (McArthur 2002: 7).

Further Fields for Research

In the course of the research several interesting/important/inspiring topics for further research occurred. However, for their complexity they cannot be dealt with in this short study. One of these issues is the status of applied linguistics among other academic disciplines in some European countries.

Another important issue touched upon by this thesis is the status of a traditional textbook at the beginning of the third millennium. Even though this topic would provide sufficient material for another extensive research we want to comment briefly on the role and perspectives of a foreign language textbook. In ELT literature we may encounter extreme opinions claiming that classrooms should be material-free; that only communication between teacher and students is all that matters. However, in L.G. Alexander's view nearly all language-teaching is textbook oriented. In today's world various media fight for the attention of their users. A traditional textbook must defend its position against computer assisted language teaching, video, television, etc. In our opinion a traditional textbook will not lose its dominant position among other teaching materials. The question is what function and what importance it will be assigned.

With the growing number of students of English of all levels, age groups, learning experience, etc., there is an immense need for motivating materials. It was always L.G. Alexander's aim to design a foreign language textbook which would present language in the way that is relevant to the students' needs. Such a 'personalised' approach to textbook design is in concordance with the humanistic approach to teaching in general.

Nevertheless, a negative trend may be observed: the above-mentioned commercialisation of ELT, which breeds negation of many traditional aspects (approach to language, methodology, etc.). L.G. Alexander's textbooks show the consequences of this trend. Many of his works lost nothing of their quality and could be in an updated version used in the today's teaching practice–such as *New Concept English in China*. Unfortunately, most of the older titles are consigned to oblivion.

As suggested above, we aimed at reflecting the varied and universal work of L.G. Alexander in its completeness. However, it is not possible to sum up all the important arguments that have been raised in the thesis. Neither, is it possible to comment on all aspects concerning the author's production. L.G. Alexander's work would certainly deserve further thorough investigation.

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Cultural Anxieties in a Globalised World

DANA SEDLMAJEROVÁ (Ústí nad Labem)

INTRODUCTION

Teaching American literature and culture gives me a lot of opportunities to discuss with my students many current problems we face entering the 21st century. I believe that as teachers we are responsible for not only "teaching knowledge" from books but also for making our classroom a place of stimulating students' discussions on thought-provoking current issues. Therefore I am going to introduce one of the topics I consider relevant for American studies or literary seminars within a teacher training programme.

SOME ASPECTS OF OUR PRESENT CULTURE

We have been living in an interesting period of our history. Thirteen years ago both our countries – Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia – experienced a great political and social shift. Paul Kennedy in his book *World in the 21st century* (1993) speaks about "a free ticket" to western prosperity for Eastern Germany and "hard work" expected from German "neighbours" before they deserve the same. Comparing Kennedy's prognosis with the present situation, it is obvious that the way towards a wide range of political, social and cultural changes has become complicated. Although changes have brought many positive results, such as the development of the principles of democracy, freedom of speech, access to new technologies, development of tourism, etc., at the same time, we have been confronted with many negative results in our everyday life, such as the enormous growth of material consumption, a destructive relationship to our environment, crime, high rates of unemployment resulting in frustration and disillusionment, etc.

Taking into consideration that today's students will soon become responsible for the further development of our societies, the years spent at college should provide them with opportunities to learn more about themselves, to develop critical thinking, to practice evaluating information from different points of view, communicating and exchanging ideas with other people. Contemporary lifestyle, human happiness, moral values or human dignity have become important issues nowadays. There is even the "Journal of happiness studies" which appeared in the United States a few months ago.

The shifts in 1989 influenced our culture significantly. Many inspiring ideas about European culture and American influence on it can be found in Pierre Guerlain's article "Dilemmas of America's Cultural Dominance: a Transnational Approach in American Studies International (June1997, 30 – 51) in which he

presented many challenging views on our culture. Among them are also Dundes' and H. Arendt's ideas. They define culture from "psychoanalytical and anthropological perspectives" or as "the life of the mind".[1]

My interest is in our lifestyle and mass culture in a broad sense, and in the changing role of languages rather than in anthropology or philosophy. Speaking about political and social shifts of the past decade it is necessary to stress the new role of English. At the beginning of the 1990s English as a foreign language became number one in our countries and replaced Russian. In the process of globalisation English has become linguistically dominant which promoted the "export" of American culture around the world. We speak about the "commodification" of culture (Guerlain 1997:34) It means that the culture has become a good to be offered and sold.

The present situation has set up one more task for English language teachers: to participate, together with students, in a life-style values judgement. We are expected to invite our learners to discuss a wide range of topics concerning quality of life, identity and other topics which disturb us in the age of globalisation.

Michael Dawson, sociologist from Portland State University, writes in his book *The Consumer Trap: Big Business Marketing in American Life* (2003) that Americans spend many hours watching television advertisements they would rather not see, opening and discarding junk mail, answering telemarketing calls, deleting spam, sitting in traffic… which is a major deduction from the limited energy supplies all people have to spend during their earthly days. Undoubtedly, the quality of life influenced by the length and quality of leisure time is going to be a major issue these days.

AN OLD MAN, A YOUNG MAN, AND LIFE'S GREATEST LESSION

It is a subtitle of the novel *Tuesdays With Morrie* (1997) which provided me with many ideas for the topic of my presentation. Two years ago, thanks to our American guest lecturer, Dr. Gloria Lovett, I got acquainted with the life story of Morrie Schwartz, who, before he died in 1994, had been teaching sociology at Brandeis University in Boston. In America he became popular when the book, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, written by Mitch Albom, Schwartz's former student, was published. Following publication in 1997 the book became a New York Times bestseller for more than two years. The film version, starring Jack Lemmon in the

[1] P. Guerlain is Associate Professor in the Dept. of English and American Studies at the Université de Marne-la-Vallée and in the Language Dept. At the Institut d´Etudes Politiques de Paris; A. Dundes is a professor of Anthropology and Folklore at University of California; H. Arendt (1906 – 1975) was a political philosopher

title role, was released two years later, in 1999 and went on to win four Emmy Awards.

Both the book and the film are full of ideas for classroom discussions on "existential" topics as quality of life, meaning of life, human happiness, etc. Although it is called a novel, it reminds one more of a textbook on sociology. In the introductory chapters Albom introduces Morrie as his favourite university teacher. Morrie Schwartz is in his 70s; he suffers from ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), an incurable illness of the neurological system and is going to die very soon. His former student Mitch, now in his 30s, unexpectedly sees Morrie's life story on TV and wants to see once more his favourite professor. For the next few months, fourteen times, always on Tuesday, he comes to Morrie's house near Boston. They speak about life. Mitch calls it "the last class of his old professor's life which was taught from experience" (Albom 1997:192). The chapters are labelled according to the topics both protagonists talk about, such as "We talk about our world", "We talk about feeling sorry for yourself", "We talk about regrets, about family, emotions, the fear of ageing, money, our culture, etc" are essential part of the novel. As I have already mentioned, both the book and the film are full of profound ideas and the book was reviewed as "a beautifully written book of great clarity and wisdom" and "an incredible treasure".

AWARENESS OF OURSELVES: ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE NOVEL/ FILM

After watching the film and reading the book with some of my students, I saw that the story had touched the class and that the students were willing to share their opinions. Together with my students I prepared some activities based on short extracts from the book, and I will demonstrate how they could be developed in the classroom.

Activity 1

For this activity we used the form of group work. Students exchanged ideas and information among themselves, first in smaller groups of four, then within the whole class.

The starting point of our discussion were two questions: What makes people happy today and what is the main source of our personal happiness?

Students discussed their views in small groups of four, and group statements were compared within the whole class. The responses were different: from superficial ones, such as

> money, success, power to the more essential, such as good relationships, friendship, love, fulfillment, family, home.

As a follow-up we read and discussed Morrie's opinion (ibid:125):

"Money is not a substitute for tenderness, and power is not a substitute for tenderness. I can tell you, as I' m sitting here dying, when you most need it,

neither money nor power will give you the feeling you' re looking for, no matter how much of them you have."

Activity 2

This activity focused on creative writing. The inspiration came from the chapter "The thirteenth Tuesday, We Talk About the Perfect Day" in which Morrie was asked: "What if you had one day perfectly healthy…What would you do?" (p.175)

Students wrote about their desires and dreams describing their perfect day and shared their ideas with their peers.

This activity was also prepared by our in-service students and tested in different primary and secondary schools in the region. Generalising the responses provided by 15–17 year old learners we found out that they longed for something attractive and inaccessible:

> *spend a day as a cosmonaut, travel around the world, play a football or ice-hockey match with famous players, spend a day with famous movie and pop music stars, etc.*

Only a few of them expressed more "down to earth" desires:

> *be with their best friends or family, go to the countryside, be with their pets, have a swim in the sea, etc.*

As a follow-up we compared Morrie's and our ideas dealing with a perfect day. We also discussed our lifestyle and its recent changes and other essential aspects of our existence. Many students realised that even small things can help us to be happy but we often do not notice them.

"…I'd get up in the morning, do my exercises, have a lovely breakfast of sweet rolls and tea, go for a swim, then have my friends come over for a nice lunch. I'd have them come one or two at a time so we could talk about their families, their issues, talk about how much we mean to each other. Then I'd like to go for a walk, in a garden with some trees, watch their colors, watch the birds, take in the nature that I haven' t seen in so long now. In the evening, we' d all go together to a restaurant with some great pasta, maybe some duck – I love duck – and then we'd dance the rest of the night….." (ibid:175-176)

Activity 3

The last activity focused on narrative skills and role-play. A short story about small waves in the ocean was read and discussed first, then narrated as a fairy tale, and, finally, performed in roles.

It was also prepared by primary and secondary teachers, who attend English language course in our college, for 15-17 year olds. What I consider positive is the fact that about half of them found a parallel between the waves and human life.

"The story is about a little wave, bobbing along in the ocean, having a grand old time. He's enjoying the wind and the fresh air – until he notices the other waves in front of him crashing against the shore. 'My God, this is terrible,' the wave says 'Look what's going to happen to me!' Then along comes another wave. It sees the first wave, looking grim, and it says to him, 'Why do you look so sad?' The first wave says, 'You don' t understand! We're all going to crash! All of us waves are going to be nothing! Isn't it terrible?' The second wave says, 'No, you don't understand. You're not a wave, you're part of the ocean.'" (ibid:179-180).

CONCLUSION

I believe that the topic I concentrated on in my paper, is challenging for those who are not indifferent to our future and feel responsibility for educating young people. Although we live outside American society and culture, it is obvious that the human issues discussed by Morrie and Mitch are global and address us as well. Using meaningful and thought-provoking material in a wide range of classroom activities we can achieve many goals: to improve language skills; to raise interest in topics rarely found in English language textbooks; to challenge debates about the problems we are facing.

I would like to conclude with an idea expressed by Henry B. Adams: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." (English Teaching Forum, October 2003).

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Teaching Risky Business Through Fiction: "A Deal in Wheat" by Frank Norris

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers of literature are often regarded to have little to offer to the ESP teacher and student. Frequently, literary studies appears to have such a narrow focus or specialization even within a literary canon that many ESL/ESP teachers consider it marginal at best in meeting the needs of the majority of English language learners. In addition, the manner in which literature is studied within the academy is often under scrutiny. Colleagues who teach ESP regard with dismay terminology denoting various approaches to literary analysis (such as hermeneutics, semiology, deconstruction, structuralism and textuality as well as intertextuality). All of these approaches to the text appear to divorce literature from human life, the social world, and of course the historical moments contemporaneous to both our times as well as the time and place in which the said literature was created, never mind the utility it may have for the ESP learner.

This paper wishes to tackle the issue of approaching literature (or fiction) especially for ESP. The aim is to demonstrate a practical exploitation of fiction for business English language learners who need to learn business English vocabulary in authentic contexts. In reading fiction for ESP, business English teachers can present in an innovative way a concrete area of business generally unfamiliar to most Czech learners of business English: the futures and options exchange.

LITERATURE ABOUT BUSINESS SPECULATION

As a writer interested in describing the great changes he perceived around him in society, Frank Norris (1870-1902) wrote about the robust new American power in international business and thus in the world economy at the very end of the 19th century. He was keen to figure out what was behind these great changes. Why, and by whom were the process of change transpiring? An important transformation took place in the agricultural sector of the U.S. economy and its financial foundation. The futures market operates differently from stock markets, under differing rules, regulations and mechanics. In the U.S., futures (agricultural products such as wheat, soybeans, corn or pork bellies) have been exchanged in Chicago since the founding of the Chicago Board of Exchange in the 19th century. This paper centers on how the short story "A Deal in Wheat" [1] by Frank Norris

1) introduces and explains the futures markets to Czech pupils;

2) shows how fiction can dramatize the natural conflict that arises in this risky form of investment (or, as some would have it, speculation);

3) brings together so many persons unaware of their interconnectedness in the world of agricultural commodities.

Frank Norris was born in 1870 and raised in Chicago in the 1870s and 1880s before moving to California. He was a leading American proponent of the literary school of naturalism, claiming that the best type of fiction, "proves something, draws conclusions from a whole congeries of forces, social tendencies, race impulses, devotes itself not to the study of men but of man," [2] referring even to a famous Czech musician of his time by stating that the fiction "is as necessary to the civilization of the twentieth century as the violin is necessary to Kubelik…" [3]. The last novel by Frank Norris, *The Pit, A Story of Chicago* [4], published posthumously in London and New York, was very popular, so much that it was quickly and successfully dramatized for Broadway in 1904. The novel, like the short story, "A Deal in Wheat," has not been translated into Czech [5].

In the same year, his short story "A Deal in Wheat" was published in book form in a collection of short stories, although it had come out in a journal during his own life time [6]. Although Norris' works were popular one hundred years ago, today they attract attention predominantly among literary historians. Yet these works of fiction have not been consulted up to now as a means for teaching about the business world or business English vocabulary. These works of fiction are specifically useful for learning the workings and the terminology of the futures market in an innovative manner. For Czech learners it is particularly appropriate (and even compelling) reading, useful for introducing the mechanisms of the Chicago Board of Trade, particularly as it pertains to agricultural commodities.

THE CHICAGO BOARD OF TRADE

The purpose of any market is to facilitate trade. Trade is conducted between investors or speculators who buy and sell in an organized setting, and the price is agreed upon freely between the two parties. A major function of a market is to provide information. The Chicago Board of Trade brings investors or speculators together with farmers' commodities. These speculators invest capital in the future value of commodities; speculators therefore function as price disseminators throughout the year.

On the other end of this free trade, the government today actually subsidizes farmers by supporting or sustaining prices, thereby intervening in the free market, since the agriculture industry is constantly overproducing. Specifically, the United States government directly buys and sells agricultural products in support of farm prices. All this government intervention into the market constitutes an effort to prevent massive numbers of bankruptcies among farmers

when commodities' market prices become too low for farmers. It should be noted, however, that the government did not subsidize farmers in Norris' time.

SOME PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before being assigned this short story, business English students should prepare for (what is for them) an unfamiliar and new kind of trading activity. By assigning some pre-reading homework, the teacher can help assure that the new vocabulary and concepts in the short story will not overwhelm them. Some assigned topics require accessing the Internet, but the library holdings or even an encyclopedia will work well too. Optimally, an oral presentation (five minutes or less) on the following topics may be assigned prior to reading "A Deal in Wheat":

- biographical information on Frank Norris
- basic information about the Chicago Board of Trade
- basic information about the futures market
- a bear versus a bull (in an exchange market)
- Joseph Leiter

After students hear the presentations by their peers, a discussion about the way futures are bought and sold publicly in Chicago may ensue. Joseph Leiter's notorious wheat corner from the winter of 1897 up to the spring of 1898 is the historical basis for this short story. [7] Then the students are ready to read the work. Although the English vocabulary is not that demanding, the business described in "A Deal in Wheat" requires careful reading.

THE PLOT OF "A DEAL IN WHEAT"

At this point in this paper it is necessary to give a short plot summary of the story for those unfamiliar with "A Deal in Wheat". At the opening part, subtitled "The Bear – Wheat at Sixty-two," a wretched farmer of wheat in Kansas, Sam Lewiston, gives his farm over to creditors after agreeing with his wife, Emma, that they are "cleaned out" (or bankrupt) and are better off moving to a big city. They have a connection through a relative and can find work in Chicago. Sam and Emma reach this conclusion after the offer for his wheat harvest in February is significantly lower than the cost of production. The grain dealer tells Sam that "[i]t's the Chicago price that does it" and that a bear named Truslow is manipulating the price down.

The second part of the story, subtitled "The Bull – Wheat at a Dollar-ten," takes place in May when a contract is signed between Truslow and a speculator named Hornung, designated as the "bull" because he has pushed the price of the wheat futures up. Through Hornung's manipulation the price of wheat has moved nearly 50 cents higher, at $1.10 per bushel. Truslow agrees to sell the newly purchased 100,000 bushels of the wheat abroad.

The third part of the story takes place in the pit or the arena within the Chicago Board of Trade where futures are publicly traded. Hornung believed he had cornered the wheat market and has manipulated the price up to $1.50 a bushel when suddenly a new broker offers wheat for sale. Hornung orders his broker to buy it all up, and over the course of a few weeks, Hornung buys 80,000 bushels of wheat, unaware where this wheat is coming from.

The forth part of the story is subtitled "The Belt Line" which is the designation for the railroad line encircling Chicago's outskirts. Hornung hired a detective to tell him where the wheat is coming from that he is buying at $1.50 a bushel. His detective finds out that Truslow has moved the wheat around Chicago and then back into the warehouse where receipts offered them on the Chicago Board of Trade for resale. Hornung then realizes that Truslow has audaciously sold him the wheat he sold to him by contract earlier in May for $1.10 a bushel. He laughs and admires Truslow for his courageous sting.

The fifth part of this story, entitled "The Bread Line," shows Sam Lewiston waiting for charity bread given out at night at the back of a bakery where a long line of people (hundreds of the homeless and unemployed of Chicago) wait for the only food available for free. Lewiston then learns that the homeless people are dispersing without getting any bread. Then he reads the sign stating, "Owing to the fact that the price of grain has been increased to two dollars a bushel, there will be no distribution of bread from this bakery until further notice." Lewiston eventually succeeds – where others do not – in obtaining a good job. Yet he remembers being a victim on both the beginning and end of the process: "The farmer – he who raised the wheat – was ruined upon one hand; the working man – he who consumed it – was ruined upon the other. But between the two, the great operators, who never saw the wheat they traded in, bought and sold the world's food, gambled in the nourishment of entire nations, practiced their tricks…and went on through their appointed way, jovial, contented, enthroned, and unassailable." Thus, the plot ends.

Students need to look punctiliously at the futures deal, and not only its obviously terrible effect on the farmers and consumers. All of the commercial transactions of the wheat in the short story (from the farmer/producer all the way to the consumer) need to be broken down and looked at from the perspective of the characters engaged in the trading in order to contribute to the student's understanding of the futures market.

POST-READING ACTIVITIES: UNDERSTANDING THE DEAL

The trading or change of hands of the wheat futures moves from the farmer named Lewiston to Truslow's grain dealer in Kansas and then back and forth between the speculators at the Chicago Board of Trade, namely Truslow and Hornung. Ultimately the consumer of bread (only domestic consumers in this

short story) ends the chain of transactions. The students may be offered the following compendious table of price changes of a bushel of wheat in order to keep the details of the deal clear:

The Plot of "A Deal in Wheat"	**The Changing Price of Wheat**
Part I The Bear – Wheat at Sixty-two	
Cost of farm production	"nearly" $1/bushel
Truslow is a Bear keeping prices low, resulting in intentional bankrupting of farmers	66 cents/bushel
February: Lewiston settles at a big loss to Truslow; goes bankrupt from farming and moves from his Kansas farm to Chicago seeking factory employment	62 cents/bushel
Part II The Bull – Wheat at a Dollar-ten	
From Feb to April	Price rises as the Bull, Hornung buys hundreds of thousands of bushels of wheat
April	Wheat at $1/bushel
Early May	Wheat at $1.10/bushel
In May, Hornung, the Bull, privately sells 100,000 bushels to Truslow "for export only"	Wheat at $1.10/bushel
Hornung's corner of wheat market becomes public information; he owns over 2,000,000 bushels	Wheat at $1.50/bushel
Part III The Pit	
In late May Truslow's worker sells lots of a thousand bushels at Chicago Board of Trade	$1.50/bushel
Hornung's workers in the Pit do not know who has wheat to sell: following orders from Hornung, they buy all the wheat offered at the Chicago Board of Trade, i.e., 80,000 bushels	Wheat selling at $1.50/bushel
Part IV The Belt Line	
Hornung detective discovers Truslow selling back to Hornung "his own wheat" (kept on trains circling the city of Chicago)	Hornung raises Wheat to $1.75/bushel to cover loss to Truslow
To raise price of futures he owns, Hornung sells off…	Wheat at $2.00/bushel
Part V The Bread Line	
Lewiston waits in bread line (at a Chicago bakery for free bread which went unsold); the bakery no longer gives bread away for free because the price of wheat is too high	Wheat sells at $2.00/bushel

Students are assigned the following questions which, when worked out, aid in the understanding of the circumstances surrounding the value versus price as well as Truslow's closing profit, thereby better demonstrating how Hornung got stung in the deal. (The answers to the questions follow immediately in Italics within the parenthesis.)

1. What percentage of Hornung's holdings of "a little over 2 million bushels" did Hornung sell to Truslow? *(A little less than five percent).*
2. Exactly how much money did Truslow pay to Hornung for his purchase? *(One hundred and ten thousand dollars = 100,000 bushels times $1.10/bushel).*
3. What would motivate "The Bull" Hornung to sell this much wheat to his competitor Truslow, "The Bear" in the first place? *(To raise short-term capital, reduce storage, insurance costs etc).*
4. Exactly how much did Hornung lose when he bought his own wheat back at $1.50/bushel? Remember: Truslow sold only 80,000 bushels back to Hornung before he discovered who was selling him the May Wheat. *(40 cents/bushel (= $1.50/bushel minus $1.10/bushel) times 80,000 bushels = $32,000 profit for Truslow, $32,000 loss for Hornung, with Truslow still owning 20,000 bushels of wheat from that sale.)*
5. What profit would Hornung realize in the value of his total wheat holdings by increasing the price up to $1.75/bushel? *($500,000 – or slightly more than that)*
6. Is the increase to $2.00/bushel ("a big link" = selling to local or foreign markets) realistic in an unregulated marketplace? Is it a realistic reaction given his loss to Truslow? *(No, for it shoots well beyond the loss, and although Hornung has other costs to cover, the recovery described to the loss to Truslow is many many times over that loss. Norris does this intentionally in order to dramatize the effect it has at the bread line.)*
7. What weaknesses do you see in the numbers Frank Norris gives in this short story? *(The price of wheat Hornung raises after his loss is unsustainable. His profits outweigh his loss in the transaction to Truslow. Perhaps Norris failed to recognize how much Hornung still possessed. A loss of $32,000 is not to be made up by increasing the value of wheat holdings by $500,000)*
8. Finally, why didn't Hornung prosecute Truslow for breaking the "for export only" clause of the agreement? *(It is not an honorable thing for a gentleman to bring before a court a man who has outsmarted him. Rather, through Hornung's cachinnation we note (what is for Hornung) the entertaining value of Truslow's inimitable business tactics.)*

From these questions and answers, one can observe that this story serves as a business case study and even necessitates the student to perform a little calculating in order to get to the gist of the deal. There are, however, flaws in the short story which are revealed by the questions raised above. One weakness of Norris's conflict is an over-reaction on the part of Hornung when he raised the price of the wheat he cornered to two dollars a bushel. Because the mathematics does not add up with regard to Hornung's response to this loss, the only explanation appears to be Norris's melodramatic inclination to depict social

injustice in the breadline portion of the story. Finally, another unresolved problem consists in some 20,000 bushels of wheat that Hornung does not own which may go up for sale by Truslow's broker in the pit. The real danger of not "supporting that market" even at the conclusion of the story may mean millions of "on paper" dollar profits lost in Hornung's "corner."

CONCLUSION

Using fiction about commercial conflicts can be very advantageous for the teacher of business English. As is often the case in other areas of interest (such as sociology and history), literature frequently accounts for the "business world" better than business English textbooks can for students comprehension, and it is not necessary to employ difficult approaches of literary criticism when reading the stories with ESP students. These stories have the additional advantage of incorporating more authentic use of English in context than the conventional business English textbook dialogues offer. Finally, even if an excellent business English textbook with authentic use of English is found, few students will find them as compelling as good fiction.

Frank Norris is known as a naturalist who was particularly influenced by the theory and practice of Émile Zola. We may see impact of Social Darwinism within the terminology describing the "bull" and the "bear" fighting it out in the "pit" while the weakest and least fit, the farmer, perishes. Åhnebrink notes in his book about "The Pit. A Story of Chicago" certain allusions to Zola's novel "L'Argent," a novel about a speculator on the French Bourse. [8] Norris wrote the novel "The Pit" and the short story under discussion here, "A Deal in Wheat," concurrently, so it is pertinent to note this famous French naturalist's influence in the short story as well. The major difference between the two works is that in "The Pit" the speculator is the hero (although he destroys many people's lives, even leading a friend to bankruptcy and suicide). In due course the hero-speculator loses all his money through irrational gambling. Notably, the novel also includes a binary association between success in marriage and speculation. When the speculator is most successful in the pit, his wife, bored with conspicuous consumption and neurotic ennui, becomes alienated and the marriage nearly breaks up. Yet, when the hero decisively goes bankrupt, love and sexual passion return to the marriage. Literary historians regard "The Pit" as one of the very few novels of naturalism with a happy ending. [9] Yet it is the excitement and suspense of the failed speculation in the pit that is central to the plot's development.

It should be noted that other American novelists portrayed the celebrated conflicts taking place on stock and future markets. Harold Frederics' *The Market-Place* (1899), Merwin-Webster's *Calumet K* (1901), and J. W. McConaughy's *The Boss* (1911) offer fascinating novel-length perspectives on the massive (and unregulated) speculation which took place one hundred years

ago among the extremely wealthy. The last two novels are dedicated, like Norris's fiction, to wheat as a future's commodity in Chicago while Herald Frederic's novel deals with the stock market in New York City. However, for the ESP purposes outlined above, these novels are difficult to access and are not as suitable as the short story genre.

The historical aspects of the changes which America underwent in the period which "A Deal in Wheat" was written in and reflects includes the majority of the U.S. population moving from the agriculture and rural communities to the industrial localities in large metropolises such as Chicago. Writers of this period were particularly fascinated by "fundamental changes in notions of value: what value is, how it is created, where it resides, how it is represented, and how it is influenced by social institutions" [10] which comes into play in this short story. These notions appear to conflict with the traditional laws of supply and demand that had governed the production and distribution of wheat in the past. Writers also found the nefarious speculators' quick gain of enormous amounts of money through buying and selling of wheat which, as wheat, they have no use for and do not want. The almost intangible state of the commodity, being represented by nothing more than a series of bookkeeper's entries at the Chicago Board of Trade, is juxtaposed by the farmer and consumer who produce and consume the real wheat. The only connection between the wealth of the speculators and the poverty of the farmer and other forlorn people in the bread line is wheat, for the former in its intangible form and the latter in its tangible form. Naturally, the farmers regard the speculators in the pit as voracious parasites. The speculators, on the other hand, take no pity on the farmers' financial ruin.

The stories available in A Reader in Commercial Fiction (which is used at the University of West Bohemia's "Foreign Languages for Commercial Purposes" bachelor degree program) include stories by major American authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Mark Twain and Willa Cather. These stories concern other aspects of business such as a business resumé of an unscrupulous cheat, employer-labor conflicts, aggressive salesmanship, land speculation, the psychology of the millionaire and the myth of the American Dream. A Reader in Commercial Fiction provides vocabulary-building exercises with grammar and translation exercises aimed at acquiring a high level of proficiency while at the same time providing language students an opportunity to take a serious, critical look at the world of business.

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