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English Projects in Teaching and Research in Central Europe

edited by
Josef Schmied & Christoph Haase

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English Projects in Teaching and Research in Central Europe

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INTRODUCING PROJECTS IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND RESEARCH

This volume represents the outgrowth of an international conference organized by the Department of English Language and Linguistics at Chemnitz University of Technology and the Sächsisch-Tschechisches Hochschulkolleg in Freiberg, Saxony, 2007. It continues to develop and discuss projects by researchers and students in the fields of English language teaching and Applied Linguistics. It further extends the discussion of issues on “Complexity and Coherence” raised in volume 3 of this series and brings once again together theoreticians, practitioners and language service provider start-ups. The lively atmosphere at the conference was especially characterised by the close collaboration of students and staff from Chemnitz University of Technology on the German side and from a representative selection of universities on the Czech side.

The theme of the conference was “English Projects in Teaching and Research in Central Europe”, which provoked several questions. In the end, we defined "projects" pragmatically, using a cognitive approach that distinguishes between projects that were conceived as best examples that had all the (core) defining features and others that were only interpreted as projects in a wider sense.

First we took a student approach and looked up “Project” in a current learners' dictionary and found the following two first meanings under the entry for the noun:

proj·ect1 S1 W1 /ˈprɒdʒekt $ ˈprɑː-/ [countable]
1 a carefully planned piece of work to get information about something,
to build something, to improve something etc:
The project aims to provide an analysis of children's emotions.
a three-year research project
The scheme will now be extended after a successful pilot project
(=a small trial to test if an idea will be successful).
project to do something
a project to develop a substitute for oil
The project is funded by Wellcome plc.
a project manager
2SES a part of a school or college course that involves careful study of
a particular subject over a period of time
project on
We're doing a project on pollution.
a geography project

“Project” in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* Online, s.v. noun (11/01/08)

The first meaning is rather general, but it indicates two major components, the planning and the product at the end. So, projects in teaching, as in the second, more specific meaning, have at least the advantage that they are not only an "academic" exercise, but possibly more generally interesting. The New Media options nowadays offer enough opportunities from WWW publications to films, which may be passed on to other members of the department or university and beyond. They might even benefit other users outside university, which is also good for integrating universities into society. The final product may also be a research data-base or a research article, a completed stage of a course or a learning goal. These two advantages, detailed planning and a well-defined goal, also benefit students because project and time management include valuable so-called soft skills that are considered so important in the new B.A. and M.A. programmes.

The major advantage however is motivational. Projects are always collaborative and allow not only lecturers to work with students, often on an informal basis, they also enable students to work with each other and learn from each other. Even lecturers can learn from their students in certain media projects. This is the reason why the Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications, accepted by the European Commission in 2004, emphasize that professional development programmes "should reflect the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to learning" (cf. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf).

The special motivation may actually come from four different sources: the more informal working atmosphere, where English is used in real-life situations, the more obvious practical purpose and outcome, the more experimental character of projects, and finally the pride of achievement when the projects are completed despite all problems and interference of real life into academic plans.

A final advantage of projects is that they can be used to apply for special funding from universities or other possible beneficiaries of the project and its results. The projects described in this volume show that a film may be supported by a political organisation, a collaborative learning project by a national or international funding agency.

The articles in this volume demonstrate the unusual breadth of such projects undertaken on both sides of the Ore Mountains and the wide spectrum that a common goal allows. Thus, the articles are ordered according to the different domains of methodology, teaching, research, and application. Especially in the methodological field, teaching can nowadays rely on a technological infrastructure that enables practitioners to disseminate materials and collect and pool feedback in efficient and attractive ways. The article by Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova shows how an entire university course can be developed within an authoring tool such as Moodle. Her findings also hint at an enhanced learning efficiency. A different route is taken by Petr Najvar, who applies video recordings to a curriculum analysis in Czech university classrooms.

New ways of using video are also an inspiring way of student-staff cooperation in the development of interesting projects. The Ústi nad Labem student project reported by Anna Kinovicová, Tony Laue, Petra Teslerová and Lucie Vacková is exceptional in that it clearly demonstrates the value of project work from both perspectives, teachers' and learners'. This new form of collaboration had been in the centre of the Freiberg conference, where most projects were presented by teacher – student teams that were able to demonstrate the advantages from both perspectives.

In a more research-oriented section, several conference participants presented samples of their current work. This concerns research that either benefits from their teaching (with students as collaborators) or that is designed to render results applicable for enhanced methodology and materials development. Daniel Nkemleke investigated the use of linguistic modality in academic student writing at African and German universities. Christoph Haase applied new models of lexical recognition to the teaching of English in English language practice programmes. Hana Coufalová, Ana-Ruxandra Iliescu and Andrew Tollet investigated the approximation of quantities and the use of English quantifiers by Czech students. Finally, Renata Povolná extended her long-time engagement with coherence in spoken and written discourse to specific implications for her teaching.

The third segment in the volume explores ways of methodological improvement in specific courses. Světlana Hanušova, Jana Zerzová and Hana Čujková impart experiences from the ELTE Study Programme in Brno. At Chemnitz, Kristiane Dürich specialises in English for Academic Purposes and presents a refined seminar concept. On the practical side, Brigitta Wegener offers a look at corporate English language training and further ways to optimize materials development. As a concluding article, Lucie Betáková makes suggestions how to structure classroom discourse.

With the Czech Republic entering the Schengen circle of countries within the European Union virtually at the same time this volume went through its final editing stages, the collaboration has been made even easier. We thus look forward to further meetings and conferences.

Josef Schmied & Christoph Haase

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Teaching Projects in English Studies

Josef Schmied

CHEMNITZ UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

This contribution propagates a project approach to English Studies. It emphasises that project thinking has more advantages than disadvantages and tries to illustrate this by current examples from journalistic writing to translation, from media to computing projects. These examples prove that projects are not a supplementary element in English studies, but an integral part and that they are neither pure fun nor surplus work, but simply a good opportunity to bring modern life and job requirements into the traditional curriculum of English Departments in Germany and the Czech Republic.

INTRODUCTION

Although thinking in terms of projects is well-known in research perspectives and in English language teaching at schools, it seems surprisingly neglected in teaching perspectives. Certainly, university teachers would often emphasise their attempts to integrate modern research projects as much as possible into their teaching, but the concept of project work does not figure prominently in the English curriculum except where external funding is involved. Admittedly, project thinking may have disadvantages. Occasionally, only short-terms aims are envisaged, and when they are achieved, a new project has to be started; this does not support long-term planning and sustainability. However, project thinking also has its advantages, which I would like to illustrate in this contribution.

Defining criteria

Although projects in the widest sense can be defined in many ways, I see two central defining criteria of project work and some others:

1) limited duration
   Time constraints are always a challenge for the project manager (usually the teacher), who has to keep a tight control of project activities, participant contributions and collaboration in general, but it has the obvious advantage that all participants can clearly see what they have achieved at the end of the project.
2) a final product
   The end of the project is usually defined by a clear result, usually a finished product that is (hopefully) presentable to the general public.
   However, there are more features that contribute to the special value of

project work. A special opportunity and a challenge at the same time is that projects are

3) a collaborative effort
A product completed by several students can be bigger and "more presentable" than an individual student project such as a presentation or a term paper. But this "collaborative creativity" requires more conscious planning than usual over a longer time period. In scientific research projects, specific charts, so-called Gantt charts, are used to illustrate the breakdown of work activities over time. For students not familiar with the concept, Wikipedia is a starting point, the value of its information must, of course, be verified by comparing it with other sources. In this case, Wikipedia offers a satisfactory explanation (Text 1) and some interesting additional information (incl. the fact that Gantt charts are named after an American, who popularised them in the West, but invented by a Russian over a hundred years ago) and even a few illustrative examples without copy-right restrictions (Fig. 2):

> A **Gantt chart** is a popular type of bar chart that illustrates a project schedule. Gantt charts illustrate the start and finish dates of the terminal elements and summary elements of a project. Terminal elements and summary elements comprise the work breakdown structure of the project. Some Gantt charts also show the dependency (i.e., precedence network) relationships between activities. Gantt charts can be used to show current schedule status using percent-complete shadings and a vertical "TODAY" line as shown here.

Text 1: Wikipedia entry s.v. Gantt chart (last accessed 20/06/08)

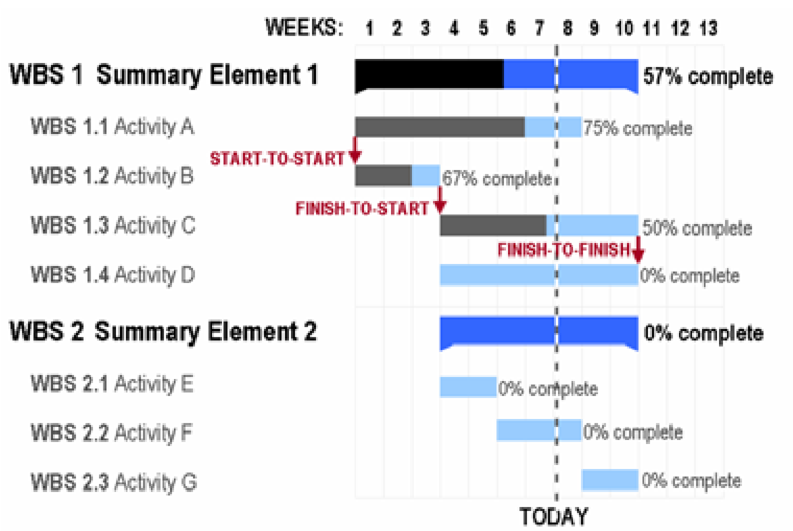

Fig. 1: Gantt chart from Wikimedia Commons

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:GanttChartAnatomy.png (last accessed 20/06/08)

A general advantage of projects is that, in order to attract real public attention, they must have

4) public relevance
   This feature makes university work generally accessible to the society and it makes English studies more embedded in our society today - and this society is, like many modern projects today, characterised by its
5) media-orientation
   Despite the obvious dangers of the so-called New Media, I intend to emphasise the opportunities offered by recent technological developments, in particular the development of the interactive web, commonly called web2.0, for project work.
   Because of this media-orientation, the traditional English teacher needs support from the IT specialist, which makes project work today often
6) an interdisciplinary effort
   From a general educational (non-subject-related) perspective, project work includes many important skills that are often referred to as "soft skills". These have been emphasised lately particularly in the context of "employability" of graduates from the social sciences. Thus, the English Department is fortunate to have enough opportunities to include
7) an applied and job-related perspective
   Ideally, project participants learn to organise their work independently and to take over responsibility for their component. Apart from that, however, they know that their contribution is important for the success of the whole group and still, the final product must be a unit that is more than the sum of the individual components alone. This implies
8) a new type of participatory learning
   The real advantage of project work is that learning opportunities and job requirements are developing in the same direction here since the new technologies make a new project thinking possible that was unthinkable only a short while ago.

Project thinking and European requirements

From a theoretical perspective, project work must be embedded in a social-constructionist pedagogy, which includes collaboration, activity-based learning and critical reflection of one's own progress. This is probably the most important effect of project work in English Studies. I will take up this issue in my conclusion. This integration of new technologies and new thinking is also a European perspective, since it is very much in line with the "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications" adopted by the European Commission in 2004 (Text 2). They state explicitly that "professional development programmes should reflect the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to learning" (ibid: 5) and include innovative learning technologies (ibid: 3f):

Work with knowledge, technology and information: they need to be able to work with a variety of types of knowledge. Their education should equip them to access, analyse, validate, reflect on and transmit knowledge, making effective use of technology where this is appropriate. Their pedagogic skills should allow them to build and manage learning environments and retain the intellectual freedom to make choices over the delivery of education. These skills also allow for innovation and creativity. Their confidence in the use of ICT should allow them to integrate it effectively into learning and teaching. They should be able to guide and support learners in the networks in which information can be found and built. They should have a high level of knowledge and understanding of their subject matter and view learning as a lifelong journey. Their practical and theoretical skills should also allow them to learn from their own experiences and match a wide range of teaching and learning strategies to the needs of learners.

Text 2: European Commission: "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications".

The following examples illustrate the possibilities (and occasionally limitations) of projects in English Studies in four major sections: of course, writing, translation, presentations and web resources. These categories can overlap, e.g. an academic writing project may be based on a translation and include a Wiki presentation using web resources. Finally, I will summarise the major concepts of this new way of learning again.

WRITING PROJECTS

Writing has always been an integral part of English studies at university level. Traditionally, the emphasis has been on "essay writing" or "composition", understood as an argumentative genre. The International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) rightly chose argumentative assays as the recommended genre for data-collections in English Departments around the world in an attempt to ensure compatibility. However, with respect to the criteria "public relevance", "media-orientation" and "job-related perspective" above, other genres are more important.

Journalistic Writing

Writing and particularly editing a journal is a special opportunity for students of English to go beyond the individual mini-projects that are the norm in English Studies. The necessity to finish a journal issue at a certain publication date and to start working on a new issue afterwards contributes to personal discipline and continuity. Continuity has always been a special problem for journals at English Departments as students have often not been able to contribute to the paper editions of Department Newsletters etc. during their year abroad. Nowadays, the WWW allows students to write particularly interesting and topical articles as "foreign correspondents" during their year or semester abroad and provide useful first-hand information for the next generation of students going abroad, especially to ERASMUS partner universities.

The fact that student journals can be constructed relatively easily (e.g. in blog format) on the WWW nowadays at relatively low cost is an added advantage.

Fig. 2: WWW page of the TUC student journal

Academic Writing

Another important aspect that helps writing projects to become more directly integrated into the disciplinary specialisation of English Studies (language, literature and culture) is that student papers are usually written in the "foreign" language English nowadays. But English is not considered a "foreign" language even at German universities any more, as English is acknowledged more and more as *the* international language of science and technology. This makes it much easier for students of English to train their academic writing skills than for their fellow students of French, Spanish or Russian.

In addition, there are many WWW pages available for academic writing, mainly from American universities, where the problem "writing" has been an issue for many years. The advantage of English students is that they can profit from these (web) publications but the expansion of American concept to German and Czech universities is not easy, since the requirements for non-native speakers are often different. The big debate in this context is whether the native-speaker norms should be taken over uncritically or whether European research traditions require different writing conventions. Although we still need more research in terms of culture-specific text-linguistic analyses of coherence or speaker involvement and speaker commitment for instance, these issues can be discussed in an advanced student forum since students of English have the advantage of being users and researchers in English for Academic Purposes at the same time. This is a unique opportunity to discuss the effect of academic writing on the intended readership. Whereas traditionally students concentrated on their own "papers" only, in a project approach they have to comment on the writing from a reader's perspective and thus learn that academic writing is clearly interaction – if it is to fulfil its purpose successfully (Hyland 2006). Whereas the collaborative aspect of this writing project is clear, the final product and time frame depends very much on the topic.

A Chemnitz example is a blog that students were asked to produce after a tour of Czech university Departments of English and language service providers. This study tour brought enough "input" for all participants and the differences between the two learning traditions provided much food for thought. Academic topics worth writing about included some very practical issues, such as the role of new media in teaching, future job perspectives and cooperation projects. Unfortunately, the output was limited, because self-organising mechanisms did not work as the study tour and the product based on it were not sufficiently integrated in the curriculum.

TRANSLATION PROJECTS

Similar to composition, translation has been a central part of language training in English Departments. Most translation exercises have tended to be "purely academic" in two senses, first the translations did not really have a specific readership and second purpose and the tools allowed were very restricted – often to a monolingual learners' dictionary. In "real life", however, translators work with a variety of media-based resources – and this could be reflected in today's university teaching, at least at the higher levels of language proficiency. Apart from the fact that translation projects can combine many student translations to a larger "marketable" unit, like a book, an exhibition catalogue or even film subtitles, students can learn to integrate technology.

Testing internet translations

Although every web user today has probably tried WW based translations, esp. with unknown languages, the results are usually so poor that these tools are not used seriously in translation projects. Testing the limitations of such machine translation tools is however a serious project. If different text-types, vocabulary levels and languages are compared, students' language awareness (and admiration for good translations) can increase dramatically. They become aware of the creative choices of translators, who always have to decide whether to take the stereotypical or the unconventional options. A small test will also demonstrate that one of the more pervasive translation evaluation techniques, that of round-trip translation (or "back translation"), is also not very valuable since this may involve one direction that is relatively straightforward and one where problems arise. Although most WWW translations of European languages are based on Systran, some interesting differences can be investigated in a student project. It is of course possible to evaluate translations automatically using the standard style checkers, but the human evaluations can contribute a lot to discussions in translation classes. The "preliminary" results will also teach students to distinguish between texts where an automatic translation can be attempted despite the enormous "hand-work" involved in improving them and other texts where this should not be attempted at all. At least, this has a very practical sustainable result for individual students.

Using Translation Memory Systems

Other translation tools which are standard in industrial contexts but rarely used in university teaching today are translation memory systems. Although they are best suited for texts with many reoccurring parts, which can then be found in the system's memory, they are particularly suited for a project approach since they have to collect as much input text as possible to increase the chance of finding larger chunks that the translator can decide to re-use from a former translation. Obviously, a translation memory project would be most suited for user manuals or technical texts, maybe tourist texts are limited enough to be included into a special database. If the English Department could support local communities in providing English or even multilingual tourist brochures this would be a particularly good example of the criterion of public relevance and maybe of job-orientation.

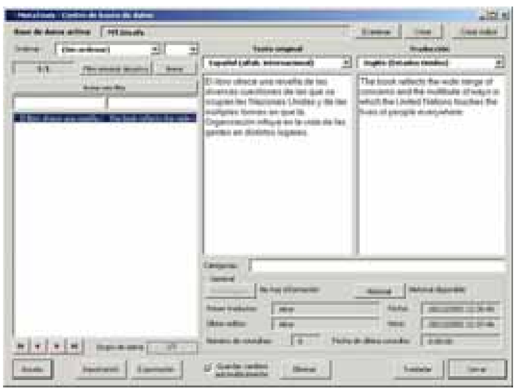

Fig. 3: Example of a translation memory system (MetaTexis)

WEB PRESENTATION PROJECTS

Media have been at the centre of philological university education from the very beginning. The philological tradition is based on the book as *the* medium to transfer knowledge from the teachers to the learners. The 20th century media, radio and film, have expanded the scope of English literature considerably. All audio, video and multimedia materials, including the most recent interactive computer games, can be considered as texts in a wider sense where the writer/author – reader/user interaction is at the centre of the philological interest. Although it cannot be considered as core competence of English Departments, cutting, editing, subtitling or dubbing films can add a practical new dimension to English studies. Digital cameras are now part of every-day (student) life and can be used in many ways in teaching languages, not only to document and control teaching quality (Najvar 2008). Shooting and editing a whole feature film is however is a long-term project that needs very detailed planning (Kinovičová 2008), maybe a short documentary on a study trip or a semester abroad is more easily practicable.

Sometimes the entertainment media (e.g. movies and games) are seen in contrast to the information media. The New Media have added hypertext and hypermedia options in the form of the internet computer and thus added completely new information and learning perspectives.

In many English Departments, collaborative e-learning platforms like Moodle or Wikis are used. Moodle is actually an acronym, which stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. The possibilities of Moodle as a complete learning management system are illustrated by Dontcheva-Navratilova (2008). Nowadays it is probably the most widely used virtual learning environment in Czech and German English Departments, although it needs a competent system administrator and more support from computer centres than other platforms. Its major advantage is that other interactive elements, such as a discussion forum and a Wiki, can be integrated and that Moodle users can feel as members of the great Moodle community, which can exchange modules and share their experience with this Open Source software package.

Since students nowadays are familiar with Wikipedia, using the Wiki technology may be an easier start into web presentations for participating students. Later Wikis can possibly be integrated into Moodle, which allows the exchange of modules between groups, discussions within groups and a good task management from a teacher's perspective. Both learning platforms (see below) share the same interactive participatory project philosophy. Wikis can be constructed easily by computer-literate students and teachers and the project history allows everyone to follow up the development of the pages, and a discussion group can be integrated for the meta-discourse why information is presented in the form it is. We tried out a History Wiki within the English Web at

TUC (Fig. 4), because it allowed us to integrate sound and images in hypertext format and it included not only a lecture but also a semi-independent tutorial, in which tutors offered downloads of hand-outs, exam preparations and other useful announcements.

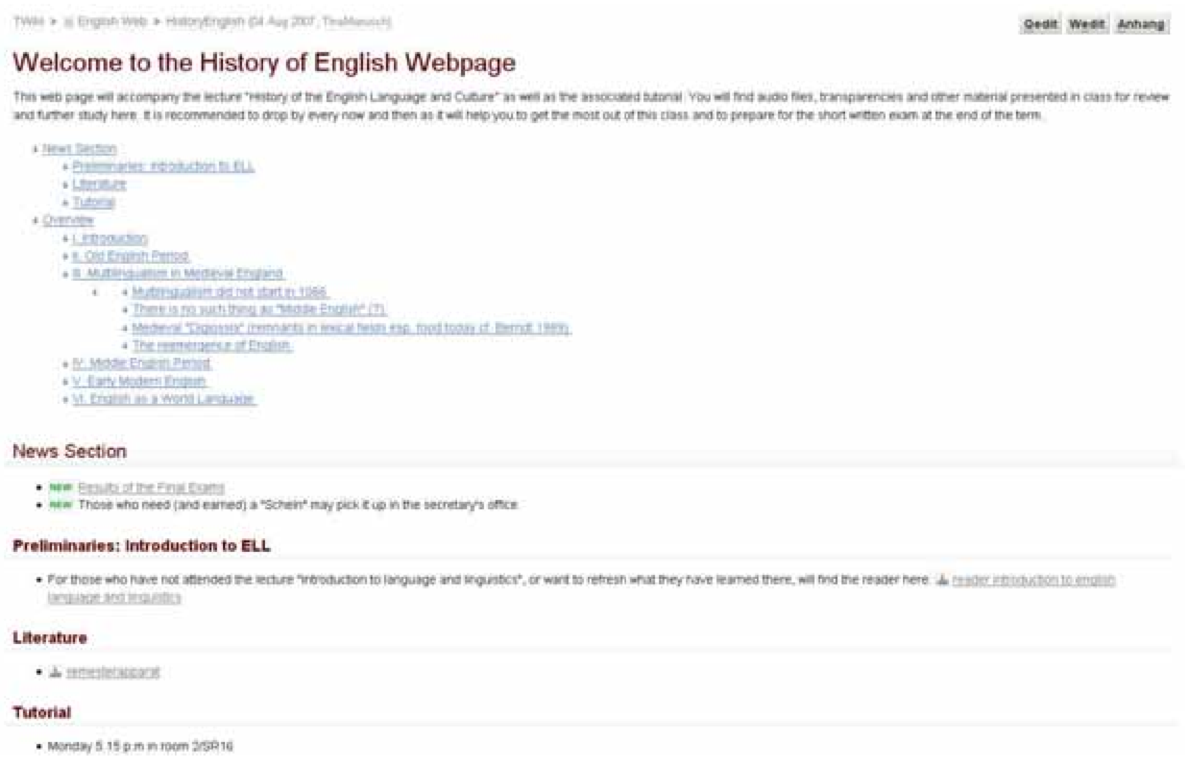

Fig. 4: English Wiki at TUC

Finally, it may be worth mentioning that many projects that conduct research on student learning offer a service as a by-product that can be very useful. Our Internet Grammar (Schmied 1999), for instance, provides a free hypertext system. However, it cannot be considered a teaching project in our sense, since it does not include this new type of participatory learning mentioned above, since the back-end, the software designed to help the author to construct the WWW pages, is too complex for normal teaching.

COMPUTING PROJECTS FOR LANGUAGE RESOURCES

In this section, I intend to demonstrate the use of new computer tools that have been developed at Chemnitz University of Technology recently and can be used partly online and partly offline by non-native speakers to verify or falsify their assumptions of English usage. Using the WWW "like a corpus" or "as a dictionary" has become common-place by now, what needs to be discussed is the limitations of this approach with Google search technologies in the Google databases and how comparisons can be made more systematically (Schmied 2006).

Of course, computing projects are only appropriate for students who study computing or have enough programming experience already in suitable languages like C++ and Perl. Whereas the product character of such projects is clear the collaborative nature is often neglected, since the detailed comments necessary to allow another programmer to understand and develop a piece of software further are often underestimated.

The following example, Collocate Finder, can be applied to a corpus to extract significant collocations, which is always a major problem for advanced students of English. Due to the unique expansion of English around the world today, such a tool is particularly useful to explore the usage of culture-specific words, as our example illustrates (Fig. 5).

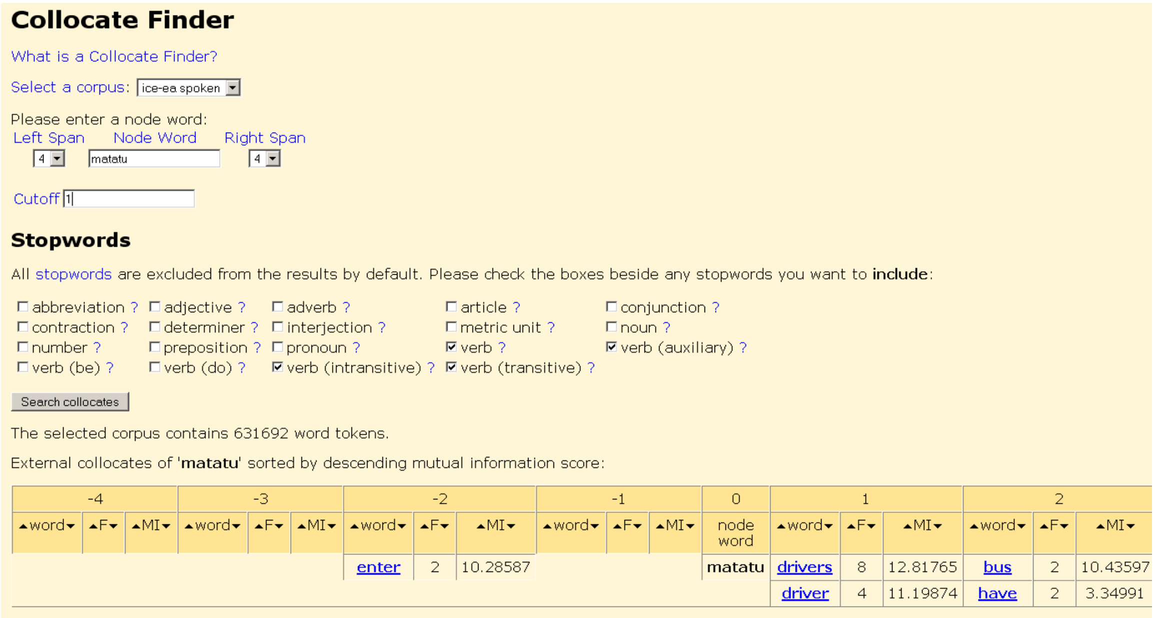

Fig. 5: Collocate Finder applied to find out usage of *matatu* in the International Corpus of English – East Africa

Outlook: Projects as a Major Component of New Learning Developments

Despite the intensive discussion of all these tools used in our projects, it has to be emphasised that learning and using a foreign language like English is not a matter of technology or entertaining projects, but it depends on the learner, for whom all this is hard work. For a long time, it has been common knowledge in the teaching profession that the teacher can only serve as a facilitator. In order to discuss this central concept in social constructionist pedagogy, we can again try the Wikipedia entry (Text 3) and evaluate it: It seems to be in line with our philosophy and it is of course particularly important in e-learning.

A facilitator is someone who skillfully helps a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them to plan to achieve them without taking a particular position in the discussion. The facilitator will try to assist the group in achieving a consensus on any disagreements that preexist or emerge in the meeting so that it has a strong basis for future action. The role has been likened to that of a midwife who assists in the process of creation but is not the producer of the end result. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facilitator

Text 3: Entry s.v. *facilitator* in Wikipedia (Retrieved on 11/1/08)

In a wider societal context, these concepts can also be seen as parts of the new trend towards participatory culture. This is in stark contrast to consumer culture, which has been deplored by university teachers for a long time. This new interactive culture, based on good old teaching ideals of interaction, student orientation, etc., goes well together with what has been described as Web 2.0. The relevant parts from the Wikipedia entry can be seen in Text 4 below. When we evaluate it, we have to admit that it supports our perspective only partly, since it concentrates too much on the disputed technical innovation, but it gives at least some references to participation approaches as we need them for university (e-) learning.

Web 2.0 is a trend in World Wide Web technology, and web design, a second generation of web-based communities and hosted services such as social-networking sites, wikis, blogs, and folksonomies, which aim to facilitate creativity, collaboration, and sharing among users. The term became notable after the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004.[2][3] Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but to changes in the ways software developers and end-users use webs. According to Tim O'Reilly: "Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform." [4] Some technology experts, notably Tim Berners-Lee, have questioned whether one can use the term in a meaningful way, since many of the technology components of "Web 2.0" have existed since the early days of the Web.[5][6] An IBM social-networking analyst, Dario de Judicibus, has proposed a different definition which focuses more on social interactions and on architectural implementation: "Web 2.0 is a knowledge-oriented environment where human interactions generate content that is published, managed and used through network applications in a service-oriented architecture." [7]
Characteristics of "Web 2.0" Web 2.0 websites allow users to do more than just retrieve information. They can build on the interactive facilities of "Web 1.0" to provide "Network as platform" computing, allowing users to run software-applications entirely through a browser.[12] Users can own the data on a Web 2.0 site and exercise control over that data.[13][12] These sites may have an "Architecture of participation" that encourages users to add value to the application as they use it.[12][2] This stands in contrast to very old traditional websites, the sort which limited visitors to viewing and whose content only the site's owner could

modify. Web 2.0 sites often feature a rich, user-friendly interface based on Ajax,[12][2] Flex or similar rich media. The sites may also have social-networking aspects.[13][12] The concept of Web-as-participation-platform captures many of these characteristics. Bart Decrem, a founder and former CEO of Flock, calls Web 2.0 the "participatory Web"[14] and regards the Web-as-information-source as Web 1.0.
The impossibility of excluding group-members who don't contribute to the provision of goods from sharing profits gives rise to the possibility that rational members will prefer to withhold their contribution of effort and free-ride on the contribution of others.[15]

Text 4: Entry for Web 2.0 in Wikipedia (Retrieved on 11/1/08)

This text is also interesting because it shows the hypertext structure of the article very clearly, in the form of traditional footnotes as well as in the form of hypertext links. This complex thinking is a central point in the development of cognitive skills at university level today.

I am convinced that the importance of projects in university teaching will increase greatly over the next few years. Especially in the new courses at MA level, where the new cognitive skills can be combined with the new technology skill, so that complex thinking and concrete application are not considered contrasts any more but necessary partners for the training of students that are fit for the 21st century.

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Enhancing Learning Efficiency: A VLE Moodle Course in Stylistics

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This contribution reports on a support project for in-class university teaching by integrating an e-learning course using Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle. It focuses on students' feedback on their experience of working with the VLE Moodle course in Stylistics and discusses the advantages and drawbacks of the interactive modules 'journal', 'assignments' and 'wikis'. The module 'journal' is intended to help students prepare for in-class learning; the module 'assignments' is used to develop the skills and expertise of students in creating texts representing different genres; the module 'wiki' allows students to reflect on in-class teaching by editing presentations made during contact sessions.

INTRODUCTION

The profound impact of new information and communication technologies (ICT) on the size and speed of information accessibility and communication in the modern world raises important educational issues for universities. The rise of the age of the internet, a site for on-line cross-lingual and cross-cultural communication, enhances the use and the "creation of new styles and means of communication" (Miššíková 2006: 147) including new styles and means of teaching and learning. The awareness of the fact that learning is a social process which requires an effective learning environment promoting the active acquisition of subject-specific and general expertise, has become essential to our considerations when we address the challenges of the dynamic world of university education. It is therefore not surprising that current research into language teaching and learning methodology puts special emphasis on the integration of ICT into the educational process. The use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) - software systems designed to facilitate management by teachers of educational courses for their students, in particular by helping teachers and learners with course administration - can improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing ways to promote quality course design, by using appropriate tools and by creating a new context in which learning can take place (Stiles 2000). A VLE includes curriculum mapping (e.g. a course may be divided into sections that can be assigned and assessed), student-work and performance tracking, online support for both teacher and student, electronic communication (e-mail, forums, chat), and Internet links to additional resources. Moreover, in teacher education programmes the use of VLEs as tools for distance education and supplements to face-to-face classroom interaction is of great importance, since it prepares future teachers for the use of the World Wide Web and educational communication technologies.

THE VLE MOODLE STYLISTICS COURSE

According to the Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications accepted by the European Commission in 2004, professional development programmes "should reflect the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to learning". Recent research on the subject-specific competences of an English teacher has suggested a set of competences which are essential for future teachers of English, namely communicative, linguistic, sociocultural and intercultural, literary, and didactic competences (Hanušová 2005). The Stylistics course offered by the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, endeavours primarily to develop learners' linguistic competence, which comprises theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills in the use of different language varieties, and to foster an ability to apply this knowledge in EFL teaching. Furthermore, the course enhances the learners' communicative competence, which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences affecting written and spoken performance. Since "without didactical aspects the preparation of future teachers of English cannot be successful" (Povolná 2004: 247), the course also addresses the didactic competence of the learners' by preparing them to improve their language skills by self-study, to select suitable teaching materials, to respond flexibly to various classroom situations and to use ICT and e-learning to support classroom teaching.

The aim of the Stylistics course project is to integrate VLE support into the existing course in Stylistics. E-learning support is intended not only as a tool for delivering information and increasing the self-study potential of the course, but also as an opportunity to involve students in course administration within the VLE and to promote meaningful and creative interaction with real goals in a real context. Thus it supports the use of 'communicative' approaches in language teaching, the value of which is "that they are based on a context of situation, not just on a setting; hence they do embody a real conception of text – language that is effective in relation to the social activity and the interpersonal relationships" (Halliday 1999: 11-12); this is of particular importance for an understanding of stylistic variation. Since language teaching and especially teacher education is a complex negotiating activity, in which the task of the teacher is "more one of helping students to find a sense of personal meaningfulness in the learning process in a context which is often shaped by perceptions, goals, and priorities of a variety of other participants" (Tudor 2001: 207), the teacher's roles in communicative language teaching are those of a facilitator of the communication process and participants' tasks, a needs analyst, a counsellor and a process manager (e.g. Brown 2001: 35). By providing learners with access to authentic discourse and meaningful interaction in the target language, this approach facilitates the development of language awareness and thus enhances the independence of the learners; it contributes to the promotion of their skills in generalising and evaluating their own language performance as well as that of other speakers, which is essential for their future teaching profession (Dontcheva-Navratilova et al. 2006).

The e-learning Stylistics support uses the VLE Moodle. The advantages of this VLE are that it promotes a social-constructionist pedagogy (which includes collaboration, activity-based learning and critical reflection), that it is suitable for on-line classes which are conducted online only as well as a supplement to face-to-face learning, that it is a user-friendly, efficient, compatible, low-tech browser interface, that it allows the editing of most text entry areas (resources, forum postings, etc.) using an embedded WYSIWYG HTML editor, and that it provides a choice of operational languages (Váňová et al. 2004: 225). It should be stressed that e-learning support is particularly important in blended-learning, a form of teaching and learning which represents a bridge between traditional classroom teaching and distance learning (Stašková 2006: 123).

The VLE Moodle Stylistics course is designed as a supplement to classroom teaching within pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes for upper-primary and secondary school teachers. It is intended to provide input relevant for the reduction of the amount of lecturing required, an opportunity for text analysis and text production within the framework of teacher-led self-access learning, and a vehicle for reflection, feedback and discussion. The course combines deductive and inductive approaches to language teaching, which encourage observation, analysis and discovery procedures. It uses as its main references Crystal and Davy (1969), Short (1996), Urbanová and Oakland (2002) and Verdonk (2002).

The basic aims of the course are:

1) to raise students' awareness of the fact that language is used in
   a) a different way in spoken and written interaction and is further modified and
   b) by the context of language use;
2) to make learners aware of the kind of features which might be expected to be of stylistic significance;
3) to outline a method of analysis which will help them identify style markers of different language varieties;
4) to specify a precise way of talking about these (metalanguage);
5) to discover the main stylistic features of styles they are likely to use in their private and professional lives;
6) to create texts in a particular style and genre, thus helping learners to achieve their goals in communication.

In addition, the e-learning Stylistics course may be seen as incorporating group projects (reflected in the wiki component) and individual projects (included as the journal and assignment components). This contribution draws on feedback provided by students who have worked with the VLE Moodle Stylistics course as summarised and formalised by Ondrej Padalik and Ivana Galetova, whose remarks served as the basis for the students' comments reflected in this paper.

The course is divided into twelve blocks which correspond to the twelve weeks of a term. Each block includes the components Resources, Journal and, except for the first two blocks, Wiki. Furthermore, some of the blocks include the interactive modules Quiz, Forum and Assignment. The introductory part (Figure 1) provides information on the syllabus, recommended literature, course requirements, exam topics, topics and a schedule for in-class presentations, a seminar-work plan and a link to the Glossary of Stylistic Terms.

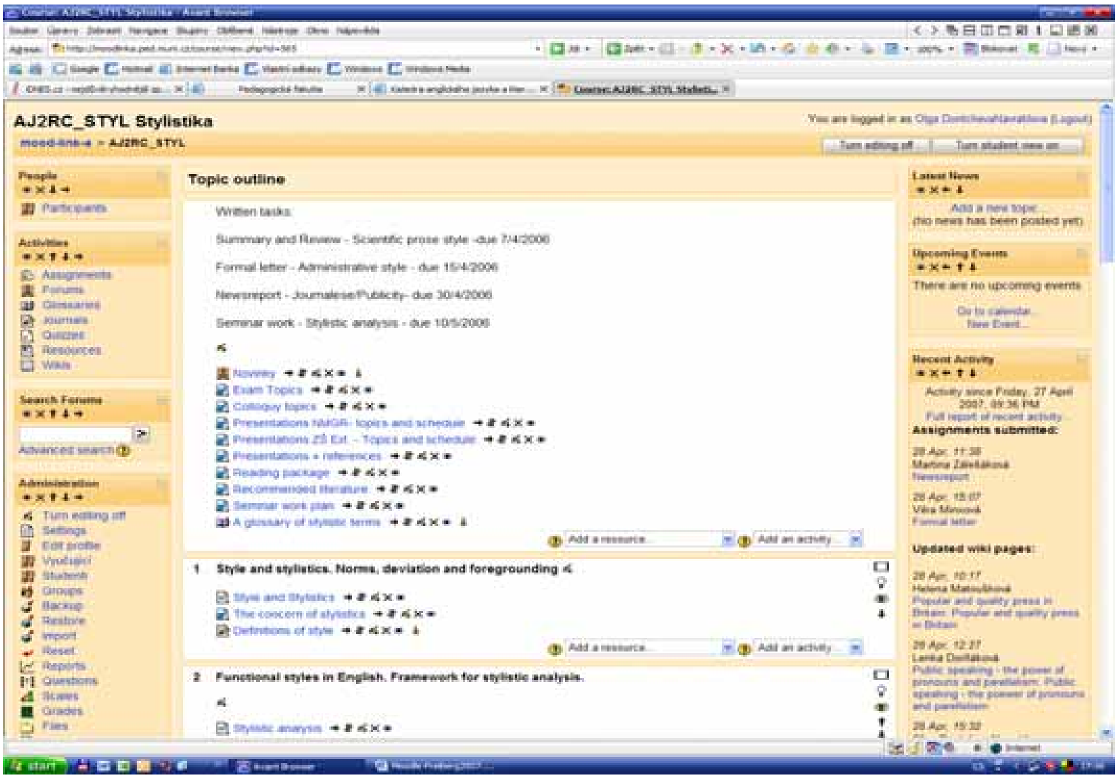

Figure 1: Structure of the course

The Resources component includes files with texts for analysis, including self-study and in-class tasks, and links to websites which are intended for use both in self-study and classroom learning/ teaching and are suitable for pair and group-work. They are designed to provide tasks and activities which use authentic language materials, thus exposing students to authentic language input and contributing to the relating of “grammatical competence to sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence in order to enable non-native speakers to use the foreign language within a particular setting” (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2005: 8). The tasks suggested for text analysis encourage students to discover the layers, patterns and levels that constitute stylistic description, to identify the style markers of different language varieties and to develop an awareness of the existence of variation within different styles.

The Journal component encourages students to prepare systematically for contact sessions and draws their attention to key problems related to a particular topic; it is designed for individual self-study under the supervision of the teacher (Figure 2). The teacher can control students' progress, comment on it and provide advice and guidance; furthermore, the teacher can monitor the amount of work students invest in the learning process, diagnose problems and adjust contact teaching to the needs of the group. As they are involved in guided learning the students can focus on the study of the most important terms and issues; moreover, they can get feedback from the teacher on-line outside office hours. A drawback of the journal component is that it has proven to be of use only to on-line users working with electronic sources.

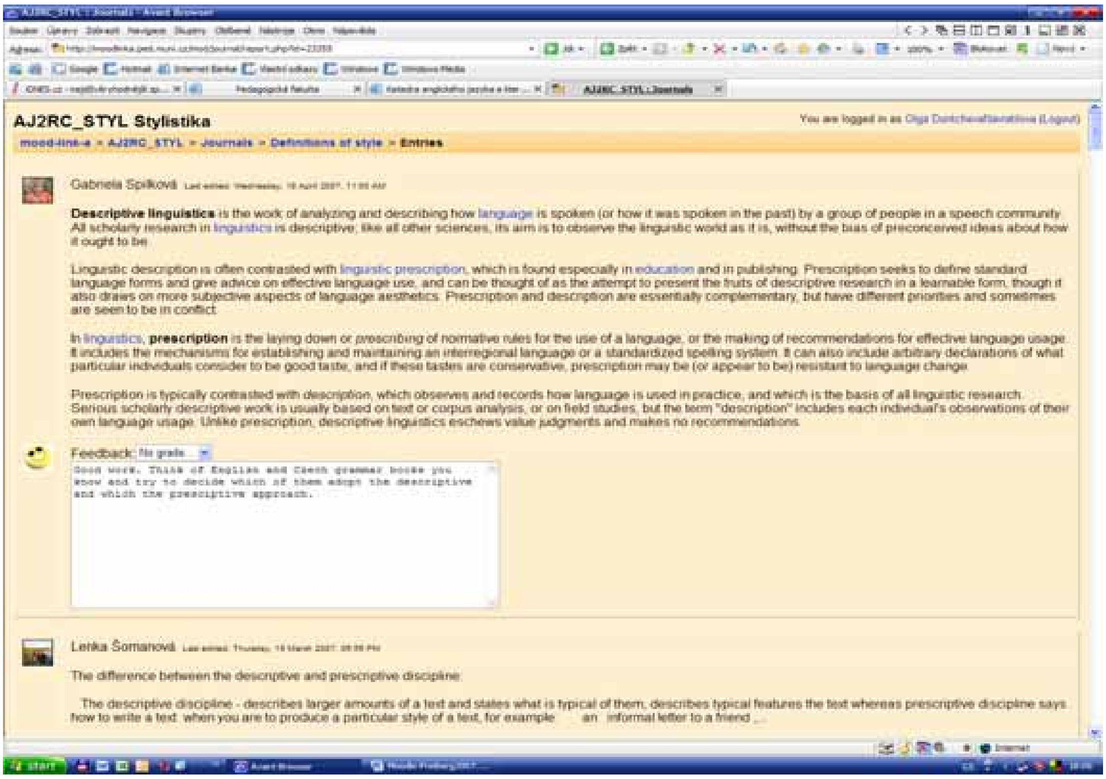

Figure 2: Student's notes and teacher's feedback in the *Journal* component

The interactive Assignment component is used to develop the skills and expertise of students in creating texts to achieve communicative goals in different situational contexts. The module builds upon the knowledge acquired in in-class and self-study analysis of authentic texts and is intended to encourage students to produce texts in a particular genre (summary and review of a piece of academic prose, a formal letter and a news report). The teacher grades and comments on the performances of the students; the results are available in tables which are easy to consult and which reflect the number of drafts submitted by each student.

Students appreciate that the assignment component is student-friendly and time-efficient; they send their assignments and receive immediate feedback on their results from the teacher, who can make corrections in the text and comment on student performance (Figure 3). If the first draft is not satisfactory, the students may submit a second draft, and if necessary further drafts till their work meets the requirements of the style (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Teacher's comments on the draft of a review assignment

First draft

Verdonk, P. (2002). Stylistics, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

As the title suggests, the main topic of the book is considering stylistics. Although the title seems to be too general, since the book deals predominantly with style usage in literary and non-literary texts. The publication is divided into four sections which include a survey, readings, references and a glossary. The four sections are then subdivided into seven chapters with one exception – the alphabetical glossary which enables an easy access to the terms appearing in the book.

Second draft

Verdonk, P. (2002). Stylistics, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The textbook Stylistics by Peter Verdonk belongs to the Oxford Introductions to Linguistics series. As the title suggest, the main topic of the book is stylistics. The title seems to be too general, since the book deals predominantly with style usage in literary and non-literary texts. The publication is divided into four sections, namely a survey, readings, references and a glossary. The four sections are then subdivided into seven chapters. The alphabetical glossary enables an easy access to the terms appearing in the book.

Figure 4: First and second draft of a review assignment (introductory paragraph)

Future teachers should be encouraged to practise metalanguage which seems to be the most appropriate for their specific needs (including explanation of terms in the target language and their equivalents in L1). In addition to the opportunity to use appropriate metalanguage in the analysis of texts representing different language varieties, the study of linguistic terminology is supported by a Glossary of Stylistic Terms, an interactive module which enables students to find relevant terms quickly as well as to participate in developing the glossary – they can edit the existing dictionary entries and/or add new ones (Figure 5). The students are highly appreciative of the possibility to participate in the creation of the glossary's content; furthermore they feel that the language of student-generated definitions tends to be more user-friendly and accessible.

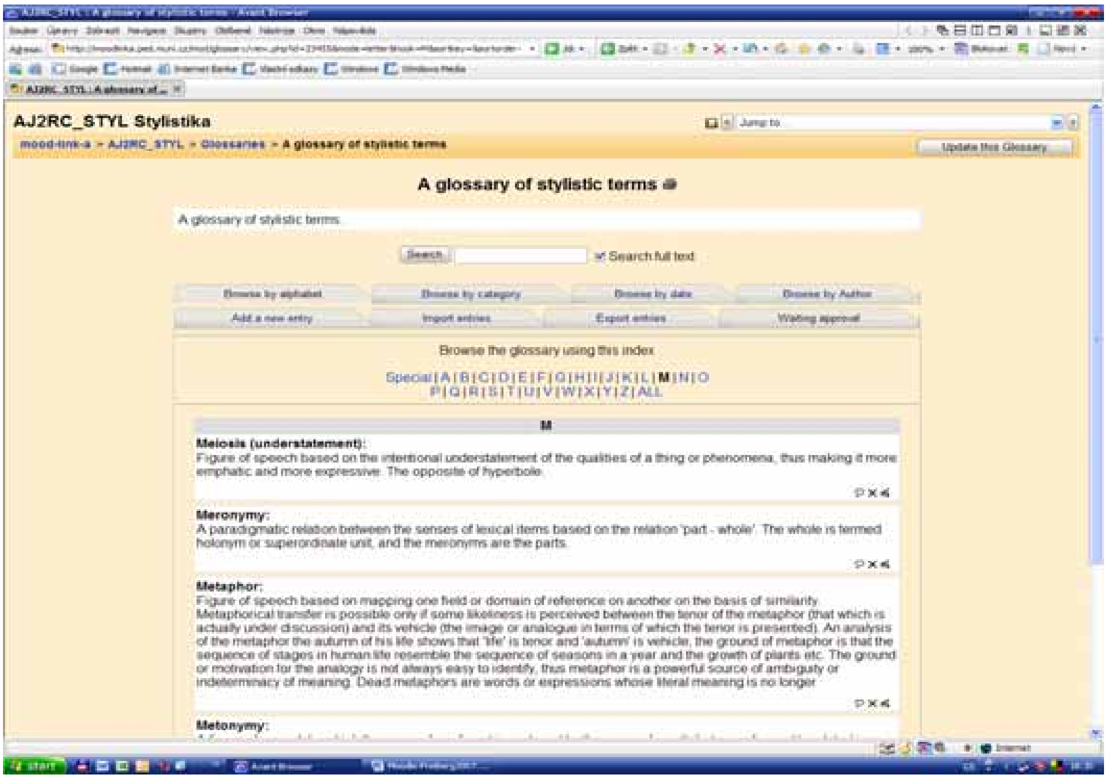

Figure 5: An entry in the Glossary of stylistic terms

The acquisition of linguistic terminology is further promoted by a set of five interactive Tests; three of the tests are terminology tests which are based on the matching of terms with definitions (Figure 6) and the other two are more practically oriented. (Students have to identify figures of speech in the examples by choosing one of the three suggested answers; Figure 7). Tests are assessed according to a ten-point grading system and students have two attempts at each test; the time allocated for each attempt is 20 minutes. Test results are shown in graphs reviewing the performance of students in all course components. The tests help students recycle terminological definitions and check their ability to recognise stylistic figures. The students appreciate the opportunity for self-evaluation when practising both theoretical and practical skills. However, they consider the time limit unnecessary and would prefer to have an unlimited number of attempts to complete the test: when working on-line they may be forced to interrupt their work, thus either exceeding the time limit or exhausting the number of attempts available for the test.

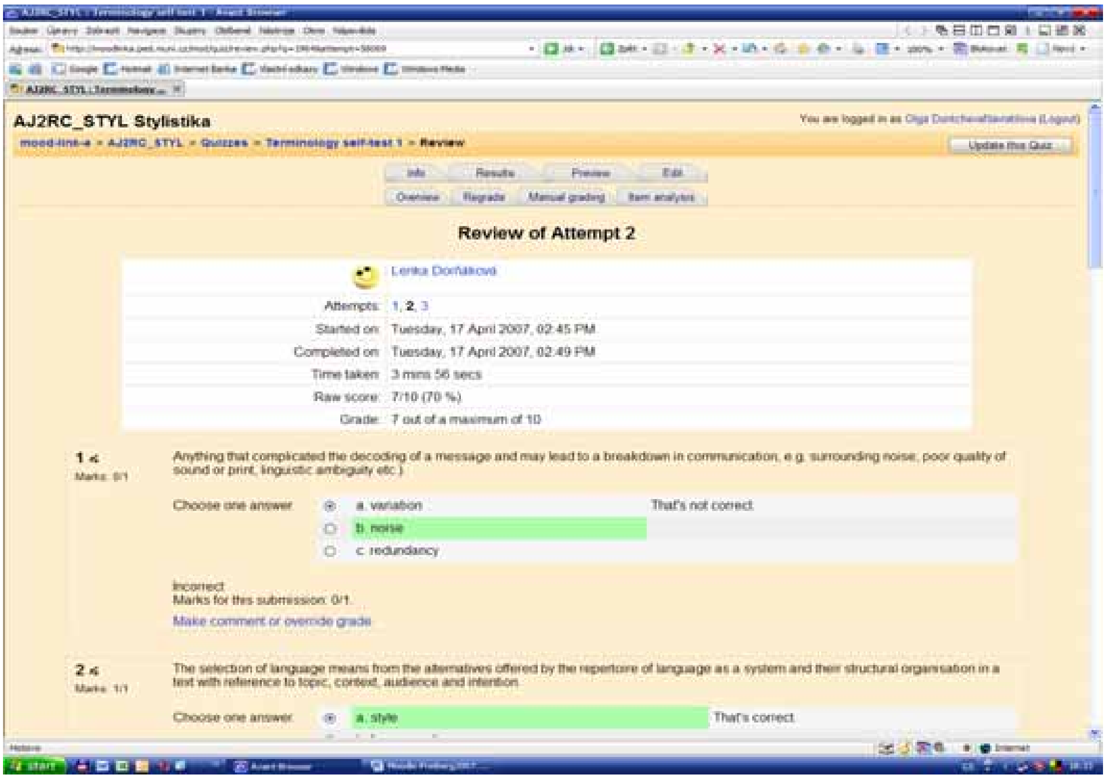

Figure 6: Terminology test

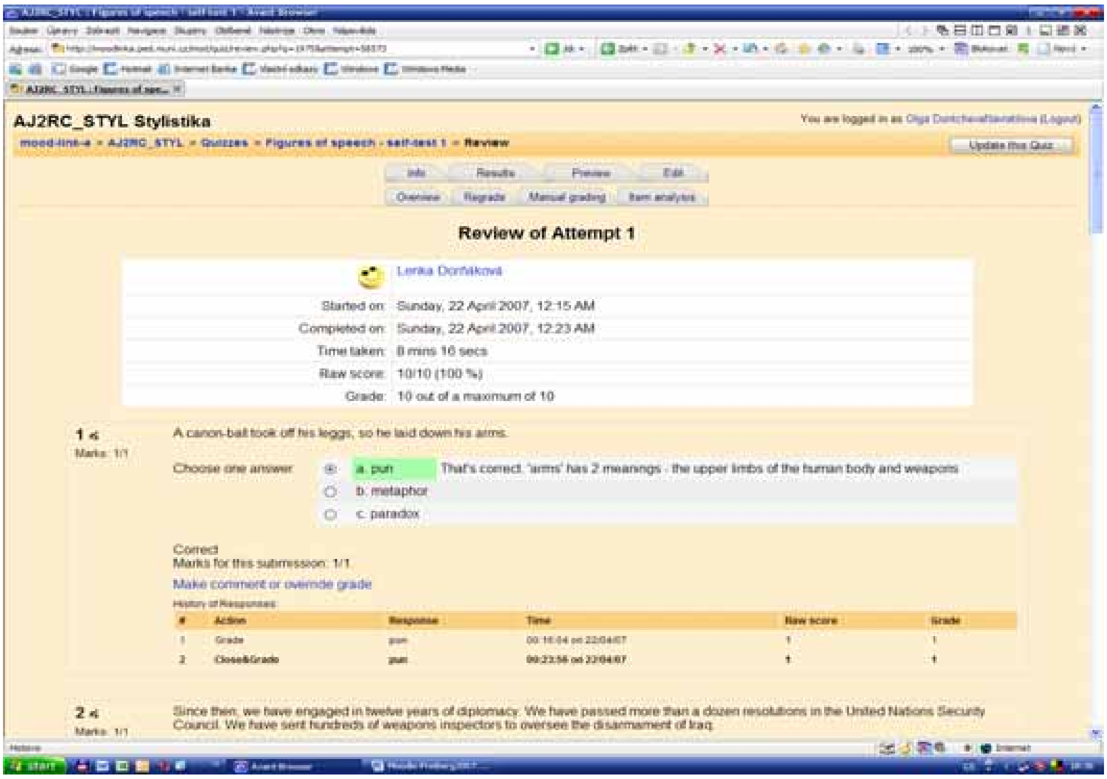

Figure 7: Stylistic figures test

The module Wiki (based on ErfurtWiki) allows students to reflect on in-class teaching by editing presentations made during contact sessions. A Wiki enables students to create and update web pages collectively in a simple mark-up language using a web browser. The module also allows for passive participation where course requirements do not force all students to take part in the creation of the web pages. The Wikis in the Stylistics course use the visible groups' mode, i.e. the participants in each group work together in their own group to add, expand and change the content of a web page, while they can also view the texts created by other groups. There is no prior review before modifications are accepted, although old versions are never deleted and can be restored.

The Wiki texts resulting from the expanding and editing of the presentations added to the module focus on the main styles and genres studied in the Stylistics course (Figure 8); they are intended to help students extend their subject-specific knowledge and prepare for the exam by suggesting easy-to-access materials which draw on various sources and offer hypertext links to internet sources. Furthermore, students acquire general expertise in working in groups with on-line resources and in creating hyper-texts.

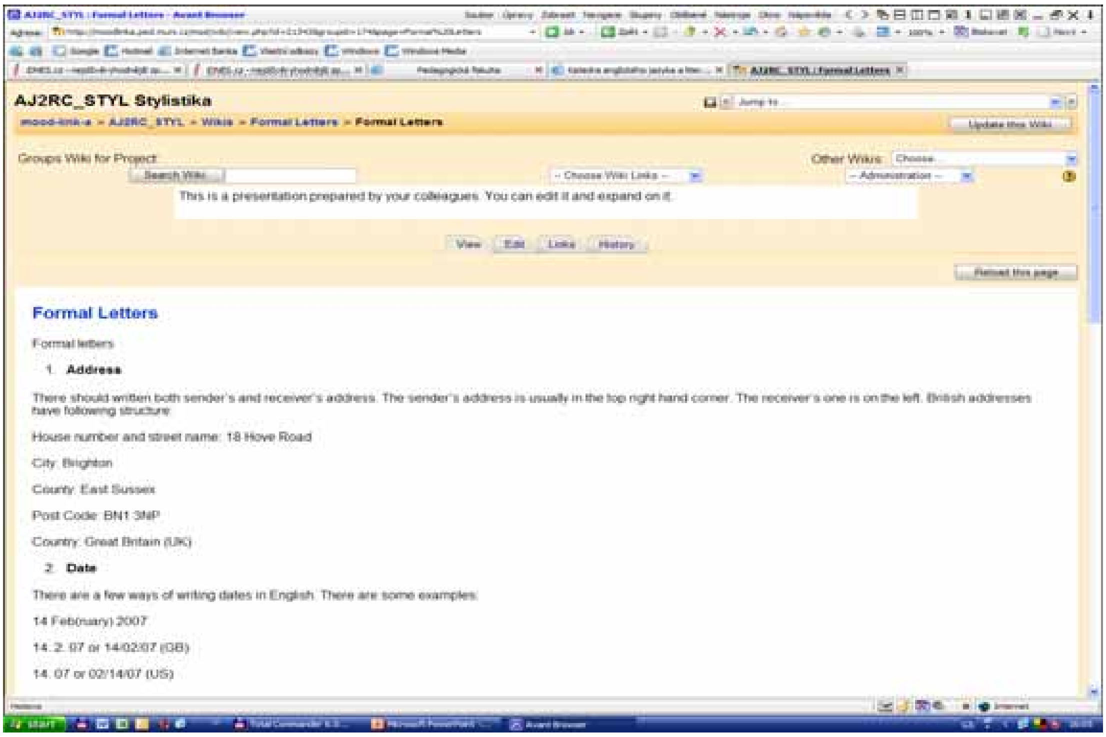

Figure 8: Students' presentation added to a Wiki

Finally, feedback and discussion are managed through the interactive Discussion Forum component, which enables an exchange of ideas and experience between all students and the teacher free of the constraints of time and space.

CONCLUSION

Based on the experience gathered while working on the project, it can be concluded that the introduction of e-learning support for traditional contact teaching in Stylistics as taught at the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno, has proved beneficial.

From a teacher's perspective, the advantages of the VLE Moodle Stylistics course are the elimination of time and space constraints; thus contact sessions may concentrate more on group work, communicative strategies, discussion and task activities. In addition, students are encouraged to think independently and to discuss the content of the course as well as the methods and approaches used in the teaching and learning process. Since the only language used is English, students are involved in real communication and perform meaningful tasks using the target language, which supports the learning process. The teachers can diagnose problems, assist students in their learning, assess their progress, and monitor the amount of work they invest in the learning process via the records of students' responses and log-ins.

From a student's perspective, an important advantage is the opportunity to accommodate the course content and tasks to individual learning styles, which makes learning more attractive, effective, and also easier. The existence of interactive modules allows students to recycle quizzes and practice activities – and to generate new ones – to develop habit and automaticity and achieve a fluent command of the target language as well as to prepare for exams; thus continuous and regular practice is expected to contribute to better study results. Furthermore, forums and guided-practice modules provide opportunities for feedback as well as for practising written communication in cooperation with the teacher and peers, thus enabling students to use the target language to achieve concrete communicative goals in well-organised discourse. Finally, the use of a VLE involves students in organising and planning the learning process by making them responsible for their progress.

These results prove that the VLE Moodle Stylistics course project has succeeded in applying an approach to teaching and learning which is able to satisfy the needs and demands of participants, students, teachers and the university by providing ways to promote quality course design and the use of appropriate tools to facilitate management by teachers of educational courses for their students, in particular by helping teachers and learners with course administration. In addition, their experience of e-learning support courses prepares students to use the World Wide Web and educational communication technologies in their future careers as teachers.

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CPV Video Study of English:
Realised Curriculum Analysis in Czech Lower-Secondary Classrooms[1]

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Educational research in the Czech Republic in the past tended to concentrate on investigating the inputs (predispositions, attitudes) and outcomes (test results, acquired knowledge) of education, or the context and media (curricular documents, textbooks). Rarely has it aimed at exploring the complex process of education itself. The aim of this paper is to introduce the design and methodology of the research project CPV Video Study of English, which aims at analysing the process of teaching English as a foreign language in the Czech lower-secondary schools in its complexity, and which is being carried out at the Educational Research Centre (Centrum pedagogického výzkumu - CPV) of the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching foreign languages has become one of the most intensively discussed topics in the realm of primary and secondary education in the Czech Republic. Here are some of the reasons for this:

- Learning foreign languages is seen as a necessity in the context of European integration processes and new travel and study opportunities.
- There are ridiculously few qualified foreign-language teachers in Czech schools (36%), (Souhrnné poznatky České školní inspekce, 2007).
- Neither theory nor practice succeeded yet in answering the question of the age factor in foreign-language learning.
- Many schools use foreign language teaching as a showcase for parents and the media in their advertising campaign to attract future pupils.
- The Ministry is implementing a reform which changes the practice of foreign-language teaching considerably.

It is this last point which is the subject of particularly intensive discussion among teachers as well as teacher educators because it generates a large number of additional points, one of which is addressed in this paper.

Reforms - generally speaking - aim to change an existing state or situation. The current school reform aims among other things to change the present state of foreign-language teaching in Czech primary and lower-secondary schools (encouraging an early start, introducing a second foreign language, etc). An obvious question we should ask ourselves prior to considering the potential for any reform is: What do we know about the present state of foreign-language teaching in today's Czech schools?

For one thing, the Czech School Inspectorate assumes that more than 70 per cent of lower-secondary English teachers are not fully qualified to teach English at lower-secondary level (Souhrnné poznatky České školní inspekce..., 2007). There is no reason for hoping that the situation at the primary level is better. As to other important factors in foreign-language teaching, so far there seems to have been no serious empirical research that would aim to describe and analyse the current situation in language teaching.

CONTEXT

The video study methodology was successfully used not only on an international scale in the TIMSS 1995 and TIMSS 1999 Video Study research projects (Stigler et al. 1999, Hiebert et al. 2003, Roth et al. 2006) but also by other research teams in Europe (IPN, DIPF) (Seidel et al., 2005, Klieme et al, 2006). Following these projects, the CPV team (Educational Research Centre, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic) launched four video study projects between 2004 and 2007: CPV Video Study of Physics (Janík, Miková, Najvar, Najvarová 2006), CPV Video Study of Geography, CPV Video Study of Physical Education and CPV Video Study of English. The key element of the methodology is the fact that lesson observation and coding are not carried out in the classroom. Rather, lessons are videotaped and all observation and analysis are carried out subsequently, using sophisticated computer software.

Replacing on-the-spot observation with mediated observation (using video equipment) has many advantages. When the on-the-spot observer's concentration fails for a few moments, the data are ultimately lost or distorted. The longer the period of observation or the more detailed the unit of analyses the more likely the on-the-spot observer's concentration is to fail due to weariness or monotony. Using the lesson's video recording allows the observers to review an educational situation repeatedly, see it from different angles and recode it into a number of different systems of categories, and also very importantly, keep themselves refreshed and alert.

AIMS

The *CPV Video Study of English* project is scheduled for 2007 and 2008; it is supported by the Czech Ministry of Schooling, Youth and Sports within *the LC 06046 "Centrum základního výzkumu školního vzdělávání" (Research Centre on Schooling - RECES)* project[2]. It aims to describe and analyse the current state of teaching English as a foreign language at lower-secondary schools in the Czech Republic. It is designed as explorative research of realised curriculum. It aims to answer among others the following questions:

1) Which modes of classroom management do Czech teachers of English employ in their lessons and in what durations?
2) Which lesson phases occur and how long do they take?
3) For what purposes and for what durations is the target language used and for what purposes and for what durations is the mother tongue used?

METHOD

A randomised sample of English lessons has been recorded using standardised methodology (Janík, Miková 2006) by two video cameras as shown in Fig. 1. One camera captured the activity of the teachers and their interaction with their immediate surroundings (the blackboard, the first row of students), while the other camera aimed at capturing the activity of the class (the majority of the students).

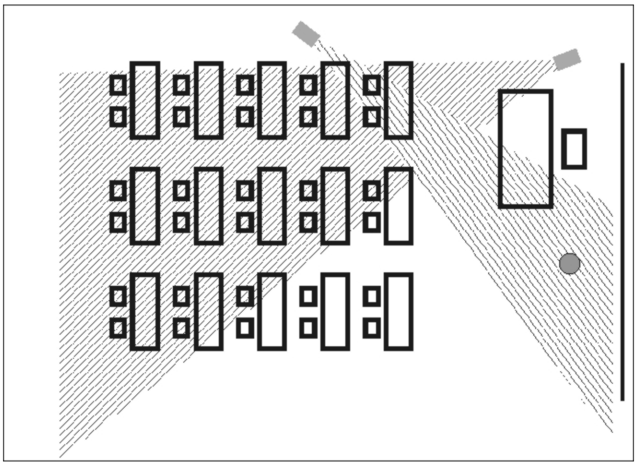

Fig. 1: Camera positions in the classroom

The lessons are transcribed (i.e. the 'public' interaction) and the transcripts are the source of other quantitative and qualitative analyses (teacher talking time vs. student talking time; content realisation).

The lessons are then subdivided into analytical units (i.e. 10-second intervals) and analysed using systems of exclusive categories such as those shown in Tab.1.

lesson phase	**modes of organisation**
repetition	lecture by the teacher
introduction	dictation
developing new content	class discussion
securing/practicing	silent/individual work
applying/intensifying	pair work
summarising	group work
retrospection	several modes at the same time
testing/assessing/checking HW	transition
other	other

Tab. 1: Examples of "systems of categories" for coding

Various techniques of descriptive statistics are employed to demonstrate the tendencies that are to be found in the analysed lessons.

Sample

For technical reasons, the project is limited to the regions of Olomouc, Zlín and South Moravia (i.e. *Olomoucký kraj, Zlínský kraj and Jihomoravský kraj*). Out of a total of 1050 lower-secondary schools in the region, 30 schools were randomly selected and invited to participate in the project. During the second half of the 2006/07 school year, 21 schools hosted the research team for the duration of one to four days and allowed them to record up to four foreign-language lessons as taught in the 7th or 8th grades. By the end of the school year, *the CPV Video Archive* included 79 lessons of English taught by 25 teachers at 21 schools.

teacher	sex	teaching exp. (yrs)	qualification	no. of lessons	school size (no. of pupils)
Aj_A	f	14	English	**4**	750
Aj_B	f	7	primary school	**4**	500
Aj_C	f	3	-	**4**	160
Aj_D	f	2	primary school	**4**	140
Aj_E	m	3	Phys Ed	**4**	730
Aj_F	f	2	-	**4**	160
Aj_G	f	30	Russian	**2**	210
Aj_H	f	4	English	**4**	500
Aj_I	f	13	-	**2**	730
Aj_J	f	14	English, primary school	**2**	730
Aj_K	f	12	Czech	**2**	590
Aj_L	f	5	Czech	**1**	590
Aj_M	f	1	-	**1**	590
Aj_N	m	30	-	**3**	220
Aj_O	f	20	English, Russian	**4**	400
Aj_P	f	4	German	**4**	450
Aj_Q	f	8	-	**2**	650
Aj_R	f	30	English, Russian	**2**	650
Aj_S	f	12	-	**4**	500
Aj_T	f	28	English, Czech	**4**	200
Aj_U	f	2	English, primary school	**4**	270
Aj_V	f	1	English	**4**	450
Aj_W	f	30	English	**4**	300
Aj_X	f	23	English, primary school	**2**	490
Aj_Y	f	7	-	**4**	550

Tab. 2: Research sample

Out of the total of 25 teachers (23 women, 2 men), 10 were fully qualified to teach English at the lower-secondary level, 5 were qualified for the primary level (grade 1-5), 7 did not have a university degree. 13 teachers had taught for less then 10 years, while 7 teachers stated that they had taught for more than 20 years.

Of the 21 participating schools, there were 6 that were attended by less than 250 pupils, and 3 that roofed more than 700 pupils.

ANALYSES

There are two dimensions of aspects that will be in the focus of analyses. We claim that on the one hand, general aspects of every lesson in each subject can be observed concerning the organisation of teaching, temporal development and verbal realisation. On the other hand, foreign language instruction is in many ways very different to instruction in other subjects (such as geography or physics) and therefore a variety of subject specific aspects can be observed in every English lesson. The two dimensions therefore are:

General didactic aspects: those are analysed in all other CPV video study projects and include (see Janík, Miková, 2006):

- Opportunities to talk: What is the proportion between talking time and student talking time?
- Classroom management: What modes of classroom management are employed and in which proportions?
- Lesson phases: In what phases is the lesson realised?

Subject-specific aspects: these include

- Use of mother tongue in the foreign-language classroom:
- What is the proportion between the mother tongue and the target language?
- For what purposes the mother tongue is used?

Fluency-based activities vs. accuracy-based activities:

- How much classroom time is devoted to activities aimed at acquiring fluency, as opposed to those that aim at controlled practice?

Teaching culture in the foreign-language classroom:

- How do teachers introduce the ‘cultural’ content of foreign language teaching?

The role of the textbook in foreign-language instruction:

- What roles do the textbook play in foreign language teaching?
- How often and for how long is it used in class?

This list of general or subject specific aspects that can and will be observed in the recorded lessons is by no means complete or comprehensive. Rather, the nature of the collected data allows additional ideas for analyses in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

Collecting such a large sample of data proved to be a major undertaking: There were more than 40 “shooting” days, more than 8,000 kilometres on the road; more than 3,500 minutes of teaching English were recorded; and it takes more than 300 DVD’s to archive the collected data. We hope that careful analysis of the collected data will allow us to acquire a much better understanding of what actual classroom teaching really looks like today. Only then will the time come to investigate the possibilities for change. Hopefully, the CPV Video Study of Foreign Languages is the first of many such steps towards our better understanding of what the teaching of foreign languages is and what it should be.

NOTES

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2 http://www.pedf.cuni.cz/reces

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Ústi nad Labem Student Project: New Ways of Creativity in English Language Learning

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From numerous projects carried out by students at the Department of English of the Pedagogical Faculty of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University (UJEP) in Ústí nad Labem, we have selected a current film project, entitled Aussig. Aussig is a feature-length film and a film project that is building on what was learned during the making of the previous student film *The Modern Man* at this department. The project is conceived as process and product of a two semester practical language course that allows the language learner to acquire the English language in real life, hands-on situations. Students are expected to work on every aspect of the film and thus create a network of English language relationships. The paper covers the genesis and conception of the project, comments on its current status and its long term goals, and investigates practical advantages to English language learners and the role of creativity in learners' lives. Apart from information about the underlying methodology, the project will also define the place of this project within a wider scope of project work carried out at the Department of English of the UJEP.

INTRODUCTION

With radical changes in educational systems all over the world and the current pervasiveness of modern media and technologies in the classroom and students' personal lives, individual foreign language departments of Czech universities strive for introducing new efficient methods, strategies and approaches and integrating technology and the Internet online resources into the language curriculum of the new bachelor and master teacher training programmes accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic over the last couple of years.

NECESSITY OF A CHANGE

At the Department of English of the Pedagogical Faculty of Ústí University, these efforts have resulted in new subjects in the syllabi of the newly accredited programmes (e.g. Creating Video/Audio Materials, Educational Drama in the ELT Classroom, Teaching English Through Literature, Computer Skills in ELT I and II, etc.), which enable the students to apply new ELT/EFL approaches, methods of work and strategies to their learning processes along with new themes, tasks and topics. One of the main reasons for introducing these changes at the department is to enhance student-centred learning, support students' autonomy and strengthen students' critical thinking. Special attention is given to the role of creativity and new possibilities for creative work by offering completely new, highly motivating, much wider and more complex project work that has not been carried out at the department before. These efforts contribute to the process of change by offering students such forms of work (project work, problem-based and student-centred learning, collaborative learning, facilitation of group work and group lead, etc.), which would enable them to make use of students' experience (knowledge and skills) from their previous language studies, as well as their skills and abilities to work in a large team on more complex projects. For that reason, out of numerous projects that were carried out at the department simultaneously, the film project has been selected to represent the collaborative efforts of students and teachers at the department and also the efforts to initiate new forms of creativity in students, which is so much required in teacher training pedagogy and seems to be hidden under the layers of other hot issues of the global world.

At present numerous research and project activities at this department of English, (which can be considered as strong contributions to the above named efforts) are carried out by students or by teachers in collaboration with students. One of these projects (Pavliková, 2006), for instance, deals with the application of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in the form of e-learning to teaching foreign languages and its main aim is to describe the ways of supporting the school teaching with e-learning tasks and materials and how e-learning can be integrated into the process of teacher training. One section of the project investigates whether there is a connection between individual learning styles and the learners' approaches to learning or not. Another project, carried out in the area of the ELT methodology (Orlová), focuses on the role of reflection in teacher development. British and American Cultural Studies, including all literary subjects and courses of Practical English are further research areas making use of both students' creativity and critical thinking in the ELT Classroom. These subjects have provoked teachers to introduce and test more effective methods of work, such as facilitation of Group Leadership or approaches provoking students to work collaboratively in groups or teams (Kinovičová, Sedlmajerová in literary subjects). One of the most inspiring student projects - the *Modern Man* film project - has been carried out in classes of Practical English under the supervision of the American lecturer Anthony Laue. The success of this film project has triggered a series of subsequent project activities and inspired both teachers and students to launch a new film project, this time more complex, a project reaching beyond everyday duties of English learners.

IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY IN THE PROCESS

At the end of the *Modern Man* project the creators of the film – students - realised that creativity, so much demanded at our schools, should be given more attention and support by our universities. The university preparing language teachers has the responsibility to include creativity into the system of intellectual operations. It should provide students with a greater number of opportunities and situations that contribute to the development of professional creativity in future teachers, i.e. creativity that may have a lot of forms – from technical through managerial to social creativity (Smékal: 1995, No. 6). The university has a duty to identify and foster those features of teacher's personality associated with creative behaviour, as defined by Rogers (1969), and take care of this personality potential of each individual. Szobiova (1999) distinguished eight different groups of definitions of creativity. The last group included definitions that see basic elements of creativity in a highly flexible process of analysis and synthesis, structuring and combinations focused on a new solution resulting in a new and surprising product that has a value even for other people. While social psychology understands creativity as behaviour, the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e. original, unexpected, and divergent) and appropriate (i.e. useful, meets task constraints) (Guilford, 1967; Lubart, 1994; Ochse, 1990), in methodology of teaching English, apart from focusing on the creative process that results in a creative product, we focus rather on the process of the creative person that fully participates in the process with all his/her qualities, psychological and cognitive processes, even the processes that reach beyond the intellect of the creative person (Lokšova; 2003, 22). The pedagogical idea behind this project was to introduce a real and complex task, highly motivating and offering new ways of creativity and problem solving in this type of study. The complexity of the task required integration of creative methodology (film and video) and teams of students with their abilities of becoming flexible in bringing ideas and opinions, original in creating new solutions, looking for various approaches to problems; teams of students sensitive to seeing problems and shortcomings and foreseeing the development in the given area of the task. At the same time students expected to enter into new social relationships in which their efforts will be multiplied. In addition to that, the filming itself enables them to develop a highly creative and motivating climate. Apart from a strict schedule and rigorous plan, the project offered students a lot of freedom to work independently.

From the very beginning, the project attracted students' attention by its novelty, provocative content, by offering independent forms of work, creative work on individual segments of the film. This kind of work required a really experienced lecturer-supervisor of the project and a person equipped with emotional intelligence, a socially skilful supervisor, able to keep the whole project in his/her hands, but also able to improvise, assist students sensitively and stimulate them continuously while the project work is still in progress.

METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE FACILITATION OF PROJECT/TEAM WORK

It is well-known that by facilitating groups of people working together to achieve a common goal it is possible to create highly efficient teams. The goal – in this case the film - brings the group together and holds it together throughout the whole process based on problem tasks. Each member of the group should be able to communicate freely and openly with all of the other members of the group. Groups develop norms about discussion and group members accordingly assume roles which will affect the group's interaction. These ideas, commonly used now all over the world, are based on the theory of a well-known American Kurt Lewin (1948), whose name is also associated with the theoretical work on group dynamics and action research. In most cases, whenever we talk about group work, the task/project is split into several parts corresponding with or appropriate to each participating individual. Each member of the team has a duty to share the responsibility for completing a task or for solving a problem. For that reason the cooperation of all members of the team is essential to the final or overall success of the group. Leadership/managerial skills which are developed by the students include the ability to fulfil different group roles. Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) refer to the following common classroom roles: Initiator/Contributor, Information Seeker/Giver, Collaborator/Clarifier, Coordinator, Evaluator/Critic, Energiser and Secretary/Recorder in order to keep the group process smooth and maximise students' potential. Some other authors speak about Leaders, Encouragers, Reporters/Recorders, Checkers or Time-keepers, but the list may considerably differ from these two samples in compliance with the complexity of the project or the number of group/team members.

The coordinating teacher and the author of the film script, Mr. Anthony Laue, who became a real facilitator of the whole process, had to distribute a lot of roles among students. Students accepted them according to their talents, abilities, interests and desires to take part in this real/authentic project.

AUSSIG – MAKING A FILM AS A STUDENT PROJECT

Structure of the Project

The project was broken down into three parts, pre-production, production, and post-production. Individual students were given roles within groups and instructions on what to do. Students were free to work creatively and independently of the teacher but they were at the same time responsible to their group and to the project as a whole.

- **Pre-Production:** In this phase everything is prepared for making a feature length film. This starts with script acquaintance. Everyone interested in working on the project was required to read the script, then comment on it and discuss it in detail with the instructor of the project. At this point students were placed into teams or groups according to their interest in filmmaking and in the script in particular. For example, a student whose interest lay in the technical part of filmmaking was placed on the Camera/Sound team, a student interested in working with costumes and props was placed on the Art Direction team, etc. As many as eight or nine teams were operating at any given moment throughout the project.
- **Production:** In this phase the filming starts. The specific groups all come together and bring their various responsibilities to the project as a whole to pull off a specific day of shooting. The pages from the script that will be shot on any given day have to be distributed to all of the teams well in advance and they must fulfil their responsibilities for that day. The Locations Team has to find and secure the locations. The Art Direction has to bring the props and costumes. The Casting Team has to find and contact all the actors. The Camera/Sound Team must have their equipment ready and in the right location. The Production Team must oversee everything and provide the finances necessary that day to cover all shooting costs. Good communication is required among the various groups for a successful day of shooting.
- **Post Production:** This phase covers everything after the last day of shooting, including editing, sound, music, marketing, web design and film distribution. The Production Team remains particularly active during this phase. Other, new groups are formed during this phase such as a Music Team that composes the musical score for the film. A Web Team is also put into place to design and maintain a web page that supports the film. www.aussig-film.cz

Project Description

The *Aussig* film project has been put together with the support of the English Department of the College of Education of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and other contributors from the Usti nad Labem Region and the whole region of Northern Bohemia. It is also supported by the Mayor of the City and the Usti nad Labem City Council.

Aussig is an independent, feature-length film that is completely shot in the city of Usti nad Labem and its environs. The makers of the film believe that the Northern Bohemia area has been far too often overlooked and at times unfairly judged as a cultural backwater. The making of this film is a response to that misconception.

Much of the crew is composed of students from the UJEP English Department, who receive course credits for their active and effective participation in and contribution to the project. They work with and are guided by lecturers from the English department at UJEP who are experienced in making films. Other professionals from outside the University advise and work on the project to assure that the film maintains a professional quality.

Shooting of the film began in October 2006. The last shooting day is scheduled for the end of May 2007. During the summer period work such as sound, music and editing will be completed and the film premiere is planned for autumn 2007. Prior to the premiere, students would also like to organize several screenings at different universities around the Czech Republic and also in Germany in order to present the work of our students and other contributors.

The Film Synopsis

Aussig is a black comedy set in Usti nad Labem. The story revolves around the relationship between two new lecturers at a local un-named university. One lecturer, Nik Malinsky is Russian. The other, John Gimple is American.

Tension starts when these two are forced to live together in one small dorm room. These two persons could not be more unlike. The American is overly clean, neat and organized. The Russian is not. The two quickly develop a dislike for each other. They conflict on everything: from should ketchup be put on pizza to what is the proper way to treat a woman. The American believes his way of life has triumphed over the Russian's and that the Russian should listen and learn from him. The Russian believes the American is a typical naïve American, who has little understanding of other cultures. It is as if another Cold War had broken out with the battleground being their tiny dorm room.

Reasons for Students' Participation in the Film Project

Apart from the effort to transfer a good idea into the form of a film script and shooting a film, which is obviously the main goal, there are numerous practical and didactic sub-goals. The project work of this more complex character, as students later started to learn, brought new experiences and a wave of motivation that, together with a lot of practical activities, taught us completely new skills ranging from more or less practical ones to cognitive, social and other ones.

One of the most positive reasons for students' involvement in the project was to learn to work independently, only under gentle facilitation by the supervisor.

We were given a task and we had to find proper ways of approaching the task and carrying it out. Our tutor/facilitator was interested predominantly in the quality of the final product. Thus, we were given a lot of freedom to find our way to solve small tasks and this viewpoint considerably enhanced the creativity of the participating students. We were "forced" to make our own decisions, to meet regularly to prepare and check our plans and defend our decisions.

It even brought some difficulties, which had to be solved. This creates the real life situations in which we are supposed to use English. Thus, we can improve our communicative skills outside the classroom setting.

Another, no less important goal is admittedly to learn special terminology or vocabulary connected to film production and to learn about the processes involved.

As we have said, the project helps us to improve our communicative skills as we have to discuss all of our ideas with other students and tutors. Therefore the group work is important. It reinforces our skills to work and communicate in teams and to be able to put those ideas into practice.

We have been able to appreciate that the environment we are in is not artificial and we can feel that our skills are needed and we can cooperatively create a product. Within the project, there are lots of different opportunities to use our talents and creative skills of various kinds.

Student Participation and Roles in the Film Project

Students do play an important role in the project, which is carried out as an optional course closely associated with seminars of practical English and intended for all students of English. From the very beginning, the pre-production phase, students (from newcomers to Year 1 to Year 3) were invited to participate in the project and accept various posts/roles, including the most important ones. What unified students' work on the project was obviously the English language and the responsibility for completing the task assigned.

Each individual student has his or her own role in making the film and is responsible for maintaining that role. We have to complete the task successfully and creatively. Creativity is the key word. The project uses our various talents, ideas, skills and abilities. The way we carry out the task is basically up to us – in some respects – we are given *a free hand*.

What Has Been Done So Far

Now it is necessary to focus on the students' work in a greater detail. All students' work on the project had to ensure the production and successful run of the shoot, which included a lot of activities and processes, e.g. being in charge of props, costumes, script supervision, slate, sound equipment, etc. Those students, who showed another kind of talent, were chosen to act in the film both as extra actors and characters. A special team of students was responsible for the production of advertising materials, such as leaflets, posters, and other printed material. Technically skilled students have been working on the website presentation of the film, which is also an important part of the marketing.

CONCLUSION

The new requirements for pedagogical creativity need not only use situations where teachers and students choose to create their own videos or simply show videos in class as a means to stimulate discussion or bring distant and difficult concepts to the lives of students. Film and video technology is undeniably a powerful medium, which can become, if properly and skilfully handled by an experienced facilitator, a tool for integrating technology into the curriculum with the aim of creating new forms of learning. Students' experience new forms of work (including authentic or experiential learning) that provoke them to construct knowledge or acquire new skills and use instructional strategies that promote their learning of English and enhance their self-autonomy, critical thinking and, in particular, creativity.

This complex project enabled educators to integrate some other kinds of technology into teacher education (cameras and sound technology, computer technology), to motivate students to use film as new medium and new methods of work effectively, and at the same time exploit students' critical ideas for a new form of learning English. These skills may later be efficiently used in the course of students' own teaching practice.

So far the following conclusions can be made. The *Aussig* film project has enabled students

- to improve collaborative skills in working in groups and larger teams;
- to improve technical skills by working with new forms of modern technology;
- to gather information (knowledge) from a great number of people participating in the project;
- to collect new experience from authentic and highly motivating activities and their outcomes;
- to increase or strengthen students' motivation;
- to understand film language and to attempt to meet the requirements of a target audience;
- to challenge future teachers in using films, videos and other multimedia technology in teaching and learning English;
- to become a skilled role-player capable of changing roles and entering into new relationships;
- to influence students emotionally;

- to enhance/foster their critical and creative thinking processes;
- In general, to become more active and start participating in critical discussions, asking questions belonging to the higher-level thinking skills, as well as to become more skilful in solving complex problems.

The process of the carrying out of the project itself will enable all participating students to reflect on their work and its results and finally (in Autumn 2007) evaluate the whole project.

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Modality in Novice Academic Writing: The Case of African and German University Students

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This contribution analyses the use of modals in the essays written by African university students (in Cameroon, East-Africa: Kenya/Tanzania) and their German counterparts (in Chemnitz). Data is derived from the student essay components of the corpus of Cameroonian and East-African English, compiled a decade ago; and a small number of essays written by university students in Chemnitz in 2007. Findings tend to suggest that students in both contexts have varying levels of competence in the use of modality, with the German students showing a greater flexibility in such usages than their African counterparts. In the later part of the study, I discuss the role of modality in academic writing and suggest ways through which students' awareness of modality could be raised.

INTRODUCTION

Modality is 'the area of meaning that lies between yes and no, taking in either yes or no and both yes and no' (Halliday 1994:356). In its broadest sense, it is the speakers' /writers' view of the potential involved in the predication. According to Lyons (1971:322), modality is regarded as 'having to do with possibility or probability, necessity or contingency, rather than merely with truth or falsity'. In other words, modality is essentially involved in the expression of tentativeness and degrees of likelihood that a proposition is "true" or "false". These are important rhetorical options/functions in academic discourse, where statements are rarely made without subjective assessment of the truth of their propositions. My experience (from an African university) shows that students (of English departments) are rarely familiar with this requirement. Yet, academic writing remains their only gateway to the academic community beyond undergraduate level; at least for those who desire to pursue research careers. Since technical writing itself is a skill that writers acquire on the job, no one obviously believes that undergraduate university ('novice') students would manifest full expertise in it immediately they enrol into university. However, it is not unrealistic either to assume that certain levels of competence in this respect should already be within their reach, two or three years later in their university studies. But taking into account the different conditions under which English is studied in Africa and Germany, it is my suspicion that students in both contexts may differ in their rhetorical skills, precisely the expression of modality, in essay writing.

AIM AND METHOD

The aim of this study is twofold: Firstly, to find out the extent to which African and German undergraduate university students use central modals (*will*, *can*, *may*, *shall*, *would*, *could*, *should*, *might*, *must*) and modal adjuncts (*certainly*, possibly, *probably*, *perhaps*, *maybe*) in their essays. Secondly, to assess the degree to which these students may differ or converge in their use of these modals in texts. At the former level a quantitative profile of the modals is established. Since modals cover a wide semantic range and modality in texts may come from many sources, including the writer, the final objective is to determine which functions the modals serve in the students' essays. For example, where uncertainty or tentativeness is expressed, it is important to distinguish whether the uncertainty is borne by the writer alone, or whether it is seen to be a shared uncertainty; where potential outcome is discussed is it the outcome of speculation or is it a statement of "facts". It is expected that gaining an insight into differences and similarities would provide some useful ideas on how to prepare and teach students the conventions of academic writing.

DATA

Data for this study is taken from three sources: (1) the corpus of Cameroonian English (CCE) which is composed of over 820,000 words of Cameroonian written English texts from 1990 to 1994; (2) the East-African (EA) (Kenya and Tanzania) corpus, which is part of the International Corpus of English (ICE) project (ICE-EA), composed of 803,575 words of written English texts from Kenya and Tanzania written between 1990 and 1996 and (3) a Chemnitz corpus of students' essays (CCSE) which I compiled in February 2007, and composed of 14, 293 words. Although the CCE and ICE-EA are a decade older than the CCSE, one may still consider them as representative of today's students' performance in Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AFRICAN ENGLISH AND EURO-ENGLISH

I proceed with the working assumption that the way Cameroonians, Kenyans and Tanzanians university students write in English is a reflection of the way English is used in Africa ("African English"?). Similarly, German students' written English would also be a reflection of the way English is used in Europe ("Euro-English"?). On the basis of these suppositions, this section highlights some aspects of the distinction between African English and Euro-English, as a justifiable basis of this study.

According to Modiano (2006:223), 'there is a focus on the manner in which English is used in mainland Europe as a lingua franca among non-native speakers, giving rise to the concept of "Euro-English". Although the label

"African English" is very familiar and has been the subject of scholarship for so long (Görlach 1991; Schmied 1991, 2006), "Euro-English" seems not to be so popular. Yet there are a number of reasons on the basis of which a distinction could be made between English as it is taught, studied and used in Africa and the practice in (Germany) Europe. First of all, English in Africa has largely been "acculturalized", "localized" and "nativized" (see Schneider 1997; Kachru 1992; Platt, Webber and Ho 1984) and communicative competence (written and oral) is so often compromised especially in formal written English. Decades of English education in Africa does not seem to have solved this problem in any significant way, and students' academic writing performance has in my view remained largely undervalued in most African universities (see Nkemleke 2004, 2006 for Cameroon, for example). Secondly, African university English departments are generally understaffed and the large number of students' enrolment is usually not conducive to any serious training in English, let alone academic writing. African institutions of higher education also face financial and infrastructural problems and this means that these institutions are under-funded and lack adequate Internet facilities on campuses, for example, which elsewhere are a useful medium for self-access learning, exposing students to samples of academic writing online. These problems militate against attempts to teach effective written English in most African universities. To a large extent, therefore, writing activities in some of these institutions of higher education are often reduced to a series of home-take assignments and term papers, and teachers' feedback is often lacking.

Euro-English is different. Firstly, the practice of ELT here is dependent of the British rendition of the English language because some of the educational materials used in mainland Europe are imported from England. Secondly, due to its proximity to Britain, most German students, for example, are more likely to have had some contacts with native speakers than it is the case in Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania. In addition, for many of these students it is also very likely that they have been taught English by a native speaker. Furthermore, the British Council operates language-learning services in Europe within the framework of Standard British English and according to Modiano (2006), ELT practices in Europe is strongly influenced by the way British scholars conceptualise it.

There is, therefore, evidence to assume that although today both Africa (Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania) and Germany (Chemnitz) are lingua franca contexts, the degree of English language competence (esp. novice writers) are not necessarily the same. This assumption enables us to conceptualise a comparison on two levels: (1) native English is compared with non-native English (a customary practice) and (2) one non-native English variety is compared with another one. This gives rise to the model in Figure 1 below, where two varieties of non-native English ("African English" and "Euro-English") are on the horizontal level and native English is on the vertical scale.

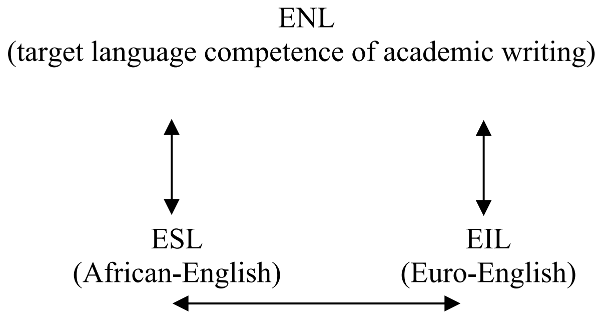

Figure 1: A comparison model

Of course, this comparison model is not mainstream practice. A common practice of corpus research (esp. on learner vs. academic language) has been a comparison to a norm: the language of non-native speakers in general is compared to that of native speakers, whose collective use as represented in a corpus is taken as the norm, or at least the target of learning (see Granger 1997, 1988; Virtanen 1996). Similarly, the language practices of native speakers postgraduate and research students, who can be seen as academic trainees, are compared to that of established writers as represented in the discourse of published papers (e.g. Thompson 2002). Another approach has been to compare academic articles irrespective of whether they are written by native or non-native speakers (see Lucas et al. 2003). These approaches are essentially a comparison between 'students'/'novice' and expert in terms of language use or academic writing by 'experts' in various disciplines.

This present study is a comparison of 'students'/'novice' vs. 'students'/'novice' in two ESL contexts, which have different experiences of language education: One with a presumably significant level of exposure to native speakers and native English norms through Internet self-access learning, and the other with little or no such contacts with native speakers and access to Internet.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Epistemic and root modality

An appropriate model of modal meaning must synthesize six orientations: mono-semantic, poly-semantic, categorical, non-categorical, logical, and pragmatic. The two central notions in modal logic are 'possibility' and 'necessity', and a distinction between two kinds of kinds of 'possibility' and 'necessity' known as 'epistemic' and 'root' is necessary. Of the two kinds of modality, however, only epistemic modality is generally distinct, both syntactically and semantically. It is for this reason that scholars (including Sweetser 1982, Coates 1983) have simply made a two-fold distinction of epistemic and non-epistemic (root) modality.

The epistemic/root distinction is interpreted as follows: Epistemic modality imputes a state of belief to the speaker/writer regarding the truth of some proposition x, in such a way that a statement of epistemic 'necessity', for example, takes the form: 'circumstances constrain the speaker to believe that "x"….' In the case of root modality, x refers not to a proposition, but to a phenomenon (an event, state, or set of events), the occurrence of which is influenced by some other phenomena. Therefore, the form of a statement of root 'necessity' can be generalised as follows: 'circumstances constrain the occurrence of x.' Paraphrase criteria according to Coates and Leech (1980:25), supported by other criteria, distinguish epistemic and root meaning as follows:

a) Epistemic meaning
   i) 'x may y'= 'it is possible that x [will] y' = 'perhaps x [will] y'.
   ii) 'x must y' = 'x must necessarily y' = 'it must be that y'.
b) Root meaning
   i) 'x can y' = 'x may y' = 'it is possible for x to y'.
   ii) 'x must y' = 'it is necessary for x to y'.

These paraphrases are subject to various restrictions and reservations, but illustrate the categorical nature of the epistemic/root distinction. The fact that the items possible and necessary occur in both the epistemic and the root paraphrases also provide a basis for using the semantic labels 'possibility' and 'necessity' in both categories.

The contrast between 'permission'/ 'obligation' and 'possibility'/ 'necessity' is often assumed to be categorical, but it is sometimes more accurate to describe it in terms of a cline of restriction (cf. Coates and Leech 1980). At one end of the scale the nature of the determining or constraining circumstances is unrestricted, while at the other end they belong to a restricted world of man-made freedoms and obligations. It is within this perspective of a cline that a paraphrase such as 'x is permitted to y' becomes more appropriate than 'it is possible for x to y'. The postulation of such a cline would not be necessary but for the existence of intermediate 'unclear cases', for which neither type of paraphrase is adequate. Coates and Leech (1980:25) use the following example for illustration: 'it's too damn busy in here. We can't expect him to leave his customers', and comment that neither 'it is impossible for us to expect…' nor 'we are not permitted to expect…' would capture the sense of can't here. The use of can is not unrestricted in that the event referred to, is clearly possible, in an absolute sense, but is forbidden by a man-made code of 'reasonable behaviour'. However, it is not fully restricted, in that the prohibition cannot be attributed to a particular human agent or agency, as it can in clear cases of 'permission'.

Modality and speech role

In functional linguistic tradition one of the main purposes of communication is to interact with other people. In this interaction process one is either giving (and taking) or demanding (and being given) a commodity of some kind. Here, language has a constitutive function; that is, it does all or most of the work in the exchange (Thompson 1996). If the commodity exchanged is information, the modality relates to how valid the information is being presented as in terms of probability (how likely is it to be true) or usuality (how frequently is it true). Some of the basic points on the probability scale are possible/probable/certain; on the usuality scale sometimes/often/always. If however, the commodity exchanged is goods-and-services (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) language has a more ancillary function: that is, it helps the success of the exchange. The modality in this case relates to how confident the speaker can be that the exchange is successful, i.e. to what extent commands are followed or offers are accepted).

Halliday (1994) uses the terms “modalization” and “modulation” to distinguish the two situations respectively. By modalising a proposition, speakers/writers signal to their hearers/readers how reliable the given information is; the speaker’s/writer’s role they construe is that of a “provider and evaluator of information”. The modulation of proposals establishes different degrees of obligation of the listener to do something or different degrees of inclinations of the speaker to perform a certain action. As the focus of this study is on writing in an academic context, I will be dealing with the first type of exchange as enunciated above (i.e. exchange of information).

Modality concepts and academic discourse

Modals usually express a wide range of meanings in English. An impressionistic idea of this range of (typical) meanings from a corpus (cf. Coates 1983) is as follows. *Will*: Volition, Prediction, *Can*: Ability, Root Possibility, Permission, *Shall*: Strong Obligation, Volition, Prediction, Determination, *May*: Root Possibility, Epistemic Possibility, Permission, *Would*: Prediction, Hypothesis, Volition, *Could*: Root Possibility, Epistemic Possibility, Ability, Hypothesis, *Should*: Weak Obligation, Tentative Inference, Hypothesis, Necessity, *Might*: Root Possibility, Epistemic Possibility, Permission, Hypothesis, and *Must*: Strong Obligation, Confident Inference.

Some of these modal concepts are particularly useful in academic English. For example, the concepts of Hypothesis and Tentativeness are frequently associated with hedging (Hyland 1995, 1998), which is considered central to successful academic writing. Further, the system of modality offers language users the possibility to express various degrees of indeterminacy between the two poles of total positiveness and total negativeness of statements (Halliday 1994). They can also be used to predict further course of action, thereby involving the reader in the exchange as well as indicating what is possible or necessary given the circumstances.

FINDINGS

Quantitative results

Table 1 presents the gross frequencies of the central modals and modal adjuncts that were found in the students' essays examined. To compensate for the unevenness in the number of essays and words in the CCSEs (as compared to CCE and ICE-EA), and to establish a favourable basis for comparison, the actual totals of the CCSEs have been normalised (i.e. multiplied by 9) throughout.

Modals	CCE	ICE-EA	CCSEs (actual)	CCSEs (extrapolated)
will	282	242	42	378
can	443	399	40	360
may	105	241	10	90
shall	34	17	1	9
would	302	162	33	297
could	127	99	20	180
might	20	36	13	117
should	143	257	32	288
must	55	160	4	36
certainly	3	1	2	18
possibly	-	7	2	18
probably	8	14	7	63
perhaps	5	9	2	18
maybe	-	-	5	45
No. of modals in corpus	1,527	1,644	213	1,917
No. of words in corpus	137,399	103,301	14,293	128,637

Table1: Gross frequencies of modals and modal adjuncts in the CCE, ICE-EA and CCSEs

On the basis of the figures in the table above, we may hypothesize that the German students use more modals and modal adjuncts than their Cameroonian and East-African counterparts. Apart from *would* where the CCE has the highest figure, the figures for the three hypothetical modals (*should, might, could*) are consistently higher in the CCSEs, signalling a greater tendency to express hypothetical meanings or hedging in the German students' texts. Further, the German students' use of modal adjuncts far exceeds those of the Cameroonian and East-African students. All the five modal adjuncts (*certainly, possibly, probably, perhaps, maybe*) occur in the CCSEs with a total frequency of 162. The corresponding figure in the CCE and ICE-EA is 16 and 31 respectively. *Probably* does not occur at all in the CCE and *maybe* does not occur in both the CCE and ICE-EA.

These statistics reveal a general trend in the use of modality in the three databases, where African students appear to be at a deficit. However, these general tendencies need to be closely monitored within the texts to uncover how the students use modals to express various rhetorical choices associated with academic discourse. A preliminary step towards this type of qualitative analysis is to examine the average occurrence of each modal per 1,000 words in the three sources. Table 2 below, therefore, shows these occurrences (modal adjuncts are excluded).

	will	can	may	shall	must	would	could	might	should	total
CCE	2.05	3.22	0.76	0.25	0.40	2.20		0.15	1.04	10.99
ICE-EA	2.34	3.86	2.33	0.16	1.55	1.57	0.96	0.35	2.49	15.61
CCSEs	2.94	2.80	0.70	0.07	0.28	2.31	1.40	0.91	2.24	13.65

Table 2: Occurrence of the modals per 1,000 words in the CCE, ICE-EA and CCSEs

The figures further confirm our initial presupposition that tentative modals (*would, could, might, should*) are more frequently used in the CCSEs than their corresponding "present tense" (Palmer 1979) forms (*will, can, may, shall*). The total figures are 6.86 vs. 6.51 respectively. In both the CCE and ICE-EA, there are rather more "present tense" forms than the "past tense" forms. The total figures are 6.28 vs. 4.31 respectively for Cameroon and 8.69 vs. 5.37 respectively for East-Africa. Furthermore, must, which has a high probability of being used to make the strongest of all possible judgements in its epistemic sense; and in its root (or deontic) sense to lay an obligation (cf. Hoye 1997), seems to be very frequent in the CCE and ICE-EA than in the CCSEs. This may well suggest an inclination for a high frequency of strong claims in the essays written by most African students, whereas the German students may tend to be more hesitant in their observations and claims.

Qualitative results

To assess how students use modals to negotiate meaning in writing, a quantitative analysis needs to be complemented by a qualitative discussion. The discussion in this section is focused on a sample (25 % randomly selected corpus citations) of the central modals from the CCE and ICE-EA, only. The CCSEs figures represent actual (not extrapolated) figures (see Table 1 above).

	will	can	may	must	shall	would	should	could	might
CCE	71	111	26	14	9	76	36	32	5
ICE-EA	61	100	60	40	4	41	64	25	9
CCSEs	42	40	10	4	1	33	32	20	13

Table 3: Sample of the modals in the CCE, ICE-EA and CCSEs

Will

One important rhetorical task in academic writing is to make predications about what is to come or what is anticipated. The modal *will* expresses this meaning in the essays, though there are some differences in the manner in which it is used by African and German students. The following examples are used for illustration.

> [1] Hurt and wound the feelings of the dull student. In as much as this is cruel to the dull student, it will be quite pleasing to those who are around. Sarcasm therefore exists in both language and literature (CCE/SE05.txt)

> [2] … use of an allegory, he is using literature in a graceful manner to tell us that our life on earth will determine our entry in to heaven. Of course an allegory also pleases because it has comic situations (CCE/SE05.txt)

> [3] …only, sarcasm, and the pun, allegory, malapropism, and even fables or folktales. Our aim therefore will be to show how these various facets of beauty in language and literature moralises and pleases. Some (CCE/SE04.txt)

> [4] … in adopting <-/unnecessary> psychological defence mechanism. <#/>2) In a rigid community the people will always look down on these exceptional ones because they don't want change or as a curse to the comm. (ICE-EA.txt/W1A012K)[2]

> [5] …the classroom climate. <#/>The teachers should personalize the instructions. <#/> This is where he will relate to a learner as an individual and should help them in individual problems. <#/>The teacher s... (ICE-EA.txt/W1A013K)

> [6] … for the spread of Kiswahili Language in East Africa. <#/> However, the main focus of the project will be centred <-_at><+_on> the factors which have made Kiswahili to be established as a National language... (ICE-EA.txt/W1A002T)

> [7] … moving world. Life, especially for young people is exciting and frightening at the same time. I will hopefully graduate from University this summer with a degree in Intercultural Communication and English. (CCSEs01.txt)

> [8] Assumption that Mary, indeed, was the Grail. If we examine the descriptions of women in the Bible, we will hardly find evidence for this hypothesis. Women were usually portrayed inferior to men. For example (CCSEs08.txt)

> [9] …make our academic degrees competitive to other countries. Having BA and MA degrees in the near future will definitely be an advantage for students who apply for jobs nationwide and they will also have excel (CCSEs01.txt)

> [10] …and private companies depend on us, because we are the customers. If they do not do a good job, we will not buy what they have to sell and they will lose their jobs. We would lose lots of interesting commercials, by the way (CCSEs02.txt)

There seems to be a greater attempt by the German students (exp. 7-10) to engage the reader in their discussion and to mitigate and/or reinforce claims (presumably on the basis of evidence/context) than it is the case with the Cameroonian (exp. 1-3) and East-African (exp. 4-6) students. While will in examples [1] - [6] predicts certain outcomes, in [7] - [8], the truth potential of these outcomes are mitigated by the epistemic adverbs "hopefully" and "hardly". In example [9] the writer's confidence is stronger and so s/he reinforces epistemic will with the 'harmonic' (Lyons 1977) form "definitely". The use of the inclusive pronoun "we" in example [10] signals the rhetorical purpose that the writer is not alone in having a particular point of view. The intention seems to be to sway the reader, who is generally seen as a potential negator of claims (cf. Hyland 2005) to subscribe to the proposition being made. There are no examples with either adverbs or the inclusive pronoun *we* in the Cameroonian and East-African samples.

Can

Since we are dealing with essay writing, where students were expected to argue out their points and draw certain conclusions, many examples of can in my data are used to state possibilities and possible conclusions. Here again, as in the previous section, there are noticeable differences between German and African students. For example, can is used in many conventionalised expressions such as "it can be said that...", "we can put forward the argument that..." by German students. The Cameroonian and East-African students on the other hand used more unconventionalized statements of possibility. We can illustrate this with the following examples (expresses ions underlined).

> [11] … international degrees would mean even more for them. To sum up the results of the discussion, it can be said that the MA's and BA's are a necessary step to take in the German Education System. (CCSEs03.txt)

> [12] …have enough money, nevertheless they wants to fulfil the wishes of their children. Consequently, it can be said that such persons are slaves to public fashion. Fourth, the acceptance of people in society (CCSEs06.txt)

> [13] … to help them. Otherwise the country would discredit human rights, the basis of democracy. As one can see, there is much space for reasonable compromises. Immigrants are not low class citizens just bec (CCSEs09.txt)

> [14] …veiled and coded which readers understand with a certain degree of difficulties. An audience can only benefit from the probable improvisation of producers and actors who make meaning easier. Word (CCE/SE01.txt)

> [15] …and makes the poems enjoyable. From the foregone analysis, it is seen that language and literature can be used gracefully and to moralize through satire, euphemism, allegory, proverbs, and the use of … (CCE/SE06.txt)

[16] …the number of student who have been infected by Aids virus. <#/> For special children a speed test can be given to see the highly talented learners who can take short-hand in the least time possible. <# (ICE-EA.txt/W1A012K)

[17] … of stealing the motorcycle. <X></X></I>W1A004T <I> <h> <#/> INTRODUCTION </h> <#/>The quotation can be summarised as "the display of gods in a shop with a marked price upon them implies the right of (ICE-EA.txt/W1A003T)

In the first three German examples above can is used as some kind of directive, a presupposition that the writer has already built a convincing line of argument before and the conclusion is now seen as a logical one. The rest of the examples are straightforward possibility cases. I further examine the three databases to find out the number of citations in which can and inclusive "we" co-occur. As expected, the highest number of cases were in the CCSEs (i.e. 7), followed by 3 in the CCE and 2 in ICE-EA. However, a cross comparison of the three databases reveals subtle differences as the examples below illustrate.

[18] … bombarding us with their commercials? On the one hand I agree, but on the other hand I think we can handle it if we care. Advertising, public fashion and people as Lagerfeld, Dolce and Gabbana and … (CCSEs02.txt)

[19] …with no regard to possible moral limitations since these are much more blurred, I dare to say. So how can we detect the invisible moral borders as religiously, culturally and morally sequented as Europe. (CCSEs10.txt)

[20] … reach their target, for they go deep in to the minds of the readers and do the work expected. We can even say that they do more than moralizing as the images and expressions we find in the book of the... (CCE/SE07.txt)

[21] …sation is that of mankind, and that animals who do not normally know how to live in a community, we can only laugh when we read the book. The pig which is normal considered to be the vilest of animals… (CCE/SE07.txt)

[22] …he special children. <#/> We are able to know what social, political, spiritual and moral advice we can give to the children and their families We are also able to know the <-/disabilities> our learners... (ICE-EA.txt/W1A014K)

[23] …which usually are the main distinctive features of any news paper reporting. <#/>In other words, we can say paragraphing is the lay-out on how the whole text is broken into small para of small lines and ... (ICE-EA.txt/W1A001T)

Dialogic and interactive discourse, common in academic texts (Hyland 2005) is evident in the first two examples, attributed to German students. The interplay of the singular and plural first person pronouns ("I"/"we") in [18] is clearly intended to show the interactional nature of the discourse. In addition, the interpersonal meaning of example [19] relates to the fact that there is an interrogative clause (a question). That is, it explicitly signals the writer's negotiation with the reader in ways that examples from the CCE and ICE-EA do not.

May

May (epistemic) expresses lack of confidence in the truth of propositions and this function is well represented in the texts analyzed. However, the Cameroonian and German students display some degrees of expertise in its use than the Kenyan and Tanzanian students. Assuming that epistemic may in a simple declarative/ compound sentence is a mainstream use; one can judge the degree of "sophistication" on the availability of other sentence types (e.g. subordinated sentences). Compare the following examples.

> [24] However alien it may appear to readers whose world view emphasises individualisation and freedom of choice, understanding the significance of respect for seniority and obedience to elders and superiors is one of the keys to decoding West African behaviour (CCE/SE11.txt)

> [25] Even though Cameroon may still have a long way to go to produce an equivalent of Mishima – the great Japanese writer, who, in an extra-ordinary gesture of patriotism, took away his own life in a ritual suicide, in the wake of the Bakassi incident (CCE/SE09.txt)

> [26] …also consider a wider perspective. As the world is growing together faster and faster every day, one may speak of a multi-cultural society worldwide. The Muhammad cartoons conflict showed that an incident (CCSEs20.txt)

> [27] …lti-religious society demands that differences are not only accepted but also respected. While this may be relatively easily done on a low level, e.g. in school, it is necessary to also consider a wider ... (CCSEs20.txt)

> [28]. <#/> The intra variations are mostly hereditary unlike intravariations which may be <-/environmentary> acquired through interactions. <#/>Education strategy to foster the desirable... (ICE-EA.txt/W1A012K)

> [29] …writer will employ the use of Metalinguistic features to deliver his message home. <#/>The writer may also bring in the idea of using photographs in his works, lets say a story book for emphasis and th (ICE-EA.txt/W1A015K)

A number of instances of epistemic may in the CCE and CCSEs occur in complex sentences as in [24]–[27] above and all the ICE-EA examples in my sample occur in compound sentences as in [28]-[29]. Both types of sentences exemplify logical structures in language, which are hypotactic and paratactic relations respectively (Thompson 1996:196ff, cf. Halliday 1994; Quirk et al. 1985:987). However, from the perspective of academic writing, the former may be considered more successful because epistemic may in these instances seeks to "guide" the reader through the text: In [24], [25] and [27], it announces what is to come and in [26] it serves a retrospective device, commenting on a previous idea ("As the world is growing together faster and faster every day"). Furthermore, by using the impersonal "one" in [26] the writer is 'pseudo-backgrounded' (Gruber 2005:53), seeking to 'manipulate the knowledge structure' (Fandrych and Graefen 2002) of the reader. Fraser (1975) has observed that epistemic may is characterised among other things by its use as a 'hedge': that is, the writer/speaker avoids committing himself to the truth of the proposition. It could be concluded that the concessive use of epistemic may in examples [24] and [27] even mitigate the prepositions further. This is no doubt a good quality of writing in the university/academic context.

Must

The modal must does not seem to be popular in academic writing, due to its imposing character as a modal and the requirement to avoid making strong judgements in such writing. The examples that occur in the data we analyzed are used to lay an obligation or state a necessity (root) as in the following examples. (Epistemic must ('logical/confident' inference) did not occur in the sample):

> [30] …censorship goes a long way to destroy artistic craftsmanship; in succinct terms it is a monstrous destructor which must not only be condemned but must be banned...(CCE/SE08.txt)

> [31] …apply all the control techniques. <#/>4.2. <#/>In order for the teacher to maintain his Activity he must be: The teacher must maintain dignity in front of the class. <#/> He should conduct himself in a wa.... (ICE-EA.txt/W1A013K)

> [32] ...sometimes it happens without the recognition of their parents. No one can be blamed for that. On the other hand, there are many societal demands that must be learned and kept by the young people as well. Sometimes the development of a person and those societal demands collide. Mostly, there are only... (CCSEs14.txt)

Based on surrounding words in the CCE example above, a strong 'obligation' sense, which can be paraphrased by 'it is imperative/ obligatory', seems more appropriate. However, the paraphrase 'it is important' may equally be valid in this example and to the other two as well. Whether must is paraphrased as 'it is imperative/ obligatory' (in its typical strong obligation interpretation) or 'it is important' (in its weak obligation sense), there is an underlying sense of "obligation" to it. This is probably one of the reasons why it is less frequent, especially, in the German students' texts. *Must* ('obligatory'/ 'necessity') occurs thrice as many times in the East-African students' essays, compared to Cameroon. It is rarely used in the German students' essays.

Shall

Many Cameroonian students, and to a certain extent those from East-Africa use shall to signal intentions and to make predictions in their essays as in:

> [33] ...stylistic documentation of human experience and realities of life. For the purpose of this paper, I shall delimit the scope of language and literature to that which should be introduced at primart and second (CCE/SE10.txt)

> [34] ...urse with the girl notwithstanding her resistance. <#/>Although there is a different view, which we shall have an occasion of considering, we answer this issue in the affirmative. <#/>The pushing of the g (ICE-EA.txt/W1A005T)

In both cases the number of times shall is used with the first person pronouns "I" and "we" are significantly high. On the contrary, these functions of shall appear to be taken over by will in the German students' essays.

Would

German students' use of would appears to be more varied in stylistic terms than that of their Cameroonian and East-African counterparts. For example, would is used in a number of interrogative sentences in the CCSEs, and also with impersonal "one"- an evasive use of hypothetical would. Such instances do not occur in ICE-EA and CCE. Some examples from the CCSEs are as follows:

> [35] ... between them. Wouldn't it therefore be time for a change in the German degree system? And what would be the advantages and disadvantages? Even more important to look at, what would be the consequences (CCSEs03.txt)

> [36] Certainly not but according to the newspapers he was left alone with this decision. Actually one would expect that his teachers helped him psychologically through this hard time and offered him help or... (CCSEs14.txt)

There are as many as 18 instances (i.e. 24 %) of interrogative would and few instances of the use of impersonal "one" in the CCSEs. The former is a reader-involvement strategy and the latter is an evasive use of hypothetical would (cf. Leech 1971), indicating the writer's reluctance to commit himself on matters of personal feeling or judgement. These are important metadiscourse strategies widely considered crucial for successful academic writing (cf. Swales 1990, Hyland 2001). Of course, German, Cameroonian and East-African students also use would to predict outcomes in their essays, and this function is equally suitable. Specifically, epistemic hypothetical would was found to be further weakened in the ICE-EA by constant use of the modal adjunct such as "probable/probably" as in the following examples:

> [37] <#/>Generally if a member of a group of armed thieves kill in the course of stealing, the killing would be a probable consequence of stealing and

all members of the group may be held liable for the killing (ICE-EA.txt/W1A003T)

[38] ...a probable consequence and the overcoming of such resistance by violence was necessary by burglars would probably be resorted to were sufficient factor to bring all the accused within the doctrine of comm... (ICE-EA.txt/W1A003T)

The Cameroonian students make more use of straightforward predictions and sometimes unnecessarily as in

[39] ... and at the same time moralises. The illustrative essays will be given in two parts. The first would relate to literature (through the medium of language) and the second to language alone, in everyday (CCE/SE02.txt).

Modal usage of this nature emphasise the need for academic writing courses to combine the need for fluency in the use of modals and the requirement of accuracy.

Should

As with would, a significant number of should occurrences is used by many German students (and to a certain extent by Cameroonian students) with the inclusive "we" to engage the reader in the ongoing discourse. For example, it occurs especially at the initial positions of sentences ("we should rather blame our huge ego...", "we should act with a huge portion of sensitivity...", "we should bear in mind that...", "we should note the use of..."). Equally frequent are the occurrences of should with "it" and "one" in expressions such as: "it should be stressed that...", "it should be noted that...", "one should keep in mind that..." in the German and Cameroonian students' essays. Significantly enough, there is no corpus citation in the texts of East-African students with any of these forms. Rather, we have a frequent co-occurrence of the pronoun "he" in the context of should in expressions like: "he should conduct himself in a way...", "he should not come very late in class" etc. Most of these East-African examples occurred in texts which were concerned with rules and regulations, and this is a specific text-type in which this style is definitely appropriate. This is probably a good reason for teachers to make a distinction between text-types and their rhetorical functions with respect to the use of modals: where it may be appropriate in rules and regulations texts to use the third person singular "he"/"she" + should. However, the point needs to be made that inclusive "we" and impersonal "one" and "it" make writing more interactive and impersonal (i.e. keep the writer out of the discourse), a rather more appealing style in scientific writing.

Could

The transitory character of knowledge means that claims in scientific writing, even when backed by facts, generally have to be qualified lest they be “rejected” or judged to be presumptuous by the readers, especially when one is not an expert in the domain (e.g. academic novices). Could in its hypothetical possibility meaning is especially relevant in conveying such speculative functions in academic texts. The German and African students actually levelled one another in the use of could to make tentative statements of possibilities. But there seems to be a tendency by the former even to go further to qualify such statements by the use of modal adjuncts.

> [40] ...last. Those people can not identify with the divine son of the church and son of god, but they could probably identify with a more human son of god who led a normal life with all human needs. This is (CCSEs07.txt)

In this and many other instances the writer seeks to comment of how likely the proposition could be true, by using “probably”. Such modalisation (Halliday 1994) of prepositions as it is the case in [40] above is a distinguishing feature of academic register and construes the writer not only as provider of information, but also an evaluator of that information.

Might

The functionality of might in academic texts often lies in its predominant use to make subjective epistemic statements of possibility (paraphrased by ‘it is possible that…’), epistemic hypothetical judgments (paraphrased as ‘it is possible that x would …’) or root hypothetical predictions (paraphrased by ‘it would be possible for x…’). Both German and African students use might in their essays, but compared to the other so-called “past” tense modals, it is less frequent, and the German students, as with many other modals, use might more often.

Novice academic writers such as the students whose essays have been examined here may not be expected to demonstrate expertise in all these aspects of the use of might. However, it may be helpful to highlight its many varied functions and interpretations (as well as other “past” modals) in scientific writing, using specialist texts.

DISCUSSION

By now it has become clear that modality plays an important role in the writing of academic English. Since academic English is widely held to be “objective”, the crucial questions to ask are: What does it mean to be objective in academic writing and how can we write objectively (i.e. in ways that our claims can be verifiable and seen to be truthful) by using modals? How should we raise students' awareness of the important functions that modals have and their role in academic English? To attempt an answer to these questions, I will briefly discuss the notion of objectivity in academic writing (7.1) and offer some suggestions on how we may proceed to raise students' awareness of the semantic range covered by the central modals of modals (7.2).

Objectivity in academic writing: the role of modality

The genesis of objectivity in academic writing is that (observed) phenomena are invariably complex and dynamic. Since "science" seeks clarity and precision (to the extent that this is possible), any assessment or conclusion made on these phenomena should be based on reasonable premises (factual and/or logical); otherwise they indicate the limit to which they can be interpreted as true. Again, phenomena may be observed from different standpoints (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen's 1999:507ff reference to phenomenon and observer) and considered true in those respects. These considerations make the truth of any proposition in time and space relative (i.e. true to varying degrees).

A corollary of this in academic discourse (esp. for budding academic writers) is the requirement to desist from making sweeping assumptions. The system of modality offers the resources to express various degrees of likelihood and falsehood (esp. with its associated notions of possibility, probability, necessity, tentativeness etc.) which are mostly encoded in the epistemic functions (cf. Papafragou 1987). Mastering these modal functions should enhance students' writing competence and help them to avoid a matter-of-fact style which in many academic contexts may be considered inappropriate. For most ESL students (in Africa and elsewhere) whose L1 does not have an elaborate system of modality as in English, it is even more important that the classroom and the materials used for language activities (e.g. advanced writing skills) in schools provide enough context in which the students can acquire relevant competence in academic writing practices. For example, to teach students to learn to distinguish the two basic types of modal meanings (epistemic and root) in texts and to learn to move from the prototypical (root) to the multifaceted (epistemic) uses of these verbs may improve the way they write for a scholarly audience, where hedged performatives are widely used to signal objectivity and legitimation of claims. Furthermore, epistemic use of modals in academic texts may also demonstrate writers' awareness of their limits, signalling the transitory character of knowledge production in academia. When students learn to write in this manner, the point is made that their texts and ideas are part of the body of texts already available. To mature in this competence, however, students have to be confronted with sample texts from diverse academic sources in their language lessons. Such sample texts could come from corpora.

Raising students' awareness in contexts: learning to use modality

According to Sinclair et al. (eds.) (1990: v), 'people who study and use language are mainly interested in how they can do things with the language [...] they are only interested in the grammatical structure of the language as a means to getting things done'. One of the problems students often face (esp. in ESL contexts) with the use of modals is that these verbs are usually presented in school books in isolation and with limited context (my experience) and students hardly ever have the opportunity to see them as a whole family, and in some real context of use. On account of the role they play in writing academic English, it is important that the whole family of these verbs be presented at some point in the teaching plan, highlighting some of their basic functions in real texts. There are many ways in which individual teachers could proceed with this, and the following three steps are my suggestions.

A) Students need to know some of the major semantic categories of modals: Proceeding to identify some of the main semantic functions of the modals we can draw on the categorizations proposed by Sinclair et al. (1990), which are actually derived from a corpus of natural occurring texts, at an introductory stage. They identify the following main semantic functions of the modals:

1) indicating possibility;
2) indicating necessity;
3) indicating probability or likelihood;
4) indicating ability;
5) indicating permission;
6) indicating intention;
7) making predictions;
8) asking questions (involvement of reader in texts);
9) indicating importance etc.

These categories of meaning are also some of the frequent rhetorical functions common in academic texts.

B) Students need to know what the typical exponents of each category are: Go further to associate the major categories above with the central modals. For example,

1) indicating possibility: *can, may, could, might*;
2) indicating necessity: *should, must*;
3) indicating probability or likelihood: *could, might, may*;
4) indicating ability: *can, could*;
5) indicating permission: *can, may*;
6) indicating intention: *will, shall*;

7) making predictions/stating expectations: *will, would*;
8) asking questions (involvement of reader in texts): *can, could, would, should*;
9) indicating importance: *must, should*;
10) strong possibility: *could, might, may*;
11) possibility in the past: *would have, could have, may have*;
12) suggesting: *could, should, might as well*.

C) Students need to know what the implications of each choice are in academic writing: Use corpora of specialist academic texts and compare citations in which modals are used, with students' own writing and/or non-specialist texts. At this stage, a more intensive scrutiny of examples may be undertaken to lay emphasis on the various expressions of possibility and probability in texts, such as epistemic/root possibility, tentative inference. Specifically, it may be important here, too, to capitalise on the special role of epistemic modality in writing, since epistemic (not root) uses of the modals is what is generally emphasised on in academic texts. In fact, Coates (1983:18) has argued that 'of all the many types of modality recognised by logicians, epistemic modality is the one which most clearly is relevant to normal language'.Concluding remarks

This analysis has attempted to show the discrepancies that exit between African university students (in Cameroon, Kenya and Tanzania) and their German counterparts (in Chemnitz) in the use of modals. Although still novice in the field of academic writing conventions, the evidence suggests that these students have attained certain degrees of competence in the use of modals, with German students being more capable to express many degrees of modality (tentativeness, probability etc.) in their texts than the East-African students, and to a limited extent, the Cameroonian students. On the whole, there seems to be enough evidence to confirm the initial assumption that German students demonstrate better competence in the use of modality in texts than African students.

Despite this general trend, one should hesitate to draw any firm conclusions for several reasons. First, the essays on which this study is based are diversified in time and topic: the African students' essays had been written ten years before the German students' essays. Second, although it is not clear to what extent the different topics the students wrote on may have influenced certain choices of modality, the fact that they were varied is significant. We cannot, therefore, totally rule out the possibility that the topic may have influenced the use of modality in some ways.

Nevertheless, one could still speculate on the possible reasons for the apparent deficiencies in the occurrence of certain modals (e.g. "past" tense forms) and modal functions (e.g. tentativeness, hedging) in the texts written by African students. First, as it was hypothesized initially, African students lack access to examples of academic writing that are readily available in better-equipped libraries in (Chemnitz) Germany with recent publications in their domain of studies. Second, African students have little or no access to Internet facilities on or out of campus, a resource that offers German students the possibility to engage in self-access study and to familiarise themselves with academic writing conventions online. Furthermore, it is not entirely unlikely that African students' "limited" use of modality to express epistemic meanings, for example, is due to an influence of their L1 (most of which do not have elaborate systems of modality as English and German). These speculative reasons highlight the need for teachers of English in a typical African university English department for more focused attention on teaching academic writing in general, and the role of modality in such writing, in particular. To the extent that technical writing is a life-long skill that is gained by engaging in the art, students at university undergraduate levels, whether in Africa or in Europe need greater exposure and opportunity to practice writing for an informed audience. This means that ESP courses should be "laboratories" of practice of technical writing, involving students in specialist texts in machine readable forms, and teaching students interactive techniques of writing.

NOTES

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2) Since ICE-EA is made up of Kenya and Tanzania, the last letter in the reference source represents the country, i.e. K for Kenya (as in example 4) and T for Tanzania (as in example 6).

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Lexical Processing of Academic English: Recognition, Integration, and the Role of Corpora in Research and Teaching

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This contribution introduces a new parallel corpus to the study of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Further, the paper will assess the potential of the texts collected and the tools devised for developing a model of academic writing. For that end, a corpus with texts from diverse natural sciences (physics and biosciences) has been compiled. Data from a preliminary study of hedge expressions in academic and popular-academic texts is investigated and subjected to qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. The study tries to connect linguistic approaches of word recognition of learned words with normative aspects of the teaching of EAP. We will define a quantifiable feature of hedge expressions – propensity- and a quantifiable feature for semantic complexity – semantic depth. Finally, the contribution makes suggestions how to incorporate some of the theoretical insight into academic writing course modules.

INTRODUCTION: CORPORA AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The scope and perspectives offered by large collections of natural language texts in computerized corpora has become influential in the extension of the options and routes a teacher or learner can take in order to acquire a second language on the authentic example. Learners can test their knowledge about constructions measured in the reality of collocations as evidenced by their occurrence in corpora. Of course, limits to this approach are set by the representativity of the corpus. For learners of English as a second language at university level a second component is evident as their curricula often include writing classes to improve academic (and also non-academic) writing skills. However, academic disciplines are diversified and so are styles and conventions – they always stand in a dependency relationship to their respective domains. Standard corpora, even large ones as the BNC, are thus hampered by several shortcomings by design. They do not offer a view on current, domain-specific usage. This generates a need for small, convenient corpora that represent a spectrum of writings and conventions closer to the actual producers. As there can be no ‘general’ corpus for an author in the academia (the sub-disciplines even within science fields like physics are enormously diverse) the corpus compiler shall capture important strategies and successful conventions to enable learners to produce coherent yet complex but always accessible texts (cf. Haase 2007: 45).

Corpus linguistics and language learning has received substantial attention recently as numerous publications such as Renouf (ed.), 2006, Sinclair, 2004, Nesselhauf, 2005, Connor & Upton (eds.), 2004 or Braun, Kohn & Mukherjee, (eds.) 2005, show. The focus of learner corpora is usually on data-driven learning or inductive learning as opposed to deductive, rule-based learning (cf. Schmied & Haase, 2002). On the teacher side, this trend goes along with a growing interest to apply corpus results to teaching, especially in ESL writing where corpora provide authentic materials, see Yoon & Hirvela, “Corpus-based studies are especially amenable to the teaching of the reading and writing skills and the development of academic literacy” (Yoon & Hirvela 2004: 258). This was recognized earlier by the creators of the Longman Activator, a dictionary source on basis of the Longman Learner Corpus (LLC), cf. Meyer 2002: 27.

However, little is known about the application of corpora to the systematic teaching of academic writing. The access to preprint-servers such as *arXiv* for papers from the natural sciences is free, fast and nonbureaucratic although the papers are generally not peer-reviewed. This has enabled us to create a substantial database within a relatively short period of time.

The corpus introduced here is called SPACE (for: Specialized and Popular Academic Corpus of English). It tries to be representative but is at the same time accessible to a large number of general-academic users. This accessibility was achieved by compiling a parallel corpus of academic and corresponding popular texts. The experience from other corpus-based projects such as the Chemnitz Internet Grammar (http://www.tu-chemnitz.de/InternetGrammar), cf. Schmied 1999, 2005, had shown a learner preference for deductive, rule-based learning of grammar. It is however difficult to state explicit rules for academic writing apart from a set of well-known principles of establishing cohesion via co-reference and semantic continuity and establishing causation via grammaticalization of cause-effect relationships (cf. Haase, 2006).

The study introduced here follows a two-pronged approach to lexical learning of items commonly found in academic texts. The first step involves the rating of plausibility of so-called learned words with the constraint that most of the words are non-words with differing degrees of plausibility. The second step involves the recognition differences of general high-frequency lexical items and high-frequency learned words.

LEXICAL LEARNING AND PROCESSING

Lexical learning is comprised of complex cognitive activities that start with lexical recognition. In order to process and produce academic texts that are effortlessly comprehended, several subsystems interact, e.g. knowledge representation, learning, perception, and memory processes. Results from eye tracking studies show that on average a lexical item is only fixated once for durations from 50-250 ms (Seidenberg 2001: 875), which means that short function words or high-frequency lexical items are sometimes skipped and long and ‘learned’ words are fixated more than once. As a rule, an increase in reading speed leads to a decrease in comprehension. This means that a considerable load of comprehensible expression is put on the lexical items used. This study does not start at levels below the lexical unit even though sublexical and morphological parsing influence speed and ease of recognition. More interesting for the teaching of academic writing is a closer investigation of contextual constraints that influence the computation of comprehension.

Visual word recognition and lexical integration

When a lexical item is perceived a representation in the mental lexicon is accessed. Thus recognition involves the identification of familiar items or items whose position, word class, scope and inflectional paradigm make it susceptible to lexical access.

Most psycholinguistic theories suggest that the processing of a single word undergoes the same principles as the processing of words in a text (Harley 2001: 67). This processing is influenced by a large spectrum of exterior parameters such as writing system, font face and size, spacing, stimulus degradation (reduced contrast, blurred letters), item seen from a rotated angle etc.

However, lexical frequency has been isolated as the single most prominent parameter. “The most powerful determinant of the time taken to recognize a word is the frequency with which it occurs” (Rastle 2006: 75). The most frequent words are recognized most easily. Simple, common items also tend to be shorter so the fixation is more efficient. Frequency has at least two psychological dimensions, a public and an individual dimension. Gernsbacher proposes that familiarity is more basic than frequency because it is personal frequency (Gernsbacher 1994:i).

The frequency effect means that a word is more accessible because we see or hear it more often and because we use it more often. Repeated exposure to a lexical item also lowers its activation threshold. For our purposes it was necessary to introduce a word/non-word test because numerous lexical items in academic English are relatively infrequent and even unfamiliar to non-native speakers. The theories sketched above predict that words are recognized faster than non-words because non-words have virtually zero occurrences. However, plausible non-words are much harder to reject than implausible ones because they are phonologically primed. Often non-words are rejected without access to the mental lexicon when they are phonologically implausible (Garnham 1992: 45). Again, this is influenced by the environment of the item. As McClelland and Rumelhart in their classic *Interactive activation model* found, letters are easier to recognize when they occur in a word than when they are isolated (word superiority effect). This means for lexical units that they act either facilitatorily or inhibitorily. For instance, *T* facilitates *TASK* and *TAKE* but inhibits *CASK* and *CAKE* (Harley 2001: 95).

An additional component is contextual priming: For collocations, Fischler and Bloom found in a now classic study significantly facilitated recognition for highly probable words and even an inhibitory effect for the unlikely items (Fischler & Bloom, 1979). Thus, test 1 is used to estimate plausibility of the lexical items whereas test 2 is designed for the integration of lexical knowledge.

TEST 1: LEXICAL DECISION TASK

The first experiment tested the lexical competence of a group of non-native speakers of English with advanced proficiency. In lexical decision tasks (LD tasks) the decision usually involves the rating of lexical items as either words or non-words. In a modified version, an LD can be administered in which the informants rate the 'goodness' of the example as a more or less plausible word along a scale. Tested were 32 lexical stimuli with 23 informants to be rated on Likert scales from 1 (clearly an existing lexical item) to 5 (clearly not an existing lexical item). The informants were all native speakers of German with very advanced competence in English. The items were non-words of different classes but do not represent a stratified sample. There are four classes of non-words (as suggested by Longtin, Meunier & Davis, 2006, who also contributed the item *sportation*):

1) non-morphological pseudowords consisting of a non-root like *crape, pyme* or *etty*;
2) semantically non-interpretable pseudowords consisting of non-existent root-suffix combinations like *processal*, *inapprop* or *uniformation*;
3) semantically interpretable pseudowords made from legal roots and suffixes like *maximify*, *criticality* and *specialness* and finally
4) synonym pseudowords made from permutations of existing suffixes with suffixes from semantically equivalent words like *syntactical*, *roboter*, and *analyser*.

The distribution of the ratings shows that items like *syntactical, optimate*, *translater* (sic!) and *roboter* receive high plausibility judgments (1 to 2 with 1 = word and 5 = non-word) even though none of them exists (*roboter* is German for *robot*).

lexical item	rating	*sd*
syntactical	1.22	0.9
optimate	1.39	0.99
translater	1.65	1.4
roboter	2.13	1.77
analyser	2.26	1.48

lexical item	rating	*sd*
sportation	3.22	1.44
xenolab	3.26	1.66
botaneer	3.39	1.16
geld	3.43	1.53
representationer	3.61	1.34

recraft	2.43	1.5	causee	3.74	1.32
crape	2.48	1.44	inapprop	3.83	1.23
mire	2.52	1.65	pyme	4.04	1.11
specialness	2.87	1.46	uniformation	4.04	1.22
processal	2.91	1.24	maximify	4.17	1.23
contextuous	3	1.54	etty	4.17	1.03
easel	3.04	1.52	murv	4.17	1.4
attentivity	3.04	1.46	zilch	4.43	0.9
assumpter	3.09	1.59	ghlam	4.61	0.78
gardenist	3.09	1.44	yoow	4.65	0.71
criticality	3.09	1.38	tarpz	4.83	0.49

Table 1: Ranked list of non-words according to plausibility (1 = word, 5 = non-word); *n*=23

Interestingly, of the several true words scattered among the list, none are attributed considerable plausibility (*easel*, *causee*, *murv* and *zilch*) (*murv* means *multi-use robot vehicle* and is rare – 4,360 Google™ hits but *zilch*, meaning *zero* or *none*, has 1,850,000 even though it is a non-standard word). Further, among the informants judgment seems to have been uniform for the 'best' and 'worst' examples of a plausible lexical item as their low standard derivations (*sd*) show. *Tarpz* was uniformly rejected (*sd* =.49) and *syntactical* accepted (*sd*=.9). The highest standard derivation has *roboter* (*sd*=1.77) which indicates that opinions differed on the term, an effect that can be explained with differences in proficiency and interference from German. A gradual difference here leads to considerably divided opinions on the status of this item.

The results show that learners form judgments about the acceptability of lexical items on basis of their phonological plausibility and the productivity of their internal lexical morphemes.

SPACE – Corpus: A Structural Sketch

Setting out from the recognition of severe differences in lexical difficulty between academic and popular academic texts we decided to compile a corpus with a binary structure: academic texts and popular texts. The basis for comparison is the fact that popular science journals like *New Scientist* feature articles and stories on basis of current publications in major academic journals. The stories presented to an academic but general-interest reader represent simplified and pre-digested versions of the original research reports. The original article is referenced in the *New Scientist* which enabled swift access. We decided to skip major journals like *Science* or *Nature* due to copyright restrictions and problematic access. Instead, the main scientific sources are preprint servers where non-peer reviewed articles are placed for immediate distribution. This is the case with *arXiv.org*, the most important preprint server for physical sciences. For the biosciences we decided on the server of the *Proceedings of the National*

Academy of the Sciences (of the US, *pnas.org*) because articles distributed there represent public property (the research was publicly funded). Both sources provide ease of access and considerably relaxed copyright restrictions.

Subcorpus	**descriptors**	**words**
arXiv	physics, astrophysics, computer science, quantum mechanics	161.864
New Scientist – physics	physics, astrophysics, Computer science, quantum mechanics	40.694
Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS)	biochemistry, genetics, genetical engineering, microbiology	267.105
New Scientist - biosciences	biochemistry, genetics, genetical engineering, microbiology	30.499
Public Library of Science – Medicine (PLoS), New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of Clinical Investigation	medicine, virology, clinical psychology, public health	217.254
New Scientist – medicine	medicine, virology, clinical psychology, public health	17.050
Total		**734.466**

Table 2: Corpus content and structure

For a more comprehensive overview cf. Haase, 2007. The issue of lexical complexity can be captured in the parameter of ontological depth – a parameter that is measurable when we consider that all lexical items are selected from ontological hierarchies. These hierarchies are bracketed by items of the highest and lowest order (e.g. entity → thing → vehicle → car → convertible → Mercedes SL). Ontologies of this type have been established in large research projects, cf. Fellbaum, 1998 on Wordnet, the largest of these ontologies.

TEST 2: LEXICAL MEMORY INTEGRATION

Methodology and the contribution of the corpus

Among the various main methods to explore visual word recognition (a list that includes brain imaging, eye tracking, tachistoscopic identification, naming tasks and categorization tasks), the tachistoscopic measurements are relatively straightforward and deliver usually dependable data. In tachistoscopic identification tests the threshold is measured at which subjects can no longer confidently identify a lexical item. This is often combined with reaction time tests (RT tests) in which informants are either asked whether an item is a word or a non-word or the naming latency is measured, i.e. informants are presented a visual image to name. A standard test is a memorizing test in which words are flashed onto the screen (the tachistoscope) and informants are asked to memorize as many items as possible. Again, as with the word/non-word task, recognition is facilitated by frequency or when the item bears familiarity or resemblance with a familiar item. Low-frequency terms as used in academic discourse should receive low recognition scores compared with more frequent items from popular science.

In the same way, the perceived difference between academic and popular academic texts in terms of accessibility and readability of their lexical items can be captured in the parameter of semantic depth. Highly specialized papers use very few generic items for their tools of trade so that most items are ontologically complex, such as *conjectures, compactification, coalescence, planetesimals, angular, mesoscopic, gauge field, accretion, radial drag* (all from corpus file 0007AX). However, frequency lists of nouns differ substantially depending on the area of expertise. Gavioli (1997: 87) lists the most frequent nouns of the COBUILD Corpus as *time, people, way, man, years, work, world, thing, day*, and *children*, and of an (unspecified) “biology corpus” as *cell, water, membrane, food, plant, root, molecules, wall, energy*, and *concentration*.

Looking at the 20 most frequent nominal items in the SPACE corpus, we find that the ontological depth of the most frequent items is on a similar level between popular and specialized texts:

Subcorpus	**frequency list (20)**
arXiv 0001AX-0046AX	mass, energy, time, number, quantum, length, hole, stars, case, data, scale, density, state, probability, terms, model, order, code, field, value
New Scientist- physics 0001NS-0046NS	quantum, universe, energy, theory, time, space, light, matter, gravity, particles, physicists, years, Earth, holes, idea, issue, page, stars, physics, magazine
PNAS 0047PN-0107PN	cells, cell, data, DNA, gene, species, table, rate, time, analysis, results, control, stress, number, group, levels, expression, effects, sequences, mice
New Scientist- biosciences 0047NS-0107NS	cells, genes, team, years, researchers, fields, species, field, farmers, water, DNA, gene, people, cell, human, primates, work, way, core, animals

Table 3: Most frequent nouns in the subcorpora

The distribution shows that many items are even shared: *energy, time, quantum, hole/holes, stars* for physics and *cells, cell, gene/genes, DNA, species* for the biosciences, which means for both sciences one quarter of the 20 most frequent terms is shared.

The experiment

The following stimuli were tested in two sets of experiments with the same group of informants from the LD test (*n*=23). In order to retain the difference in lexical difficulty the sets were selected from an academic text and from a text geared towards children. Thus, the first set encompasses 29 items extracted from the Grimm fairy-tale *Rapunzel* (version used from http://www.squidoo.com/Rapunzel) and is given below:

lexical item tested; set 1 (non-academic, general knowledge items)		
child (121)	garden (800)	year (60)
hope (473)	look (90)	forest (1,419)
God (1,520)	husband (833)	voice (357)
people (80)	twilight (>6,300)	hook (4,611)
window (535)	handful (4,298)	hair (682)
house (191)	descend (3,756)	king (911)
flowers (1,366)	thief (4,393)	song (1,415)
power (246)	case (140)	time (53)
world (161)	well (82)	door (327)
woman (141)	terror (4,128)	

Table 4: Set 1 with high-frequency items (number indicates rank in BNC wordlist)

The figures show that the items are largely high-frequency items with five items even among the 100 most frequent words in the BNC (ascending: *time*, *year*, *people*, *well* and *look*) and ten items among the 200 most frequent words.

The second set is comprised of stimuli items extracted from corpus file *0007AX* (arXiv:astro-ph/0107169 - *Experimental hints of Gravity in Large Extra Dimensions?*).

lexical item tested; set 2 (specialized academic items)		
gravity (5,000)	gauge field (>6,300)	orbit (6,065)
conjectures (>6,300)	gradient (>6,300)	spirals (>6,300)
propagates (>6,300)	experiment (1,700)	cross–section (>6,300)
dynamics (A 4,085)	aggregation (>6,300)	magnitude (5,471)
compactification (>6,300)	accretion (>6,300)	differential (6,100)
coalescence (>6,300)	radial drag (>6,300)	anomalous (>6,300)
planetesimals (>6,300)	sweep (2,603)	instability (>6,300)
fractal (>6,300)	relative velocity (5,456)	observation (1,858)
angular (>6,300)	dispersion (>6,300)	collisions (>6,300)
mesoscopic (>6,300)	turbulence (>6,300)	

Table 5: Set 2 with low-frequency items (number indicates rank in BNC wordlist)

The figures indicate that the 29 items are all low-frequency words with 20 items not among the 6,318 most frequent lemmas ranked in the BNC wordlist and only three items among the 5,000 most frequent items (*experiment*, *observation* and *sweep*)

The specificity of the lexical items in the respective texts is reflected in their huge difference in complexity scores: *007AX* yields 22.94, *Rapunzel* yields 16.00.

An interesting observation was the profiling capacity of the lexical material supplied. Set 1 required a Google™ string search of 17 items to point to the text on the web, set 2 required exactly two items to correctly identify and find the text on *arXiv*.

Stimulus length was determined at 160 ms. This means that the items were flashed for a span of 160 milliseconds which enables fast reading. All stimuli were followed by a short break of 500 ms length. The screen tachistoscope used was a freeware program, *RAM 3.5* by C. Pavur (1999) (see fig. 1)

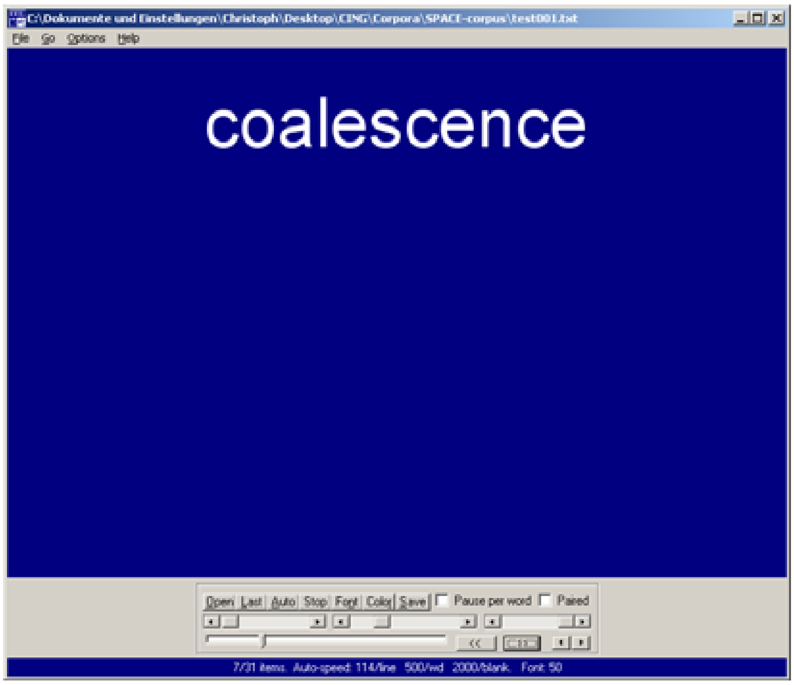

Fig. 1: Tachistoscopic screen view with lexical test stimulus

After each set, students were asked to recall as many items as possible. The average recall figure for set 1 was 20 items (roughly 69%).

The recall figure for set 2 was 9 items (31%), a surprisingly high figure given the low frequency of the items. However, informants were triggered to remember as many items as possible. Due to the low overall frequency of the items, effects of adjacent triggering (there were only targets, not primes and targets) could be largely excluded. However, there is some disagreement about the strongest parameter of recall. As shown above, the overall frequencies were so low that other effects could take the place. As mentioned above, Gernsbacher suggested that familiarity is a more basic parameter than frequency because it is an indicator of a "personal frequency" (Gernsbacher, 1994). On the other hand, the threshold of recognition could have been lowered due to the coherent domains the targets were extracted from.

The findings are therefore a robust indicator of the real recognition competence of the test subjects.

INTEGRATING CORPUS DATA IN TEACHING

The use of corpora in the teaching of linguistics and academic writing

Data from the parallel corpus will be applied in the academic skills module of a new BA English Language and Linguistics at Chemnitz University of Technology. This solves several problems of mediated access as, for example, brought forward by Chambers (2005:111). The corpus, the search engine and the semantic analyzer tool are all accessible for students on the intranet.

With the semantic tool students can evaluate the semantic difficulty of their own texts and term papers.

As could be shown in the two studies discussed above, the recognition and integration of items from the corpus is determined by the semantic complexity of the items. Especially the recall rates show correlation with frequency of the items; rare items showed inhibited recall.

Teaching academic writing requires a binary approach of which the final application of results is determined by close work with the data collection and rigorous application of quantitative methodologies such as the search for collocations in class or in self-study. The module implementation has therefore two phases. This first phase (data phase) aims at binding efforts and research strategies from previous corpus linguistics and contrastive studies at our institution Chemnitz in order to provide a wider parallel data base of texts. This means also that student essays will be analysed according to the same strategies suggested above. The second phase (interpretation phase) will look at the linguistic phenomena in the texts in parallel: English academic texts produced by both native speakers of English and by German mother-tongue speakers. The pedagogic goal is to derive general models of involvement and commitment together with a comparative interpretation of corresponding 'cognitive' conceptualisations at the interfaces of non-native academic English/native academic English and non-native popular academic English/native popular academic English, respectively. The conceptualizations are important for the logical and causal structuring of the respective texts and thus the persuasive effect on the readers.

The models are intended to formalize certain 'felt' stylistic and iconic parameters in texts, which can be made transparent in this way. In particular, the module aims at developing a text model for academic texts. The point of view here is lexicalised in less opaque ways than in other texts types which often use terminological mechanisms to blur subjectivity (as expressions of vagueness, modal verbs, hedge expressions etc. do). A user workshop/conference will bring together primary text producers with diverse natural science and engineering backgrounds. The results obtained from the teaching are intended to inspire a network of excellence among producers (writers and translators) of argumentative texts that will familiarize large numbers of authors with argumentative writing skills and international conventions of publishing.

The following table summarizes the approaches taken and puts the focus on canonical problem areas. Authors with different L1 vary considerably in their problem profiles. The most significant variance can be noted in their lexical frequency profiles as measured in ontological complexity. A large field is also definiteness and the mass/count noun distinction.

level	**lexicon**	**syntax**	**semantics**	**pragmatics**
N	ontological depth	count/mass	metaphors source/target domains	hedges commitment deixis
V	causatives resultatives	aux V causation	V perception motion events	hedges commitment
Conj	cause clause effect clause			linkers
Det/Q			definiteness scope	
P			spatial domains	
Adv			modal adv	
clause	linking	biclausal causativity		
text				abstract conclusion

Table 6: Work schedule for linguistic determinants in EAP

Several determinants have been tested and verified by looking at students' elitcited answers from questionnaires, most recently for hedging (cf. Haase, 2008 fc.).

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated, a limited scope of academic English can be represented within the spectrum of corpora. Further analysis of the corpus data yields that there are versatile determinants of the linguistic shape of commitments. Establishing models therefore requires primarily a catalogue of phenomena to investigate. The notion of subjectivity can be lexicalised in different ways according to primary origin (academic or popular academic) and readership (scientists or educated laypersons). Furthermore, we could confirm and substantiate on quantitative grounds the higher semantic complexity of academic texts. An accompanying tool for semantic analysis was developed and used for analysis. Both, corpus and analyser can be used in teaching academic writing, not only to sensitivize students to the pragmatic and semantic markers of academic English but also to investigate and quantify the results of their own academic work.

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Approximating Quantities and the Use of Quantifiers: A Czech - English Comparison

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This paper will describe the preliminary results of research into the use of round numbers and approximating quantities from a cross-cultural (Czech-English) point of view. The aims of the research are threefold: first, to determine the extent to which Czech and English speakers use similar formulae when approximating quantities; second, to look at some problems associated with translating the Czech quantifier *nekolik* into English; and, third, to see whether a survey into the range implied by such phrases as about fifty or roughly a thousand in a Czech context would produce similar results to the English data in Channell (1994). The data for this study was gathered by means of a questionnaire which was completed by Czech learners of English in the 17-20 age range, all of whom, at the time when the questionnaires were administered, were studying at either secondary schools in the city of Pilsen or the University of West Bohemia.

INTRODUCTION: ROUND NUMBERS AS APPROXIMATORS

An analysis of university conference registration forms conducted during the first half of 2007 indicates that conference organisers, in their calls for papers, tend to set word limits for abstracts along the lines of "no more than 50 (100, 150, 200 ...) words". Similarly, university students of modern languages at the University of West Bohemia are accustomed to receiving essay assignments whose length is specified by either such phrases as "approximately 600, (750, 1500 ...) words" or, alternatively, a range such as "... of between 750 and 850 words". When questioned about what exactly was meant by 'approximately 750 words', one lecturer replied: "I'd allow at least, say, about thirty or forty plus-minus either side." What is noticeable about the above-cited numbers is that they are all multiples of ten, whose use in the given context is in accordance with Channell's observation (1994: 70) that 'approximators are very much more likely to occur with what we think of as "round" numbers, such as multiples of 5 and 10, hundreds or thousands'. Such usage also corresponds to the Round Number Round Interpretation (RNRI) principle advanced by Krifka (2002).

It seems that a widespread preference for using, where possible, round numbers stems from 'a well-known pragmatic principle that prefers simple expressions over complex ones' Krifka (2005). As regards what is meant by 'simple expression', Menninger (1969: 46), for example, states:

> [I]f we contemplate the number sequence in our minds, 1,000 seems clearer, more 'available' to us than 543, a number of which we can really only say that we must certainly arrive at it if we keep counting long enough. We can visualize it directly only with difficulty, if at all.

With this in mind, it seems reasonable to assume that the larger the numbers become, the easier they are to imagine – possibly even memorise – if rounded off with a series of noughts rather than a sequence of apparently random digits. A practical example of rounding up to the nearest thousand may be seen in the contrast between two newspaper reports which appeared on the same day, 4 May 1982. The articles in question were describing an incident in the Falklands War, in which the British Navy sank an Argentine ship, the General Belgrano. The Sun article, under the famous headline GOTCHA, referred to 'the 14,000-ton Argentina cruiser General Belgrano', whereas The Times noted: 'The General Belgrano is a 13,644-ton cruiser ...'. The explanation for this discrepancy in weight may lie in the difference between the serious newspaper's striving for factual accuracy and the popular Sun's aiming at a style and register closer to that of everyday speech with its tendency to approximate weights and measures to a convenient reference point on the counting scale. The latter approach involves a strategy which would appear to be acknowledged across cultures: four separate groups of Czech students of English, when questioned about which of the two above-cited weights they considered more accurate, chose the one given in The Times on the grounds that – as summed up by one of the respondents – if there is a conflicting choice between a round number and one which is more difficult to remember, "the one more difficult to remember is likely to be more accurate".

In fact, the above examples of multiples of 5 and 10 could be classed as 'extreme rounding' (Dubois, 1987), since non-round numbers may be considered round in certain situations. Wachtel (1981) uses the example of a bank account containing \$9,873 – which is not a round number as such, even though it may well become one if seen in the context of "rounded to the nearest dollar".

As Channell (1994) argues, when other than round numbers are prefaced by approximators, they serve to narrow the range implied and also function as a kind of self-defence on the part of the speaker, who does not wish to lose face in the event of the given number subsequently proving less than 100% accurate. To verify this phenomenon in a Czech context, the authors of this paper asked several Czechs if they could state the world record for the men's 100 metres. The majority of responses were along the lines of "something below 10 seconds" or "about 9.7 seconds". It is not difficult to imagine other circumstances in which using *about* before a time already expressed in tenths of a second would appear incongruous.

Round numbers in the sense of multiples of 10 are shown to be cognitive reference points by Rösch (1975); however, other reference points also exist, such as the 'prominent conceptual unit' described by Krifka (2005), who notes that a phrase such as in the next 24 hours is more likely to be used than within the next 23 hours, since the recipient of the message can more easily equate 24 hours with an existing time scale. Other reference points may be culturally influenced:

> The numbers which function as reference points may be determined by other factors in addition to the structure of the number system. It seems that some numbers are reference point numbers by virtue of cultural significance maintained over a long time. (Channell, 1994: 84)

The following sentence, taken from Sheridan (2003: 168), may serve as an example of a cultural reference involving a unit of measurement in which, however, the relevant number is not actually stated:

> In the opposite corner, about a cricket pitch length away it seems, is a table setting with rattan chairs, where Jessie and I will eat croissants and sip rich, dark coffee for breakfast.

Reducing about a cricket pitch length away to its literal sense of about 22 yards away might distract the reader into wondering "why 'about 22' rather than 20?". In this case, the reference is culture-bound and, once outside the specific cultural milieu, the phrase probably has to be reduced to literal sense in order to convey any meaningful information. Three Czech-English translators in Pilsen, when asked how they would render this text in Czech, suggested ve vzdálenosti asi 20 metrů (literally about 20 metres away). The official rules of cricket state:

> The size of the field on which the game is played varies from ground to ground but the pitch is always a rectangular area of 22 yards (20.12m) in length and 10ft (3.05m) in width.[1]

Thus about 20 metres is a reasonable paraphrase, even if the cultural element is lost.

In fact, cultural differences in measuring quantities came to the fore while this article was being prepared as, during this period, the European Union resigned in its efforts to persuade Britain to convert to metric measurements. The reasons for what many claim is primarily an English reluctance to accept metrication are numerous and varied, but the metric cause is not helped by the fact that some of the metric weights and measures seen, for example, in supermarkets do look odd in the way they violate the round number principle when viewed alongside their imperial equivalents. We may cite, for instance, 454g on a pack of sausages or 1.136 litres on a bottle of milk, compared to 1lb and 2 pints respectively. Informal discussions on this topic with English people suggested it is the imperial measures which those in the over-40s age category in particular still relate to, their conversation containing frequent references to how metric measurements "don't actually mean anything to us". When pressed further to explain why this might be, some of the more immediate responses tended to produce such tautologies as "because the numbers have no meaning." Gradually, though, it emerged that one of the main stumbling blocks to accepting metrication was that it was difficult to conceptualise in one's mind's eye quantities which have no immediate orientation points on a familiar measuring scale. Reluctance to learn a new scale is, of course, another matter – although in this respect the element of tradition should not be ignored: the citation below appeared in an internet discussion from 2006.

> People forget that Imperial is based on a person's bodily bits (foot 12", hand 4", rule of thumb 1", longbow pull 36" or 1 yard and a walking pace also c. a yard). We carry these immensely useful rulers round with us 24 hrs/day. In effect, WE are the Imperial system.[2]

Changing 25 yards to 22 metres on the rugby field is a relatively simple task, even if contemporary British rugby reports sometimes contain a curious amalgam of metric and imperial measurements – as demonstrated in the following:

> The scrum-half's dummy completely deceived the Toulouse defence and he ran from the opposition 10-metre line to touch down unopposed. Toulouse's defence was again nowhere to be seen less than five minutes later when Trimble charged through the midfield and ran 50 yards to score after taking a pass from the excellent Humphreys.[3]

Nor is it such a problem in soccer to talk of a penalty spot eleven metres from the goal-line as opposed to 12 yards. However, to return to that most archetypal of English symbols – cricket: the dimensions of the stumps with a height of 28 inches and width of 9 inches may seem arbitrary in themselves, but they are at least whole numbers, which may be visualised in relation to "12 inches = one foot", of which anyone familiar with the characteristic twelve-inch rulers used in British schools can form a mental picture quite easily. The same cannot be said of 22.86cm and 71.1cm respectively. Johnson (2004) offers several other examples of how the British prefer to adhere to tradition:

> How tall are you? If asked this question, do you reply five feet seven, or six feet two; or do you say 1.7018 metres or 1.8796 metres? I have met few people who would answer this question metrically, including youngsters still at school who have been educated using metric, rather than imperial, units.

Similarly, most of us still talk about a pint of beer, two pounds of apples, a three-mile trip, a six-inch blade, a 15-stone rugby player, and a 10-ton truck. We do so because we feel comfortable that we understand these concepts and can picture instantly what they involve.Johnson is no doubt expressing the sentiments of a sizeable proportion of Brits, even if his metres statistics running to four decimal places are clearly exaggerated, presumably for comic effect. In the

Czech Republic, where metres are the norm, heights will normally be expressed either in centimetres or (to take the above examples) metr sedmdesát (one metre 70), metr osmdesát sedm (one metre 87) etc. Yet, just because the terms used for describing both weights and measures may vary in different cultures, which does not necessarily mean there is any great discrepancy in the perceptions of what constitutes a significant point on the scale. Thus anyone six foot plus in height in imperial measurements is generally considered to be tall; Czechs would have a similar view of someone 180cm or more. Informal conversations with native speakers of both languages also suggest something similar may be said of cars travelling at 100 miles per hour and 150 or 160 km/h. In fact, two further extracts from the above-mentioned internet discussion2 demonstrate that both the imperial and metric systems of measurement allow for useful approximations:

> My hand is 10 cm wide. I can move my elbows 1 metre apart. My hip is 1 metre above the ground. A metre is a slightly long step. Metres relate perfectly fine to humans!
>
> My hand is 10 inches from the tip of my thumb to the tip of my little finger. I can move my elbows 1 yard apart, my hip is one yard above the ground, a yard is a normal step.

APPROXIMATORS

There were	approximately	fifty people at the lecture.
	about around	
	roughly	
	some	

Na přednášce bylo	přibližně	padesát lidí
	asi kolem na okolo	
	zhruba	
	nějakých takových	

Table 1: Approximators in English and Czech

The table above shows dictionary translation equivalents, though it should be noted that, while *approximately* and *přibližně* are of a comparable (more formal) register, the same is not true of *some* and *takový(ch)* and *nějaký(ch)*. In this instance the Czech words would be considered more informal than the English some. Another point to be made here is that there is no obviously neat way to translate directly into Czech a sentence such as:

(1) a. The women were in their late 20s to early 30s

This idea may be rendered as:

(1) b. Těm ženám bylo něco okolo třicítky

though in back translation this would come out as:

(1) c. The women were about thirty years old

In (c) *about thirty years old* could be replaced by *30-ish* – another vague expression for which there is no one-to-one equivalent in Czech. In informal speech such approximations may be reinforced by, for example, *nebo tak nějak* (cf. English *or so*).

QUANTIFIERS

Dušková (1985) suggests that English quantifiers may be categorised as follows, on a scale running from totality to zero: all/every – many/much – some – several – a few/a little – few/little – no. This sequence is in tune with Quirk et al. (1985) who state that several 'indicates a number slightly greater than a few'. These are, of course, relative terms and a comparative study shows that the opinions of both grammarians and lexicographers to some extent differ over the meaning of several. For instance, Palmer (1969) suggests several means 'more than two but not many', which is identical with part of WNWD (1989) definition, namely 'more than two but not many; of an indefinite but small number; few.' However, WNWD then adds a further possibility: '(Chiefly Dial.) quite a few, many.' The BBC (1993) notes that several 'is used to refer in an imprecise way to a number of things or people, when the number is not large but is more than two'. Hornby (1986) has 'three or more; some but not many'. LDCE (1990) is less committal about numbers: 'more than a few but not very many'. Ch21C (1996) gives 'more than a few but not a great number' for the adjective; then, for the pronoun 'quite a few people or things'. MED (2002) states 'a number of people or things that is more than two or three, but not many.'

Concerning the Czech-English bilingual dictionaries, Poldauf's (1986) entry demonstrates the range of meanings implicit in *několik*:

> a number of ..., some ... (on its own of them, before a defining phrase some of – some of the boys, some of those people, some of my friends), quite a few, of a small number mentioned several (jich of them and as with some) if used of no more than two a(n) ... or two (on its own one or two)

Froněk (1999) gives 'some, several, a few'; otherwise, several is the first meaning offered for několik in Hais & Hodek (1997), Řešetka (2003) and FSS (2004). In fact, the first two mentioned both give 'několik, pár', with Řešetka even offering the following synonyms: 'a few, some, a couple, a handful'. This seems something of an oversimplification, since our informal interviews with native English speakers revealed that they would not consider several and a handful synonyms at all, since the former expression generally implies considerably more than the latter, unless, as one informant suggested, handful were qualified by the adjective whole in order to emphasise an inappropriately large amount – as in, for example, I offered him a sweet from the bag and he took a whole handful.

In the comparative table below, we offer a slightly modified version of Dušková's scale by suggesting several implies more than some on the grounds that several, unlike some and a few, cannot be qualified by the semi-negative adverb only.

all – every	**many – much**	**several**	**some**	**a few –a little**	**few – little**	**no**
všichni všechny každý	mnoho	několik		trochu	málo	žádný

Table 2: Quantifiers in English and Czech

NOTES

1) *všichni* is used for plural masculine animate nouns
2) *všechny* is used for inanimate plural masculine and feminine nouns and colloquially with neuter too, although in the latter case *všechna* is formally correct
3) For the sake of completeness, we should also mention three declinable adjectives which may be used to express quantity:
4) *mnohý*, which can appear in the singular before countable nouns and would correspond to the English *many*; however, its use is relatively infrequent. In the plural it would translate straightforwardly as *many*, so that in essence there is no difference in meaning between *mnozí lidé* and *mnoho lidí*.
5) *nějaký*, which corresponds to some in the sense of a certain or a (some) kind of; in some contexts, it carries the meaning of the indefinite article in English e.g. There's a Mr Davies waiting to see you. An example of its use with a plural noun following a numeral appears in Table 1 above.
6) *některý*, which in its singular form may translate as *one [of]* or simply *a* e.g. *Použijte některý z trolejbusů či autobusů* (např. 38,105) – literally *Take one of the trolleybuses or buses* [= *Take a trolleybus or bus*] (e.g. 38, 105). Plural forms of *některý* will commonly be rendered in English as *some* e.g. *Někteří lidé říkají* ..., *Some people say* ... An example of its use with a plural noun following a numeral appears in Table 1 above. These declinable adjectives are, however, relatively transparent in meaning and unlikely to cause such translation problems as *několik*.

As can be seen in Table 2, *několik* can cover at least three different meanings in English – and this number would, of course, be increased if we were to include alternative expressions commonly used in informal speech, such as *a lot of* or *a number of*. Sometimes, context alone will determine the most appropriate English translation; in the spoken language intonation can provide additional help. Thus:

(2) a. Viděla jsem ho před několika minutami.
I saw him a few minutes ago.

contrasts with:

(3) a. Čekala jsem na něj několik hodin.
I was waiting for him for several hours.

Here it may be argued that in (2) there is an implicit 'only', which – as mentioned above – would automatically preclude the use of several. In (3), however, the speaker is trying more to emphasise the frustration felt at the length of her wait than the immediacy of the event itself. Nevertheless, occasions are bound to arise where there is no obviously preferable translation of několik into English:

(4) Před několika leta se rozvedli.
Several [or A few] years ago they divorced.

Likewise (5) below offers more than one possibility in the English version, each of which would seem equally valid, but imply different speaker attitudes (from "more than expected" to "only"):

(5) Znám několik učitelů dobrých až skvělých

		several		
I know	{	some	}	teachers who are good, even excellent.
		a few		

Quite different problems are posed by:

(6) Jen několik desítek lidí může na vlastní oči sledovat semifinále SuperStar
Only a few dozen people will be able to follow the semi-final of SuperStar live.

Czech native speakers studying English – sometimes even those with a highly competent command of the language – are apt to fall repeatedly into at least two traps here. The second of these will be dealt with in a separate section below. Firstly, we need to note that *jen několik* should be translated as *just/only a few* and not **only several* – a Czech mistake common enough to merit a mention in Peprník (1987) and Sparling (1989).

For the sake of completeness we might add that, further to complicate matters, Czech can also use the combination jen několik málo as in, for example:

(7) Jen několik málo diváků tehdy vidělo "fantóma úderu" jak Listona uzemnil.
Very few spectators saw the "phantom punch" which decked Liston. (4)

(8) V knihovně máme jen několik málo starších čísel časopisu. (5)
The library has only a few back issues of the magazine.

LEXICAL ITEMS FOR NUMBERS

The second difficulty Czech students of English have in translating sentences such as (6) above – and likewise mentioned by Sparling, concerns the word desítka. Here it is necessary briefly to mention the Czech category of *názvy čísel* – 'names of numbers' or 'reifiers' (Cummins, 2001). For instance, when counting in Czech, the word for *five* is *pět*; however, there also exists *pětka* which can mean a *number five tram*, a *fail grade* at secondary school, just as *jednička* describes a *number one tram* or *first-class*, *grade of A*. *Jedenáctka* (the number 11), in addition to a public service vehicle running on that route, may denote a football team as in English, or a penalty kick in football (cf. German *Elfmeter*). In other words, these words are heavily context bound.

Thus *desítka* is derived from *deset* (*ten*) and literally means the number ten or group of ten, as in, for example:

(9) a. Skončila v druhé desítce.

- a tricky sentence to translate succinctly into English, though the meaning is clear enough:

(9) b. She finished somewhere between 11th and 20th position.

True, *desítky milionů* would become tens of millions in English; however, in cases such as our questionnaire sentence (see below), where *desítky* is followed by a noun rather than another numerical expression (such as thousands, millions, billions), cultural norms require that the literal translation of the Czech Only a few tens of people should become *Only a few dozen people*.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires were completed during 2007 by 60 students at the Faculty of Education of the University of West Bohemia and a total of 120 secondary school students from four different schools in Pilsen. All respondents completed the questionnaires during their regular English lessons without consulting a dictionary. The questions and tasks were chosen bearing in mind the level of knowledge one could reasonably expect from the students who formed the target group. All respondents had been studying English for a minimum of five years and, in some cases, as many as nine. Clarification of certain questions was sometimes given when asked for by the students, providing the teacher did not lead the students towards a particular answer. For example, it was felt no harm could be done by supplying the students upon request with a suitable English equivalent for na vlastní oči in section B, sentence (b). No time limit was imposed, though respondents were encouraged to respond as quickly and spontaneously as possible, without recourse to a dictionary and without consulting their desk neighbours.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE QUESTIONS

Our initially informal monitoring of Czech speakers' conversations in a variety of social situations suggested that, in Czech as in English, people tend to use approximations when providing information concerning, for example, time and distance. Subsequently, a more formal investigation by Iliescu (forthcoming) confirmed that native Czech speakers use vague language in similar ways to English in the sense referred to by Channell (1994) as 'using a precise number with an approximate meaning'. Section A of the questionnaire was designed further to test this phenomenon, with two control questions inserted (7 and 9) where we would expect the answers to be quite specific.

Section B consisted of just two short sentences, taken from internet discussion groups, both containing quantity expressions which we anticipated might cause problems in translation. The first part of section C, a text taken from an online newspaper[6], was used partly to verify some of the problems from the translation exercise in B and, at the same time, introduce some additional quantity expressions whose translation is not entirely straightforward.

As regards the choice of text, the primary citerion was that it should contain a large number of quantity expressions within a relatively low word count; we also strove to provide a relatively recent news item which would be of some interest to the target group. The English version of the text was translated from the Czech original by the authors of this article and certain expressions of quantity removed which respondents were asked to fill in. It should be noted here that the English text was simplified considerably from a lexical viewpoint, mainly for reasons of space, so that, for example, strážců pořádku was translated as police officers rather than the more literally precise guardians of the law and účastníků party as ravers rather than those taking part in the party. It was felt that in neither case should using the more economic expressions in English have any effect on the outcome of the questionnaire.

Finally, in section C2 , respondents were asked to quantify the vague expressions in the text, our aim being to establish whether there was any common consensus as to what people imagined by the given vague expressions.

Section A: Please answer the following questions.

1) What time did you get up today?

2) How far did you travel to get to school today?

3) How long did the journey take you?

4) How many people live in your home town?

5) How much time do you spend per week watching TV?

6) How much time do you spend per week preparing for lessons at school
(for example: homework, compulsory reading, learning for tests …)?

7) How many letters are in
   a) the English alphabet
   b) the Czech alphabet?

8) How far is it from Pilsen to Prague?

9) What is the value of the mathematical symbol π ?

10) In your opinion, how old are the people in the photographs below?

Age:…………… Age: …………

Section B: Translate the following sentences into English.

a) Znám několik učitelů dobrých až skvělých.
b) Jen několik desítek lidí může na vlastní oči sledovat semifinále SuperStar.

Section C1: Translate into English the highlighted expressions in the Czech text.

Při zásahu proti technoparty CzechTek na Tachovsku byly zraněny **(1) desítky** lidí na obou stranách. Podle policejních informací lékaři ošetřili **(2) na padesát** strážců pořádku a dvacet technařů, tři policisté a patnáct účastníků party skončilo v nemocnici.

/.../

Na louce dopoledne zbývalo **(3) posledních asi deset** aut, v okolí dalších sto padesát. **(4) Zhruba tisícovka** technařů se nechce vzdát své taneční party a podle policistů se sjíždějí do neupřesněné obce na Tachovsku.

/.../

Účastníci technoparty podle policie poškodili čtyři policejní automobily. Policisté měli podle reportérů poškozené **(5) minimálně dvě** dodávky, kterým technaři rozbili okna

/.../

Na místě, kde se ještě v sobotu bavilo **(6) několik tisíc** lidí z celé Evropy, zůstávalo v neděli ráno **(7) několik stanů**, odpadky a střepy /.../ Po louce se potulovalo **(8) jen pár** technařů.

The intervention against the CzechTek technoparty in the Tachov region resulted in **...(1)...** of injuries on both sides. Police sources say doctors treated **...(2)...** police officers and twenty ravers; three police officers and fifteen ravers finished in hospital.

/.../

In the morning **...(3)...**cars remained in the field, with a further 150 nearby. **...(4)...** ravers did not want to end their party and according to the police went to an unspecified location in the Tachov region

/.../

According to the police, the ravers damaged four police vehicles. According to reporters, **...(5)...** police vans had their windows broken by ravers

/.../

On Saturday**...(6)...** people from all over Europe were still partying here; on Sunday morning there remained **...(7)...** tents and litter /.../ **...(8)...** ravers were wandering round the field

Section C2: How many do you think of (±) when reading the following expressions?

a) na padesát *(l. 4)*

b) Zhruba tisícovka (*l. 11*)

c) několik tisíc *(l. 23)*

d) jen pár *(l. 25)*

Thank you for your assistance with this questionnaire!

RESULTS AND COMMENTARY

Our original intention had been to analyse separately responses from the university students and those from secondary schools; however, it soon transpired that, overall, there was little difference between the results from the target groups. This was a little surprising, especially in sections B and C1 – both of which involved translation – where we expected the university students specialising in English to possess a better command of the idiomatic language. We will comment on this more later; for the time being, however, we would just like to note that when discussing the results, our remarks will apply to all the respondents as a whole – unless otherwise stated.

Section A

1. What time did you get up today?

It was anticipated that replies to this question would be expressed in whole hours, half hours, quarters or possibly any of the other multiples of five, but it was unlikely anyone would say, for example, 6.17 or 7.32 a.m. This was borne out by the responses, the overwhelming majority of which were either whole or half hours, with just 17 giving answers on the quarter-to or quarter-past mark, and a mere three others multiples of five (6.25 a.m., 7.10 a.m. and 7.40 a.m.)

2. How far did you travel to get to school today?

Likewise in Question 2 it seemed reasonable to expect that, in most cases, numbers would be rounded up to at least the nearest half-kilometre and, more likely, the nearest whole. Another factor to play a role here was that a high percentage of the questionnaires were administered on a Monday: this was a deliberate tactic since we could expect that, although some of the respondents were living locally, several of the students would have travelled to school that same morning from their homes outside Pilsen – hence some of the distances would exceed 50 or even 100 kilometres. In all instances where the distances were expressed in metres only, a round number was given: for example 200 metres, 500 metres, 800 metres etc. 13 respondents gave non-round numbers between 11 km and 20 km; beyond 20 kilometres, there was one respondent who stated '54 km', but this was exceptional: in all other cases, once the distance covered was greater than 20 km, respondents would approximate the distance, stating a number divisible by five.

3. How long did the journey take you?

Here journeys of under ten minutes were stated with greater precision – though excluding any seconds element; otherwise, the responses were all multiples of 5 (25 minutes, 1 hour 10 minutes …) Responses to this question also contained more qualifiers (51 in all) than the answers to any other question in section A; however, out of the various approximators potentially available, respondents tended to restrict themselves to just two: about and approximately (frequently abbreviated to approx.); otherwise, there were three instances of roughly; two of around and seven cases where the written abbreviation ca or cca was used.

4. How many people live in your home town?

Here there were three cases where respondents came from a village whose population was less than 1000; in each such instance a round number was quoted: 420, 500 and 750 respectively. All other numbers bar one were given in round thousands, the sole exception being 16,500.

5. How much time do you spend per week watching TV?

6. How much time do you spend per week preparing for lessons at school (for example: homework, compulsory reading, learning for tests …)?

Responses to questions 5 and 6 were all given as a precise number of hours, with the exception of one of the two respondents in Question 6 who decided to answer in the form of hours per day; in the case in question this was 1.5 hours per day, to the respondent added '= 10.5 hours'.

7. How many letters are there in

a) the English alphabet b) the Czech alphabet?

This was the first of the "control questions" – in other words, a question requiring a precise response which could be reasonably anticipated in advance. True, 5 respondents answered 24 for (a); there were also two 25s and a 27; all the others were spot on with 26. Curiously (b) provided considerable variety from 42 at the top end to 31 at the bottom. As a cultural aside, we may note that it appears

Czechs do not consider the number of letters in their alphabet essential general knowledge, since a subsequent random survey embracing all age groups and levels of education found a majority of Czechs were unable to answer this question with any degree of conviction. Confusion evidently arises over whether to include certain accented letters in the count, even if these cannot appear in initial position in a word. The most popular responses, though, were 39, 34 and 32 – in almost equal measure. But all answers for both (a) and (b) were stated exactly with no qualifying *about* or *approx*.

8. How far is it from Pilsen to Prague?

This question also elicited a variety of responses, mostly multiples of ten with 70 at the bottom end and 130 at the top. Of the exceptions, one claimed it was a mere 54 km (the same respondent who answered 54 km to question 2), another 97 and a third 97.1 – the sole example of a fraction of a kilometre appearing in this question. In subsequent discussions with the target groups, the "97.1" respondent admitted his answer was based on the fact that he had recently made a door-to-door journey by car from Pilsen to Prague and had noted the exact distance travelled.

The most interesting response to this question was "about 100 km – maybe 88". Nothing remotely similar to this formulation appeared anywhere in any of the completed questionnaires.

9. What is the value of the mathematical symbol π ?

Responses here revealed a cultural difference inasmuch as English students are traditionally taught 3.142, whereas almost all the Czechs in the survey gave the answer to just two decimal places; those who did not, presumably keen to demonstrate their mathematical knowledge, offered four decimal places followed by a series of dots. Again, though, as in Question 7, the answers were given without any additional approximation comments

10. In your opinion, how old are the people in the photographs below?

It was interesting to note that 117 respondents thought the girl was at least 5 years older than the boy – in one case the difference was as much as 13 years (30 vs. 17), when in fact there were fewer than two years between them; moreover, they belong to the same generation as the respondents themselves. Another noteworthy feature was that all the respondents bar one stated an exact age rather than a possible range, the one exception having 25-30 for (a) and 17-22 for (b). However, subsequent informal discussions with some of the respondents revealed that initially they had, in fact, been thinking in terms of a range of ages (*Ona vypadá na pětadvacet, šestadvacet nebo tak nějak – She looks about 25, 26* *or so* was one characteristic verbal response), but decided for the purposes of a questionnaire it was better to be more specific. This clearly implies that an oral questionnaire might have produced significantly different results with greater use of approximators and ranges.

SECTION B

The **only several* formulation mentioned above appeared in no less than 43 of the responses in our survey. However, the most numerous instance of mistranslation occurred in relation to the word *desítka*, where 141 respondents wrote the contextually inappropriate *tens* and fourteen **decades*.

We had expected that some of the secondary school students might not be familiar with the word *dozen* and a subsequent mini-vocabulary test in some of the relevant target groups proved this indeed was the case. For technical reasons, it was impossible to conduct this test with all members of the same groups who had completed the questionnaire; nonetheless, the results were still revealing inasmuch as only nine out of 98 secondary school students tested knew the word *dozen* and were able to define and/or translate it. The ratio was reversed with the university students, where 48 out of 53 students knew that the English *dozen* has its formal equivalent in the Czech *tucet*; however, when questioned orally later, the majority admitted it had not occurred to them to use *dozen* as a translation of *desítka*.

Overall, just six respondents rendered *desítka* correctly in the questionnaires, albeit in one case with a misspelling of *dozen* as **douzen*. Four others chose only some people, which sidesteps the ‘tens v. dozens problem’, albeit at the cost of some semantic loss in the translation.

There were certain other problems with the translation in the form of phrases which would be judged incorrect even if ‘tens’ were an acceptable rendering of *desítky*, for example **some of tens people* or **only a few tens people*.

SECTION C1

The results of C2 were the patchiest of the survey, since 29 of the respondents did not respond at all, leaving the section completely blank. In a further 12 cases, the instructions were misinterpreted and respondents merely duplicated their translations from section C1. Nor did all those respondents who offered valid answers always complete all four parts of this section.

For all four items, we had expected respondents to give a range of numbers; however, in (a) 57 respondents gave just one number for *na padesát*: in 30 instances, this was the number 50 itself, while the remainder contained selections from 43 up to 54. In (b) as many as 64 respondents did the same for Zhruba tisícovka: 35 put 1,000; the others ranged from 870 to 1,020 – and not all of these were multiples of five. One-off instances of, say, 893, 987 or 998 may be seen statistically insignificant eccentricities; however, one potentially interesting feature is that in the majority of such cases where just one specific figure was cited, that figure tended to be lower than the exemplar number. This is shown in the tables below.

na padesát				Zhruba tisícovka			
choice	< 50	50	> 50	choice	< 1000	1000	> 1000
no. of respondents	19	30	8	no. of respondents	18	35	11

Table 3: One-number responses to ‘about 50’; Table 4: one-number responses to ‘roughly 1000’

Otherwise, as far as the ranges are concerned, the results confirmed the findings of Channell (1994: 56) that ‘the distance apart of the two exemplar numbers increases with the size of the numbers involved’. In the case of (a) answers contained all five possible equidistant combinations from 45-55 at the high end to 49-51 at the bottom; in (b) the largest range was 900-1,100, the least 990-1,010. Were we to summarise these results using the round number principle, it might be said that, as a rough guide, the range was approximately ± 10%.

For (b) all the ranges offered were multiples of 10, the most popular choice being 900-1,100 and 950-1,150, though there were other examples such as 950-1050 or 930-1,070. One other curious factor was that not all the choices of range in (b) were equidistant either side of the exemplar number; moreover, in 22 of the 34 instances where this happened, the range was greater on the top side of the exemplar number e.g. 980-1,050 or 970-1,100. These apparent anomalies may just be a quirk of the data collection and more completed questionnaires would be needed to determine whether this pattern would repeat itself over a larger sampling.

For *několik tisíc* in (c), again the respondents were split between those who offered a range and those who gave just one specific number, there being 92 cases of the former and 47 of the latter, where the most extreme case was 60,000; this, however, was a one-off: none of the other numbers was above 10,000. The most popular choices were 3,000 and 4,000 (21 of the former, 13 of the latter). Where ranges were offered, 10,000 represented the upper limit of the scale, though the most popular cut-off point was 5,000 (57 respondents), where the choices were as follows:

choice	**2000–5000**	**3000–5000**	**4000–5000**
no. of respondents	**11**	**40**	**6**

Table 5: Ranges for několik tisíc (“several thousand”) with 5000 as the upper limit

If we add to the 11 in the 2,000–5,000 category the four respondents who gave 2,000–10,000 as their answer, together with seven cases of 2,000 in the one-number category, then a total of 22 respondents considered that the concept of *několik* begins at two.

In (d) the favourite single-number choices were '2' and '3', with 31 and 17 responses respectively. All answers occurring more than once and involving a range appear in the table below. One interesting feature here is that the range 2-10 proved the most popular choice – this is in contrast to the previous question, where 3000-5000 was preferred. The inclusion of 'two' in the range for *jen pár* seems natural enough, given the literal meaning of 'pár'; however, that the range 2-10 for *jen pár* should attract a higher number of responses than 2,000-10,000 for *několik tisíc* is something of a surprise, as in normal circumstances we would expect *několik* to be at least equivalent to *pár* and, in this particular instance, the preceding *jen* to reduce the value of *pár* somewhat.

choice	> 2	2-5	2–10	max. 10	10–20	up to 50	50–100
no. of respondents	**11**	**15**	**27**	**3**	**7**	**5**	**2**

Table 6: Concepts of *jen pár*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the basis of the results so far, it seems reasonable to suggest that – cultural differences in units of measurement notwithstanding – Czech and English use of approximations is similar, both in terms of using round numbers and in the range offered either side of a reference point number. However, more research would be required in order further to test what might be seen as certain emerging patterns, particularly in relation to the understating of an approximate round number and the lop-sided ranges from section C2 of the questionnaire discussed above.

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Notes on Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse (with some Implications for Teaching)

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The present paper attempts to contribute to the study of coherence, an important linguistic notion not yet uniformly defined by linguists. While taking coherence into account particularly in relation to cohesion and intertextuality, the author concentrates on the differences between spoken and written discourse which are reflected in the language means that speakers/writers use when encoding the messages they want to convey to their addressees and which the hearers/readers have to decode in order to arrive at meanings coherent with the speaker's/writer's communicative goals. The author - a university teacher - also includes some implications for the teaching process which result from the important role of coherence relations performed in the structuring of a well-formed and comprehensible text.

INTRODUCTION

Since coherence is understood in the present paper as a result of an ongoing process of negotiation of meaning between all participants in a given communicative situation and a matter of interpretation (Bublitz 1988), it follows that it cannot be an inherent quality of a text. Accordingly, it can be stated that any text, either spoken or written, can be considered coherent if it is understood to be coherent by the discourse participants, i.e. in Bublitz's terms (1988) "a text is not coherent in itself but is understood as coherent in an actual context" (ibid.: 32). Thus, the entire situational context including all discourse participants, i.e. writers/speakers and readers/hearers, their relationships and the amount of background knowledge they share, as well as co-text, i.e. the linguistic part of the environment in which particular referring expressions are used (Yule 1996: 21), is crucial for an understanding and coherent interpretation of discourse.

COHERENCE AND COHESION

Although both coherence and cohesion are generally considered important linguistic notions, they are not yet established in the same way in linguistics. While cohesion became accepted as a well-defined and useful category for text and discourse analysis, in particular after the publication of Halliday and Hasan's Cohesion in English in 1976, for long time coherence was rather a vague notion. However, this situation has changed in the past three decades. This complex concept has been given considerable attention by many linguists, which is evidenced, for instance, by the great number of publications on coherence that have recently appeared (cf. Lenk, Gietl, Bublitz 1997). Coherence has become one of the key concepts in text and discourse analysis. At the same time, however, there has been a considerable shift in the ways coherence is understood. Coherence is no longer a static product of textual connectivity and cohesion: these days it is conceptualized as a dynamic process and a potentially variable co-operative achievement of the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader, since it is a context-dependent, hearer-/reader-oriented and comprehension-based interpretative notion (cf. Bublitz 1997: 2).

Halliday and Hasan (1989) view cohesion and coherence as closely related and conceive that "variation in coherence is the function of variation in the cohesive harmony of a text" (ibid: 94). However, many linguists draw a stricter line of demarcation between the two concepts. For example, Mey (2001) states that "cohesion establishes local relations between syntactic items (reference, concord and the like), whereas coherence has to do with the global meaning involved in what we want to express through our activity" (ibid: 154). Moreover, he believes that "intuitively, we are able to distinguish coherent talk from incoherent babbling" (ibid: 153) (cf. the role of intertextuality in Beaugrande & Dressler 1981, Ventola 1997) and this belief of his is in accordance with the assumption in the present study that coherence is a matter of interpretation and permanent negotiation of meaning between all discourse participants (cf. Povolná 2007), although it must be stressed that the means a hearer has at his/her disposal are different from those a reader can make use of.

Another linguist who distinguishes between coherence and cohesion is Stubbs, who states (1983) that coherence refers to relations between communicative acts and cohesion has to do with relations between surface linguistic forms. Similarly, Widdowson (1979) defines cohesion as the overt structural link between sentences as formal items and coherence as the link between the communicative acts that sentences are used to perform. According to Miššíková (2007) coherence "is best defined as a text-external relation, while cohesion is obviously a text-internal relation" (ibid: 171).

Furthermore, it must be emphasized that coherence is viewed as independent of cohesion, since, in the author's opinion, a text, either spoken or written, can be considered coherent without cohesive means and, conversely, a text can comprise cohesive means without being understood as coherent. It is possible to imagine a text that does not comprise any cohesive means or only a few of them, but which is still considered coherent owing, for example, to a great amount of background knowledge all discourse participants share (e.g. a piece of spoken face-to-face conversation between close friends). On the other hand, a text can be formally well-organized with many explicit cohesive means, but still cannot be viewed as coherent owing to the lack of logical relations between its parts (e.g. any text which does not make sense in spite of comprising many appropriately placed cohesive means). The above-mentioned view is in accordance with, for example, that of Seidlhofer and Widdowson (1997), who state that one "might derive a coherent discourse from a text with no cohesion in it at all … (and) textual cohesion provides no guarantee of discourse coherence" (ibid: 207), and Bublitz (1988), who maintains that "cohesion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for coherence" (ibid: 32).

COHERENCE, GENRES AND INTERTEXTUALITY

Many coherent links of the text are recoverable on the basis of previous experience of particular text types and their semantic organization; in other words, people use their common sense and impose coherence on the text (Tárnyiková 1995: 24-25), while trying to achieve a coherent interpretation and understanding of a particular text. In this connection Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) speak about intertextuality as our previous experience with other texts (or rather text types) and as a reliance on other texts (or an echoing of other texts) and include the notion of intertextuality together with coherence and cohesion among the seven standards of textuality, the others being intentionality, acceptability, situationality and informativity, while stating that the text is not communicative if any of these standards is not considered to have been satisfied (ibid: 3ff.).

Since coherence is an interpretative notion (cf. Bublitz 1988) which depends on individuals' comprehension abilities, coherent interpretation and understanding, it follows that coherence is not a state, but a process (Tárnyiková 2002: 56). Accordingly, coherence is always only partial because texts are often only partly coherent for their addressees, depending on their comprehension abilities and their previous experience of similar texts. However, there are some signals that can help disambiguate the message and enhance an interpretation which is coherent with the communicative intentions of particular discourse participants under given communicative circumstances. These guiding means signal the coherence of the utterance with the prior discourse, the coherence within the utterance itself, and also the overall coherence within the entire communicative situation (cf. Lenk 1995: 351).

Coherence is based on the language means used in the text as well as on additional information provided by the entire situational context, including the social and cultural environment, communicative principles, conversational maxims and the interpreter's encyclopaedic knowledge. (For the role of extra-linguistic knowledge related to the contexts in which the texts occur see also Brown & Yule 1983: 71ff.)

Since it is not texts but rather people that cohere when texts are understood, it can even be stated that for one and the same text there exist a speaker's/writer's, a hearer's/reader's and an analyst's coherence, which may or may not match

(Bublitz 1997: 2). Moreover, since each reading of a text is performed with a particular intention and in a particular context, the interpretation of the same text by the same reader or analyst on different occasions need not to be identical, which entails some important implications for teaching, in particular the distinction between coherence and cohesion (see below). As Seidlhofer and Widdowson (1997) state it is not a matter of asking "whether a text is coherent or not, but how coherent (one) can make it" (ibid: 210). Different hearers/readers hear/read different meanings into the same text since they make the text coherent in different ways. Accordingly, coherence cannot be taken for granted but, depending on situation, genre or text type, rather viewed as being more or less temporary, since it is permanently in need of being checked against new information. It can only be approximate and a matter of degree and may be described as a scalar notion (cf. Bublitz 1997).

In order to help their hearers/readers create coherence, speakers/writers normally use signals to guide them to a suggested line of understanding which comes as close as possible to their own understanding of coherence relations. Conversely, hearers/readers use these signals as instructions to achieve coherence and arrive at an interpretation which is in conformity with the speakers'/writers' communicative intentions. However, the signals that speakers use are different from those that writers have at their disposal, while spoken discourse can be characterised by a permanent negotiation of meaning between all discourse participants (cf. Povolná 2007), there is a "lack of overt negotiation of meaning in written discourse" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson 1997) because the time of production does not coincide with the time of reception and interpretation.

In the process of human communication people make predictions about the meanings that are to be communicated and thus exchanged with discourse participants. Consequently, it is evident that they have to draw on some established patterns stored in their background knowledge on the basis of their previous experience (cf. Östman 1997). According to Hatim (1997) genres are "conventionalized forms of language in use, each with its own function and goals adopted by a given community of text users or socio-cultural grouping to cater for a particular social occasion" (ibid: 31); therefore, in creating a text a writer/speaker interacts with the existing genre-specific patterns by reproducing or modifying them, and in making sense of a text a reader/hearer is likely to activate the relevant genre-specific meaning potential available in his/her background knowledge in order to arrive at a coherent text. Thus, intertextuality as mentioned above as the relationship holding between a text and similar texts previously experienced affects both text production and text interpretation. In agreement with Dontcheva-Navratilova (2007) it must be stated that "genres and text-types impose various constraints on the interpretative potential of texts" (ibid: 129). In consequence, while some texts allow for numerous interpretations (e.g. literary texts and informal private face-to-face conversation), others, especially those characterised by conservatism and formulaicity, enforce a very restricted range of interpretations which are specific to a given discourse community (e.g. legal documents, scientific texts).

COHERENCE IN SPOKEN ENGLISH

Any spoken interaction is governed by two main principles - turn-taking and co-operation between at least two participants. Turn-taking necessarily implies hearers' attempts to arrive at coherent interpretation and understanding. Since coherence is understood as a matter of interpretation, i.e. how participants in a given conversation interpret what the current speaker wants to communicate, it becomes evident that each participant creates his/her own interpretation and understanding of what is being mediated by speech. In addition, each participant's interpretation influences the way he/she communicates and formulates his/her contributions for the further development of the communication. These, in turn, influence further contributions produced by the other participants in a given communicative situation and so forth, since conversation is a co-operative process in which "each contribution should be treated as part of the negotiation of 'what is being talked about' " (Brown & Yule 1983: 94).

Coherence is a matter of interpretation and the result of an ongoing process of negotiation of meaning between discourse participants. In this co-operative process cohesive means, including what are mostly labelled discourse markers (e.g. well, I mean, I think, you know, you see, OK, all right, that's right, anyway, perhaps, in fact, certainly, honestly), play an important role. They function as signposts in the communication because they facilitate the hearer's correct interpretation and understanding of what is being communicated and thus are close to other cohesive means such as conjunctions. They "indicate the underlying structure of the discourse or the underlying functions of individual utterances" (Stubbs 1983: 178) and consequently become crucial for the achievement of coherence. These guiding signals help disambiguate the message and foster an interpretation which is coherent with the communicative goals of the participants in a given interaction.

Although discourse markers are not constitutive elements of the syntactic structure of the language (Aijmer 2002: 16) and mostly do not contribute much to the propositional content of utterances into which they are inserted (Stenström 1994), in spoken English they perform important pragmatic functions: they can express, for example, the speaker's intentions, feelings and emotions, or the speaker's attitude towards the addressee or the situation under discussion, thus enhancing the smooth flow of interaction and the establishment and maintenance of coherence. In agreement with Aijmer (2002) it can be stated that if they are absent or used wrongly, current hearers may have problems establishing a coherent interpretation of the discourse; therefore it is very important for a foreign learner to become familiar with them, for instance, in the teaching process, and "be able to use them quickly, and appropriately, in different situations" (Leech & Svartvik 1994: 13).

COHERENCE IN WRITTEN DISCOURSE

Unlike coherence in spoken discourse, where "the entire situational context plays a crucial role in the ongoing process of 'negotiation' of meaning between conversational partners" (Povolná 2006: 133), coherence in written discourse cannot be explicitly negotiated, since the discourse context is 'split', i.e. "there is no reciprocal management of the discourse" and "readers are co-opted without their overt co-operation" (Seidlhofer & Widdowson 1997: 209). The time of text reception and interpretation is not simultaneous with the time of text production, and the situational context of the writer and the reader need not be the same. Since a written text is "of its nature only a partial record of the discourse" (ibid: 208), the writer has to anticipate the ideas, values and expectations of his/her reader and use some explicit guiding signals (e.g. cohesive means such as conjunctions and patterns of information processing, cf. Dontcheva-Navratilova 2007) in order to instruct the supposed reader towards an intended interpretation of the text. The reader, however, interprets the text as discourse by relating it to his/her background knowledge and communicative goals in a particular situational context, and therefore the reader's interpretation of the text may differ considerably from that intended by the writer. Thus, a written text can be considered a carrier of "the interpretation potential" (Sarangi 2004: 299), which is "activated in the process of a particular interpretative decoding in which the reader creates his/her own discourse from the text by assigning intentionality and recreating its meaning" (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2007: 129).

In order to guide the reader towards "an understanding of coherence which comes close to or, ideally, even matches (his/her) own" (Bublitz & Lenk 1997: 154), the writer mostly has to structure the information more explicitly and thus use more explicit cohesive means more frequently than in spoken discourse and, moreover, he/she has to rely on patterns which are well-established within the given discourse community and can be interpreted by analogy. In Brown and Yule's opinion (1983), the principle of analogy together with local interpretation forms "the basis of the assumption of coherence in our experience of life in general, hence in our experience of discourse as well" (ibid: 67). Therefore, especially in formal written discourse (e.g. legal documents or specialized scientific texts), which is characterised by the primary concern for clarity and disambiguation, the writer has to use conventionally recognised signals and communicative strategies to make his/her intentions unambiguously clear and guide his/her readers towards the intended interpretation of the text. Thus, when deriving coherence from a text both the writer and the reader rely strongly on the entire situational context, including the shared background knowledge of the members of a particular discourse community and previous experience of processing well-established generic patterns. For instance, in the genre of legal documents (e.g. last wills, business contracts), the writers use a standardised pattern of information processing which is indicated by cohesive devices to facilitate the hearer's correct interpretation and understanding of what is being communicated.

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

On the basis of the distinctions between coherence and cohesion as discussed above, it becomes clear that, in the teaching process, it is very important that students should become acquainted with these important linguistic notions, including the relating distinction between discourse and text (cf. Seidelhofer & Widdowson 1997). Moreover, students have to realize that the differences between spoken and written discourse and various genres within each language variety are also reflected in the ways coherence is achieved. Thus, it is crucial to concentrate on both the notions from the point of view of text producers as well as text receivers and interpreters; otherwise students will not be able to produce well-structured texts that are comprehensible to their supposed addressees and, conversely, when interpreting texts, they may face problems when attempting to arrive at a coherent interpretation.

When composing written texts, students should be taught to make allowances for their supposed readers and the problems these readers may encounter in particular when only insufficient cohesive means are engaged. When producing spoken texts, students should realize that it is always necessary to pay attention to their hearers and their immediate reactions while negotiating coherence and, furthermore, they should be taught to use adequate guiding signals to instruct their hearers how to interpret the message being communicated in conformity with their communicative goals.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion of coherence has proved that coherence is not an inherent quality of a text since it is a matter of interpretation and may vary according to the entire situational context. However, explicit signals used in the text, either spoken or written, can help the current hearer/reader derive coherence which matches as much as possible the intended communicative goals of the speaker/writer.

Since, in the present paper, coherence is understood as a scalar notion dependent on the current hearers'/readers' comprehension skills and the social and cultural background knowledge determined by a given discourse community, it becomes evident that the best way to approach coherence is from the point of view of pragmatics.

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Course Design in an ELTE Study Programme

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Primary and secondary education in the Czech Republic is currently undergoing a major curricular reform. So far, the teachers in the Czech Republic have been obliged to follow curricula set by the state. Traditional curricula are now replaced by Framework Educational Programmes. Each school is required to design their own School Educational Programme, which is an outcome of team cooperation by all teachers at the school. To prepare future language teachers for their new role as curriculum designers who are capable of implementing integrated approaches in their own teaching, modifications in teacher education study programmes are needed.

INNOVATIONS IN ELTE

At the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno, we introduced course design as the main subject matter in the final semester of the ELT methodology course in our teacher education study programme. The aims of the course were to develop the teacher trainees' reflective and planning competences and equip them with tools vital for the role of curriculum designers. During the course trainees worked on the design of a one-year course of English for upper-primary learners at state schools.

As a topic combining theory and practice and offering a high level of challenge for teacher trainees, the course design reflects the complexity of the teaching and learning processes. The process of designing the courses was rooted in the conception proposed by Graves (2000). Graves understands course design as a systematic process consisting of several components that are interrelated and each of them "influences and is influenced by the other in some way" (p.4). She sees the foundation for the other processes in articulating teacher beliefs and defining context.

Teacher trainees were asked to address the following issues: teacher beliefs, aims and objectives as set by current educational documents, needs analysis, content specification, materials specification, modes of delivery, class management, assessment plan, dealing with learners with special educational needs, and the course evaluation.

As for the input, a series of six seminars, each devoted to a particular aspect of the above was complemented with online support – a course in VLE Moodle

(http://moodlinka.ped.muni.cz/course/view.php). The online course also allowed continuous discussions in asynchronous online forums. Students were asked to post selected parts of the projects to inspire colleagues.

In this paper we want to focus on two major components of the projects, namely the articulation of teacher beliefs and content specification.

TEACHER BELIEFS

After the first session of the Course Design class, the students were asked to write a short essay (150 – 250 words) of what they believed language, language learning and language teaching were. They were supposed to identify and think about their personal goals as language teachers that followed from their beliefs.

Many of them responsibly accomplished the assignment and brought very thoughtful, complex and enriching ideas, some of which we are going to examine closer. Most of them wrote about language as a system of signs that enables communication, stressed the role of inner motivation in the process of language learning and teaching and the role of the teacher who should perform the role of a competent guide in the process. The students wrote about language as music, passion, fascination, a bridge to other cultures and people, a key that opens the doors to other cultures, a multi-level medium, an expression and the most important part of the human personality. They also brought a number of other ideas, metaphors and concepts of language.They did not limit themselves to a simple concept of language as a means of verbal communication and language learning as a long-time process but observed that language is a powerful tool that can either build up lives or completely destroy them, as a means of expressing uplifting, encouragement, praise, appreciation, love, motivation, acceptance, welcome and truth but also a means of expressing lies, discouragement, hatred, contempt, and scorn. The teacher should help the learners to become aware of the power of language and of the fact that language is firmly tied to the identity of an individual, the national cultures that speak it and cultural interaction with other countries. According to the students, the capacity of each language is different and what is possible to express in one language is not possible to express in another one; the possibility to express ideas and feelings and the poetics of language is infinite and language learning and finding ways of expressing oneself both in the mother tongue and other languages is an adventure, a way of getting to know both oneself and other people physically, emotionally and spiritually; getting to know the world, truth, and richness of life. For some people, however, language learning is a cause of stress and low-spiritedness. How can a teacher motivate and help learners who have such a mindset? Does the fact that language is a system help less verbally talented students? Is it beneficial to help these students discover the system? A good and efficient system of teaching grammar, zealous, motivated and responsible teacher and learners, and a plenitude of regular opportunities for active practice of the language can bring astounding results in a relatively short time indeed. Mastering a language is a long-term, never ending process but the ability to communicate in daily life and basic situations in English can be reached in a relative short period of time. The student teachers are fully aware of all this. Let us read some of their pieces of writing.

Petra Horská gave a true picture of the struggle each human being experiences on numerous occasions in their lives:

> Language is the means and the way people communicate their inner world. It is the expression of thoughts and emotions and in fact anything that passes their minds. How problematic though this "communication" may be, since there is a strong control within each human being – either personal unique to everyone, or social, often repeated and multiplied among members of identical cultures and thus exposed to identical stereotypes. How much people try to hide their Freudian "id" suppressing it with the censorship of "superego".

Helena Rýlichová reflected on the power of language:

> Language arranges us unforgettable moments of happiness but at the same time troubles and problems. Language gives us the chance to live, to breathe, and to make use of our skills, no matter whether we communicate on the highest level or try to tell somebody by using legs and arms that we are hungry. Language declares war and this same language declares peace. And who is the silly man who claims that language is just a set of symbols and signs? Could symbols and signs achieve magnitudes like this? Are teachers those, who could influence all this mentioned above?

Eva Táborová expressed her opinions on language, language learning and the role of the teacher in a very creative way:

> What does language mean to me? Language is a code. There are many people all over the world and all of them need to communicate. It is obvious, that you need some code that most of the listeners can understand. Language is a gun. It is very easy to hurt someone by words. How to protect yourself from it? By using the same gun – words. On the other hand language is a flower. You can use words to express compliments, to praise, to help. Language is a house. You need some base, on which you can build. You need rules how to build. And you need the material. What is learning a language? It is a fight. Sometimes you have to overcome many difficulties to reach your aim. Learning languages means to have more and more friends. You can make contact with more people than those who speak your mother tongue. And what does teaching a language mean to me? Teaching language is mainly a question. How to motivate children and young people not only to learn the language but also to get them wanting? to learn it? It is a challenge. Am I able to do it?

Ivana Kojetská debated especially the factor of motivation and the role of the teacher in the process of motivation:

> Language is music to me. It is not only a means of communication, the usage of each person's language, whatever language it is; it is an expression of his or her character, attitude, values, temperament, social background and national

> trait. Diversity is what I value the most – various dialects, intonation, register. Some languages sound especially musical to me and that is in fact the utter criterion whether I decide to learn the language or not. People who only learn a language because they need it for work can never acquire it the same way as those who love the language and love learning it, listening to it as music. Learning a language as a hobby, as a passion, is the best way to learn. So teaching a language requires passing the teacher's love for the language on his or her students. The teacher should find out why the students want to learn (work, films, fun, prestige...) and adapt his or her methods, curriculum and course requirements to suit the needs of the students. Most importantly, the teacher and his or her methods of teaching have to be encouraging for the learner's autonomy.

Helena Titlová stressed the role of encouraging speaking in a language class:

> I believe that the time distribution of the language skills training should reflect the application of the skills in the real life. If we analyze one day of our life from the language point of view, we realize how much time we spend on listening and speaking to someone compared to the time spent on reading or writing activities. Of course, I mean a common day, not a day spent on studying for an exam or writing an essay. I believe that we spend at least twice more time on the spoken communication, which leads me to the conclusion that we should devote the same time to the training of the spoken communication in a class.

Alena Škorpíková shared her cheerful way of motivating students into learning of English:

> When I start teaching real beginners I tell them this comparison which in my opinion fits very well: English is like a lover. In the beginning you fall in love so deeply, you want to be with her all the time, admiring her, thinking about her. As time goes on you start revealing her bad habits, imperfections and you realize that you spent too much money and energy on her with maybe little or no progress. You might even be "fed up with" her. Stop and think what she has given to you. If you overcome some crises as in every relationship you will find out how much you need her in your life and cannot live without her.

Ivona Havelková wrote, also in a cheerful way, about her idea of the relationship between the learner and the teacher:

> The learners are the customers and teachers should treat them like that. Customers can sometimes be very rude and thoughtless, however, teachers should be able to deal with even difficult situations and keep their heads. All in all they are trying to motivate their customers to do more shopping - in this sense to continue studying the language.

Let us conclude with ideas of Veronika Rosová who gave a nice illustration of the whole process of language learning and teaching:

> Language learning is a way leading to a hidden treasure, and learners, being treasure hunters, must overcome a lot of obstacles, experience a huge amount of

> tough moments and fight in the most difficult, long-running battle with themselves against laziness, unwillingness to study regularly, insufficiently strong will, and a time-stealing pirate, which is for example television! On the other hand, it is also a world tour full of exciting experiences, fun, remarkable discoveries, and knowledge.

Language teaching is then giving learners the maps carefully planned by the teacher, who should monitor, check if the learners are following the instructions properly, as well as help them if they get lost on their way heading towards the wealth of knowledge.

> Even though the processes of language learning (searching for treasure) and language teaching (creating clear maps leading to certain aims) are exacting and require a strong will, in the end the learners will find their dreamed-of treasure, wealth that no one can take from them. That is why it is worth searching for it!

On the whole, the teacher trainees enjoyed the "My Beliefs" task and found it a useful part of the Course Design class as it helped them articulate their own implicit ideas and concepts of language. At the same time, the course on Moodlinka enabled them to share their ideas with all the other students and read and comment on theirs, which gave the task a new and irreplaceable dimension.

CONTENT SPECIFICATION - PROJECTS IN THE ENGLISH LESSONS

Foreign language teachers and teacher trainees seek ways to teach languages in the most effective way. They understand the language classes as preparation for real life situations and want to provide their students with activities comparable to real life.

Therefore a very important part of the course design projects was the syllabus. It is obviously possible to take the course book as the backbone of a syllabus but then the course would be boring and dull. If teachers require creativity in their students, they should prove their own creativity and enrich both the teaching and the learning process. A very interesting way to achieve this is to introduce various projects, creative work, which joins theory and practice. Designing projects is highly recommended for teachers who cannot stand the favourite response of many students: “It is useless to learn” or “I cannot use it outside the classroom.” To make students’ works purposeful seems to be a crucial point not only in foreign language teaching, but also in teaching generally.

Hana Čujková was one of the students in the course. She designed a syllabus that focused on creative projects for upper-primary learners. The following description of her ideas provides insight as to how the course encouraged students to think in new ways about teaching English to young learners. She claims that employing projects in English lessons is beneficial for various reasons. Firstly, students are encouraged to be creative and cooperative. They also have a chance to express themselves and have fun during lessons. Their own opinion is recognized. English is introduced to students as something natural, as an expression of their life and experience. Due to creative projects students feel more comfortable with English. Moreover, the teachers can introduce English as means to gain something valuable, which helps the students to appreciate their work by seeing the results. Finally, creative projects can make students more relaxed and a relaxed atmosphere invokes unintentional learning. As far as the teacher is concerned, the projects become an invaluable source of gaining information about students via their work.

Teachers have to decide carefully which projects are the best for the students to achieve particular educational aims. Firstly, suitable projects increase motivation to learn English as they raise the students' language-awareness. Successful projects also relate to students' lives, as students are encouraged to write and talk about their personal experiences. Information from successful projects is usable outside the classroom and can help students at the airport, in shops, or while explaining to foreigners how to get somewhere. Projects involving problem solving connect language learning with logical thinking. Finally, well-designed projects involve sensory integration and so they support the students' memory.

Before students start working on a project, they must be provided with some clues, such as useful vocabulary and phrases. Furthermore, they must have particular background information about the selected topics to build on. The third presumption is the students' awareness of what to do and what their work should consist of. Students have to also be informed in advance what materials and other aids they will need.

Projects can relate to topics from the course book or they can reflect important events or festivals, e.g. Christmas, Easter or various anniversaries. Very common topics suitable for creative projects are those related to English speaking countries, such as housing, weather, music or animals. They help students to get familiar with the lifestyles, habits and daily routine of other people which increases the students' cultural awareness. Projects related to English speaking countries may include making national flags from various materials, making a brochure attracting people to a place in an English-speaking country or staging a play with typical English black humour and conversational habits. It is advisable to invite a native speaker (preferably of the same age as most of the students or pupils) because the personal contact fosters closer relationships and positive attitudes towards foreigners. Afterwards the students can change into guides and show the English guest round their village or town. Finally, the students can make a present for their English guest. It can be a poster representing the village or the town where the students live.

The topic "my home" offers a great range of opportunities for designing a project. The students can design an advertisement (House for sale), similar to advertisements in English newspapers. The input and practice can be combined while learning about the types of houses and the students can walk down a village or a town and recognize them. They should be provided with a list of types of houses and tick those ones they identified. Drawing and describing students' ideal rooms combine creative work and speaking activity.

Many teachers use video recording to render the class interesting and purposeful. Video can be used in projects related to weather. Students may pretend to be forecast readers and elect the best forecast reader of the year. Within the "weather report project" they can also make maps and design extraordinary clothes for forecast readers.

While designing creative projects teachers should not forget about general educational goals. To motivate students and encourage them to sustain their efforts the teacher should appreciate their work, display their products or use them in follow-up activities.

Čujková's syllabus is one example of how the teacher trainees applied their education and experience to the semester's project in preparation for their role of curriculum designers.

PROJECT EVALUATION

The course was evaluated by the trainer and by the trainees themselves. The trainer's evaluation concerned the final products and the process. As for the quality of the course design projects, most of them met the criteria set at the beginning of the course. Fifteen percent of the products were evaluated as outstanding. They showed thorough reflection on a number of aspects and thoughtfully designed strategies of long-term planning. Only eight projects out of 62 had to be returned because they were lacking in quality or some important parts were missing. Not only the final products but also the process itself was valuable and contributed to the development of the student teachers' reflective and planning competences. Several students reported that they were unable to produce the quality of project that they wanted due to the lack of time in the last semester of their study, but thanks to the assignment they would know how to proceed when planning their teaching in the future.

Feedback gained from the students, both formal (survey administered at the end of the course) and informal, was predominantly positive, despite the high level of challenge involved in the task. Students saw the course design project as a meaningful activity related directly to the teaching practice. Surprisingly, their attitudes towards the Czech curricular reform (as identified by the same survey) were rather negative. The negative attitudes can probably be explained by the influence of negative attitudes of the schoolteachers who acted as mentors during the students' teaching practice. Otherwise, the totally different opinions of two very similar processes (i.e. course design projects and the design of school educational programmes) would be hardly understandable. In the feedback questionnaires the students also suggested several changes for the future. Some of those will be implemented in the following year. First, the projects will be directly related to teaching practice in the penultimate semester of the study programme. Then, the course design will become part of two semesters of ELT Methodology instead of just one, to allow students enough time for designing their projects.

The students who took part in the pilot seminar have been asked to cooperate on another project evaluation after the first year of their teaching career. Thus, within a year's time, they will be asked to evaluate the projects from the viewpoint of their "real" teaching experience and compare the seminar project with the process of designing their school educational programmes. This delayed feedback should contribute to the identification of the most and least useful components of the course design projects in the context of primary and secondary teaching in schools in the Czech Republic experiencing curricular reform.

CONCLUSION

The course design project focused on developing the student teachers' reflective and long term planning competences, which are increasingly important in the context of the current curricular reform in the Czech Republic. Both final products and the process itself proved to be beneficial. The course participants realized the complexity of the teaching process and multiple factors that have to be taken into account when designing foreign language courses for mainstream schools, starting from the articulation of their implicit beliefs to the detailed specification of the content. The students enjoyed the process of the course design, which can be also confirmed by the fact that two of the student participants became co-authors of this paper.

Yet, many more complicating factors might be revealed when the participants encounter real teaching situations and will have to deal with a plethora of contextual aspects related to the pupils and school contexts. Therefore, the course participants (now University graduates) will be asked to give feedback within the next year, which will hopefully bring new impulses for the teacher trainers at the Faculty of Education and for the future development of the course. The results of this delayed feedback are to reveal the benefits of the project for the teaching practice and the usability of the reflective and long-term planning competences in the context of the Czech curricular reform.

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The Culture of EAP: A Seminar Concept

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This paper deals with the conception of a seminar at Chemnitz University of Technology which will be conducted in spring 2008, bearing the title “The Culture of EAP”. The subject matters of the essay are the predispositions, the general context, the content and considerations about the methodology of the course. Apart from the general content of other EAP courses, this seminar will look at EAP from an intercultural perspective. For this purpose culture and the role of the individual as someone who is bound to obey behavioural standards and simultaneously also shaping them and contributing to the culture is observed. The identity of authors of academic texts is regarded to in the institutional, the academic and national cultural context. Conventions for the creation of academic texts are of course also included in the course, as well as the linguistic means to express stance, attitude and evaluation. They are considered as products of cultural norms.

INTRODUCTION

The seminar with the provocative title “The Culture of EAP” was inspired by a long-term stay abroad, where I taught German as a second and foreign language at the Philological Faculty of Belgrade University. There I began to gain insight into what it means to be a mediator for cultural matters. As someone who is teaching his/her mother tongue in a foreign country, one has first to experience what the differences and similarities are between the culture and the language one grew up with, and the one which one is living in now, before setting to work with a course design. This first challenge is crucial, since it opens perspectives to understand the students, thus being a teacher starts with the reflection of the self and the empathic reflection of the students’ needs within the context of the institutional and cultural framework.

The title of the seminar is chosen in such a provocative way, because scientific writing is often considered as something which comes naturally to the scholar if s/he only studies long enough, and unfortunately not as a skill which one has to work on and practice to become a successful member of the academic community.

THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Concept of Culture

The number of definitions of culture almost exceeds countability. Diverse attempts were made to find a proper description for culture in the various contexts of scientific disciplines. Kroeber/ Kluckhohn tried to define culture on a common ground for the diverse scientific disciplines: “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; cultural values may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.” (Berry et al. 1992: 166)

Thus culture is the product of human interaction with the environment and as such it is the product of our behaviour, while it is simultaneously also affecting all our actions. We are constantly reshaping/developing culture by our behaviour, and as such it is in the constant process of development. The individual’s role appears to be a crucial one in this state of affairs: on the one hand, s/he is the product of the social and cultural environment; on the other s/he is actively taking part in shaping it. (cf. Atkinson 2004)

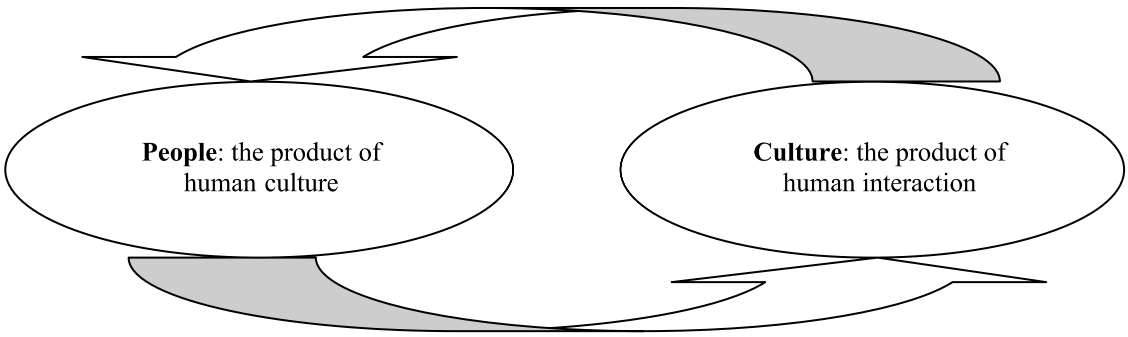

Figure 1: Culture as process and product

Defining culture poses the problem of drawing a line: who or what belongs to a cultural community, according to which criteria can we set one community apart from others, are there overlaps with other communities, etc. Many perspectives are possible, and culture appears to be encapsulated on various levels, so that if one category is put up to classify a culture, several others have to be included. The culture of a university and the culture of a department have to be viewed in the context of the culture of a whole national, or even international, academic community. (cf. Thomas 2003a: 33 ff.) Likewise, the role of the individual in the community should be borne in mind as interacting with and shaping the various cultures it belongs to.

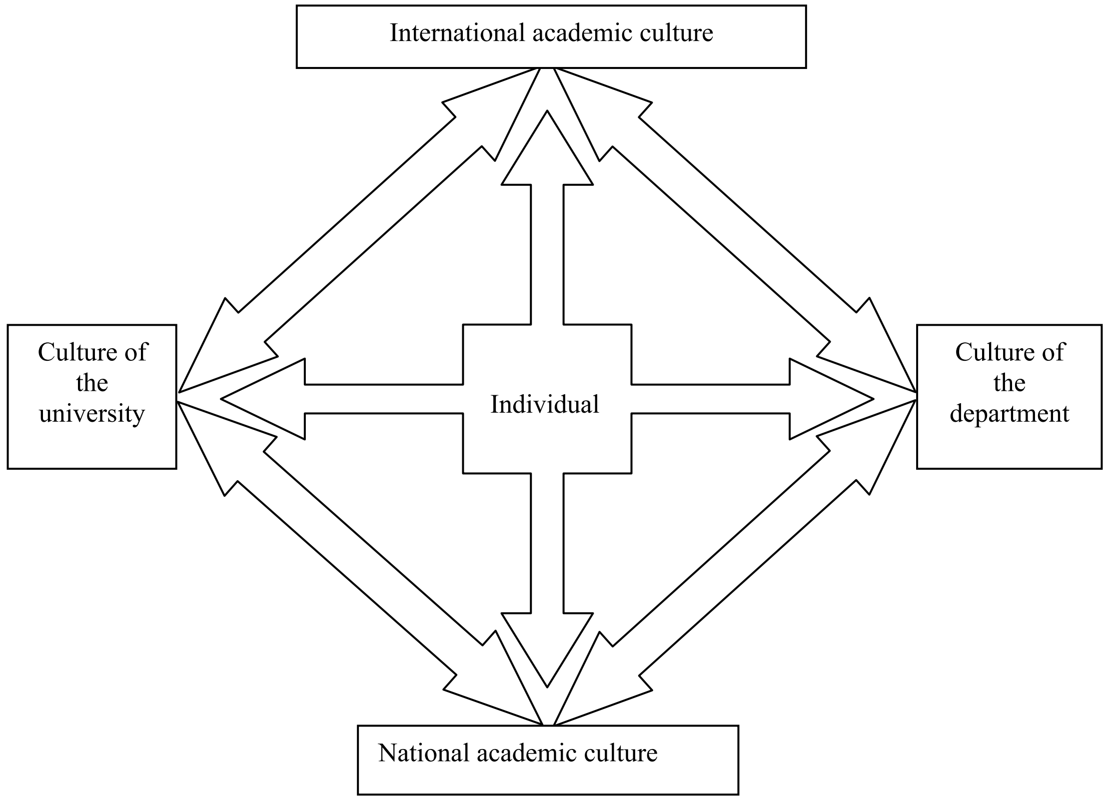

Figure 2: Interdependencies between the individual and the various domains of the cultural context

All the micro- and macrocultures have certain standards the individual needs to follow to be socially successful.

Cultural standards

What are cultural standards? Thomas defines cultural standards as rules which determine the perception, thought and evaluation of the members' actions of a certain cultural group, they are normal, typical and obligatory; cultural standards are the basis for evaluating, regulating and guiding own and others' behaviour. The boundaries of cultural standards are fuzzy, but as soon as this behaviour is perceived as overly deviant, it is rejected or sanctioned. (cf. Thomas 2003b: 25 f.) Deviating behaviour is not accepted, since it impairs effective interaction and demands increased efforts to work out a common ground in this special situation, so as to achieve at least some success. The same applies to linguistic behaviour: divergent linguistic behaviour makes effective communication unfeasible.

Obeying cultural standards appears to be crucial for social success. The culture of the academic discourse community is no exception: if people attempt academic success, be it nationwide or internationally, they should be able to present the product of their work and express their thoughts in a convenient style, which is generally accepted. But where does this leave the individuality of the author? What does this say about the author's identity?

IDENTITY IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Despite the fact that the writing conventions support authors by supplying them with guidelines for writing, they also limit his/her rhetoric possibilities and expressing their thoughts freely. Thus they also limit the possibilities of the development of themselves as authors. Another perspective on the matter might be that the guidelines help him/her to grow into the discourse community by internalizing its conventions.

Identity in writing has to be looked at more closely. It is not just there as a simple matter of fact, it is multilayered and has different aspects to it. It can be said that identity is constructed in the writing process, a process which has been studied by Ivanič in the context of academic prose. She observed that various internal and external factors influence the style of writing, which are connected to the identity of the author. She differentiates between four aspects of author identity that interact in the construction of texts and identities:

1) the autobiographical self, which is shaped by the author's personal background,
2) the discoursal self, which the author conveys in writing,
3) the self as author, which is the intended position they take in writing and
4) the possibilities of self-hood in the socio-cultural and institutional context, i.e. the effects of the environment on the process of writing. (cf. Ivanič 1998:23 ff.)

Thus she understands the process of writing as professional and social interaction (cf. Jakobs 1997:11) with the audience and the several facets of the author as a person who has to fulfil different roles. The author has the opportunity to express himself and follow the conventions of the discourse community, to be accepted within the academic community. The expectations of the audience who establish the cultural context of the writing process are, hence a very important factor in writing. How the author deals with those expectations, which relation s/he establishes towards the audience, whether s/he addresses them directly, maybe even use personal pronouns, etc., is a matter of the academic standard. The framework of the standards provides a manual for the author, it tells him/her, whether it is allowed to take up direct contact with the audience, but more than that the contact with the audience is a question of the personality of the author. There are, of course "aspects of identity related to the role in the academic community" (Ivanič 1998: 296), which have to be taken into consideration as well: is the author a student or a member of the staff of the university, how high is his/her position in the hierarchy, etc. those factors have as well an impact on the presentation of the author's self and the construction of his/her identity in texts.

Furthermore, the anticipated function of the text affects the author's choice of linguistic means to express him- or herself. (cf. e.g. Leech, Short 1981: ch. 2) Thus the presentation of self plays a crucial role in writing so as to meet the readers' expectations. And it is also the function of the texts and the aspects of identity that affect the presentation of the subjective point of view of the author.

Apart from the lexis the author uses in writing, the audience also expects a correct register and style, and suitable grammatical structures. Moreover, "aspects of identity related to ideologies in knowledge making", such as objectivity vs. subjectivity, revering established authorities vs. dismissing established authorities, neutrality vs. personal involvement, linear, conclusive, expository as opposed to organic, open-ended, provisional, explanatory writing, etc. (cf. Ivanič 1998:304)

THE CULTURE OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH

The ideologies in academic knowledge making, as they were described by Ivanič, are surely direct expressions of culture, the academic, as well as the national ones. How people deal with authorities in the cultures, for example, is often seen in the context of politeness and face work. Directness vs. indirectness is also a common standard in many cultures. The way authors refer to their audience is thus always context dependent, while this context is shaped by cultural conventions.

There has been the hypothesis that English as the standard language of the international academic community is a tyrannosaurus rex (cf. Hyland 1990) in that it restricts the scholars' freedom of speech, since Western academic conventions are the norm and their obedience prerequisite for success in the international academic community. Thus it could even be claimed that English owns a hegemonic position on the international platform of science. Using English as a lingua franca in the international academic community requires adjustment to its conventions. Since, as Pogner put it, the various discourse communities show differing patterns of language use (and thought) in the social construction and negotiation of meaning. Those patterns affect the content, as well as the way of presentation of the research topics and results. (cf. Pogner 1999: 146)

However, not only the conventions of the English speaking community are to be acknowledged, the standards of the institutions itself have to be taken into consideration. The way how the students learn, which relation they have to their lecturers for example is culturally shaped and in the context of the seminar also of high importance. Since learning experiences and social relations in the seminar will affect the learning style, learning behaviour and the outcome of the seminar.

Supposing that there will be international students in the class, opens the perspective of cross-cultural studies on texts the students will produce themselves. Studies in non-verbal and paraverbal behaviour of the students might also be of interest. But apart from meta-seminar analyses, the various, culturally shaped perspectives on subject matters will enrich the outcome of discussions.

The Concept and Aims of the Seminar: a General Methodology

The course will contain 3 main components. The students are provided with the necessary theoretical background, this part is covered by the lecturer since it covers the most important aspects of theory. On the next step, the students will be guided through further theoretical research, which they will do on their own and present their results to their fellow students. The last component will be the practical analysis of academic texts: after a sample text is analyzed in class, the students will be given the task to analyze a text on their own. They may choose a text of any genre and culture they like. They are to find out the linguistic means in the text that convey the cultural standards of the discourse community the text was produced in and thus find out the cultural features of the community.

During the seminar, students will continuously produce own linguistic output. One aim of the course is that the students will develop the ability to reflect on their own production, so that they are afterwards able to have a more critical perspective on their own work and grow into their roles as future contributors to the standards of the English department at Chemnitz University and thus the academic community in Germany.

The ability to read academic texts is another aim of the course. A further aim is the ability to read texts for several purposes. Reading African theses in English linguistics, for example has the twofold effect that they are contributions to the professional linguistic knowledge of the students, but also that they are able to identify cultural traits in the texts that derive from the national, academic cultures but also to identify idiosyncratic characteristics of the authors.

The overall aim of the course is the generation of a general awareness for cultural features of discourse communities in the students and to enable them to produce well-reflected academic texts themselves. Thus the course is designed for German as well as foreign students at Chemnitz University of Technology, but not only for students of English linguistics: students of Intercultural Communication might as well profit from the course, as much as students of Germanic studies and Applied Linguistics.

Texts for analysis used in the seminar

Materials used in the course are authentic texts from corpora including articles from scientific journals, of varying disciplines. Articles on mathematical and physical matters are included, as well as texts on historical matters and English linguistics. Those texts are written by German and foreign authors. Doctoral theses from various African and Eastern European countries are also to be used as sources and compared with each other and German and American texts of the same genre.

Contents of the seminar

Before going into detail about the culture specific characteristics of academic writing, a general overview of academic writing is provided to the students. The theory of the features of academic writing in English is introduced. Students then work on their first analyses of texts and will present their results in class. Theoretical aspects of culture specific traits of texts will be looked at afterwards and the students will hold presentations on the results of their own practical analyses.

FEATURES OF ACADEMIC WRITING

Academic writing in English is linear. It usually starts from a central hypothesis, with each argument and fact being brought forward contributing to the main line of argumentation. The mode of the presentation in academic texts is usually as objective as possible, subjective statements are commonly hedged, since the focus is on facts and not on the person who wrote the texts. Hypotheses are usually worked upon with the support of facts and references to other academic works. Academic writing in English is formal, explicit, dense and complex. Complexity includes the length and the complex structuring of the sentences with subordinate clauses and passives, as well as the occurrence of nominalizations. The density of the texts is achieved by the use of subject specific words resulting in a relative shortness of the texts. Moreover, academic texts are usually explicit and coherent; they guide the reader from one point to another, which is usually achieved by linking devices.

CULTURE SPECIFIC FEATURES OF ACADEMIC TEXTS

Stance

Expressing one‘s opinion is usually dependent on the culture one was socialized in: whether one expresses the own point of view directly, or rather indirectly, non-verbally or not at all, is usually dependent on the community and the social circumstances. The author’s stance is conveyed grammatically and lexically, and co-occurs with evaluative statements. Stance is defined by the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English as communicating “personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments” (Biber et al. 1999: 966)

It has been shown that the use of deixis, passive and modality ultimately express the subjective point of view of the speaker. Linguistic means like these can be studied in various contexts. Stylistics, for example, engages itself in the study of how language is used in certain contexts, “with the goal of explaining the relation between language and […] function.” (Leech & Short 1981:13)

Contrasting the studies in stylistics, Biber studied lexico-grammatical structures authors use to express stance in various academic registers (Biber 2006). Following his example, the uses of modal and semi-modal verbs are investigated. It shall be investigated whether their use is connected to varying cultural environments, stance verbs, adverbs and adjectives are also included, just like stance communicating that- and to-clauses. Moreover, sentences making use of 1st person pronouns and the different syntactic surroundings are investigated as stance markers.

The matter of stance can also be viewed in the context of speech acts. The frequency of occurrence of representative, declarative, expressive and directive speech acts and the analysis of indirect speech acts (cf. Searle 1969, 1975), for example, could establish a basis for a comparative study between cultures and build on the cross-cultural works of Gass and Wierzbicka. (Gass 1995, Wierzbicka 2003)

Evaluation in texts

Evaluation in texts usually co-occurs on a lexical level with the communication of the author's personal point of view. Non-verbally it can also be noticed in inter-textual references: which sources are, for example used and which are left out, the frequency of use is also important. Citing conventions are usually specific for the department, but national and international standards are usually taken into consideration. Thus, citations and quotations reflect the cultural standards directly, and they reflect the relationship among the scholars of a culture.

Hedges

The use of hedges in scientific research articles was explored by Hyland. He defines a hedge as "the process whereby the author reduces the strength of a statement." (Hyland 1998: 1) Hyland already noticed that hedging generally, but especially the epistemic meanings, pose a major problem on non-native writers of English in scientific articles. For this reason, special emphasis will be posed on the matter, so as to stimulate the participants of the seminar to improve their skills by internalizing their declarative knowledge and use them appropriately.

Typically non-native academic writers are found to be more direct in making a point than native writers (cf. Hyland 1991: 218); this can be explained by overgeneralizations. Overgeneralization is a normal stadium in the acquisition of linguistic, as well as cultural rules. Psycholinguistic aspects are, hence also included in the seminar.

Discourse organization

Whether it is a good idea to open a presentation by commenting on the little amount of time one had to prepare the talk, is a matter of perspective. From a German point of view this does not seem appropriate, the psychological effect such statements have on us are devastating: we suddenly lose all interest we had to listen to such talks. We assume that the person giving a presentation is not well prepared, that s/he does not care about the subject matter, etc. However, within the context of, e.g. a Slavonic classroom, teachers should take into consideration that exactly this kind of opening is possible, going further east it can be assumed that this is even more likely.

Thus, statements which position the author of texts directly to his/ her audience are a direct hint at his/ her cultural background and will be investigated in the seminar in the context of the cultural environments of the authors. Examples as the one above may be a sign of decency, which is in some cultures considered a virtue. The aim of such (linguistic) behaviour being to hold the expectation of the audience low, so that the author does not disappoint the audience and embarrass him-/herself, the department, the institution and even his/her country.

Written academic texts in English usually follow the schema *Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion*. (cf. Swales 1990:134) Cohesion in academic texts was studied generally by Halliday/ Hasan (1976) and in the specialized genre of academic text types by Swales. Swales found that the introductions to English research articles follow three moves: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. (cf. Swales 1990:137) Studying the discoursal organization of texts of various genres and national cultures will surely reveal differences. Also differences in the argument structure will be shown: a short comparative survey carried out in 2007 at the Chemnitz University of Technology and the University of Belgrade revealed a more circular form of argumentation in the Slavonic context.

Metaphors

Metaphors were also a feature used widely in Serbian of Belgrade. Their application will be explored in the seminar, the source and target domains will be examined and the conclusions will be drawn as to the cultural values of the discourse communities.

Emotionality

Emotionality is yet another feature of academic texts in Serbia. The way how the writers express their emotional temperature and how it affects the academic research was a completely new experience for me. Hence the seminar will also have a look into that matter and compare texts across cultures and scientific disciplines.

CONCLUSION

That culture became a major component in second language classrooms has been acknowledged in various scientific disciplines: alongside pedagogy, also psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics and semantics, but as well cognitive sciences, etc. do research in this area. The seminar is intended to combine those approaches to provide an insight into how culture(s) affect(s) academic writing from as many perspectives as possible.

The seminar will have been successful, if the students are able to analyze academic texts towards their general discourse organization and the presentation of the author him-/herself, find linguistic features of general academic writing and academic writing and features that reveal cultural traits of the academic community and the national and international cultures. Thus, at the end of the seminar, they should be able to read academic texts and deal with them critically. Apart from the development of the students' receptive skills, they should as well have developed their own productive skills in the seminar, since they are expected to submit regular contributions, orally as well as written. A general competence in EAP and sensitivity towards cultural impact on (linguistic) behaviour within the academic community is thus the overall aim of the course and prepare the student to become accepted members of the German academic community in English linguistics.

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Corporate English Language Training: The Way to Customized Materials

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English teaching for adults has largely changed in the last few decades. Traditional English evening classes are still common; however, diversification into new educational markets and a more specific approach to language classes has become evident. The predominant position of English as lingua franca in the business world and globalization have resulted in a growing demand for effective and tailor-made in-company training programmes that are supposed to enable learners to communicate appropriately with international business partners.

Materials for corporate training courses have to consider the specific purposes for which the learners need English; these purposes are defined by job tasks in which the learners are to speak English in their workplaces. Specific vocabulary of the occupational context, the register appropriate to the situation in which work tasks are performed, and, finally, linguistic skills needed for conversational strategies help master authentic target situations. As most textbooks available on the market can only partly meet the students' analysed needs and the syllabuses required for the training, the course instructor often has to create supplementary, customized worksheets.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I will try to outline how special features of corporate language training determine courses and the material production. First, I will describe the needs of the learners (and the consequent demands on the teachers). Then I will briefly point out to the variety of methodologies applied in corporate language courses that form the basis of the different parts of classroom materials. After that, considering the fact that each of the courses has to be designed individually, I will discuss problems to find appropriate textbooks for company training and suggest a model of how to generate topical and purposeful materials for the course participants. Finally, a worksheet for employees in the automotive industry will demonstrate how the course development for corporate training programmes can be enriched by means of teacher-designed language materials.

Traditionally, teachers and language institutions apply the term 'ESP' (English for Specific Purposes) to describe corporate English training courses which is actually the generic term standing in contrast to English for General Purposes. Therefore, in this contribution, 'ESP' denotes corporate language courses.

This article is based on the author's master thesis (Wegener: 2006) where the topic is dealt with more in detail.

THE ESP CONTEXT

Due to their specificity, ESP courses are highly diverse in terms of the participants' profiles and needs.

Learners attending corporate English courses can be divided into two groups: pre-experience learners who have not yet used English in their work and post-experience learners who have (Sussens-Messerer 2003: 97). Pre-experience learners often do not have an immediate or clearly defined need, but in English courses organized by their companies, they refresh their grammar knowledge, learn common business English and general terminology to build up a solid foundation for potential, subsequent specialist courses.

Most of the post-experience learners, making up the majority of learners in corporate training courses, had previously the opportunity to use English in their jobs and, therefore, to see what they can and cannot do properly. They are usually familiar with the basic terminology of their own area of business in English, but do not know how to use their specialist knowledge and to convey meanings effectively in authentic business settings. On the one hand, most post-experience learners show little inhibition when they speak English, but on the other, they sometimes make fossilized grammatical, collocation and 'false friends' mistakes. Having had to communicate for a longer time without sufficient grammar skills, they have experienced that arbitrary or inappropriate use of linguistic items does not allow real progress. Some students may even have lost confidence as a result of insufficient knowledge of grammar, use of tenses and sentence structure, all skills required for communicating in a foreign language. They need to know the basic rules of grammar and their practice to improve fluency.

In open group courses, learners are assigned to the course according to their level of proficiency, but they often have quite different needs resulting from their job-specific tasks and responsibilities. In closed groups, however, learners have the same specific objectives, but sometimes enormous language differences (cf. Ellis/Johnson 1994: 74-75). This heterogeneity may reduce the quality of the course which can be more successful with a group at a homogenous level of knowledge. Personnel officers responsible for training courses sometimes try to allocate course participants according to executive levels to avoid a comparison of language performance between managers and their subordinates, a course of action only recommendable if the participants in question have similar needs and language competencies (cf. Sternkopf 2004: 75).

Describing the role of an ESP teacher, one has to consider in what ways his work differs from that of a General English teacher. The first contrast refers to his professional position. The great majority of ESP teachers are freelancers, and they typically work with, as opposed to for, different language institutes or companies. Hutchinson and Waters observe that "[o]ne of the most important features of ESP in relation to General English is that the status of English changes from being a subject in its own right to a service industry for other specialisms" (1987: 164). In other words, the teacher is a service provider, accountable to sponsors, personnel managers and subject specialists used to total quality assessment.

As ESP learners work in different industries, ESP trainers pursue an interdisciplinary strategy, i.e. apart from language teaching they have to understand and to translate situations, facts and processes inherent in the target business. They widen their knowledge and experience of the business world and specific areas through contact with students who contribute their expertise to the course. Eliciting answers and explanations from his students, the teacher activates a two-way knowledge transfer. The teacher acquires some expert knowledge he can profitably use later in the course to ask more specific questions and the learners, giving an informed answer, are taught how to describe items, processes and problems in the foreign language.

Considering the fact that there are specialists of various subjects with different job-related responsibilities in the course, the trainer's ability to adapt to the given circumstances is more important than highly specialized subject knowledge. He is, however, expected to have some knowledge of the main principles of the subject area, as only an open and interested approach to the learners' expert fields, tasks and problems at work allows meaningful communication in the ESP classroom.

COURSE PREPARATION

An inquiry from the customer (company) to a language institute or directly to the teacher is normally the starting point of a negotiation aiming at a programme that the company expects to be customized specifically to the needs of the course participants on the one hand and that is feasible according to the teacher's expertise and experience on the other. The company provides the course developer with general information, e.g. on the business field, the structure of the company, the purpose of the English classes, previous contact of potential learners with English, and their function and position in the company. First ideas about group form and size, intensity and length of the course are exchanged. Moreover, the time available for planning as well as time frames and location of the proposed course are discussed. Sometimes the course designer might be invited to co-decide; in other cases, organizational matters are not negotiable, mostly due to the intended time-scale of the further education project or financial constraints.

The preparation period starts with an analysis of what the course participants need and want to learn, and an assessment of their proficiency level. The required data can be obtained from the following sources of information:

1) placement tests
2) questionnaires and checklists
3) interviews with sponsors or the company the learners work for
4) personal interviews with learners
5) observation, e.g. company visits
6) authentic texts about respective industry and subject
7) internet research

Students are grouped either according to the results of initial placement tests, the self-assessment of the potential course participants, or on the recommendation of personnel officers aiming to divide employees with similar functions in the company and/or similar proficiency levels into one group. While (2) to (4) are based on the customer's objectives and attitudes, (1), (5), (6), and (7) are subject to the teacher's (or language institute's) search for information and corresponding interpretation. Consequently, the results always depend on individual views and different background knowledge of all people involved.

Figure 1 summarizes the different aspects of a needs analysis, the results of which provide the basis for the course objectives, the syllabus design, and the selection of classroom materials (cf. Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998: 123).

Items analysed	**Information gathered on**
target needs	learner's professional background: target skills, situations and tasks they need English for; subject matter, industry and company
learning needs	factors affecting the learning process: learning experiences, expectations, attitudes, and problems
proficiency level lacks	learner's language skills (comparing target needs and proficiency level)

Figure 1: Elements of needs analysis

The needs analysis is followed by the production of the syllabus and the decision on suitable classroom materials. During the preparatory period of an

ESP course, the language institute or teacher usually delivers only an approximate course programme, which is part of the contract between the company and the respective language service provider, and draws up a detailed course plan later. Variation occurs consistently, due to alterations of individual corporate activities. Firm points in the course outline usually remain industry-related topics and job-related skills, whereas project-related skills and the urgency of needs may change at short notice. Furthermore, there must always remain space for spontaneous discussions of topical interest or the work on an urgent presentation.

SYLLABUS DESIGN

The needs analysis prepares the syllabus design by defining the learners' target needs and proficiency level and therewith the course and learning objectives. The general subject area of the course is determined by the industry the company belongs to, whereas smaller topic fields depend on the different departments and deal with terminology and expressions specific to the students' particular places of work. Figure 2 gives an example of how linguistic content can be deduced from the target situation.

deductive steps	**examples**
TARGET SITUATION	meetings with colleagues from different countries, mainly oral communication
↓	↓
business task	chairing meetings
↓	↓
business skills	welcoming people, asking for opinions, inviting people to speak, keeping control of discussions, summarizing
↓	↓
language structures	modal verbs expressing politeness, word order in affirmative and non-affirmative sentences

Figure 2: Identifying linguistic features for the syllabus

The course syllabus embodies the organised programme for the whole course like the list of contents represents the written plan of a course book. As the course syllabus is rarely completed in detail at the beginning of the course, because it has continually to be upgraded by involving the ideas and problems that occur during the course. Therefore, it is commonly drawn up step by step in the form of separate session syllabuses where the teacher incorporates the basic ideas of the course syllabus and adds necessary modifications. On the basis of the course objective, the syllabus establishes the criteria for the vocabulary and texts to be used and for the structural items to be focused on. As materials reflect these guidelines, syllabus design and the selection of classroom materials closely interact.

TRAINING METHODOLOGIES

The training style in ESP is highly specified in some regards. First of all, the teacher has to adjust his classroom performance to the kind of group or person he is teaching. Second, he has to base his work on specified students' needs, i.e. he has to combine topic area and skills needed. Moreover, in order to tailor language courses to those needs, he has to find appropriate learning materials to satisfy them. Consequently, ESP has absorbed various methodologies from General English Teaching and operates them selectively within the various types of texts and activities. As the course objectives are determined by target situations with tasks the learners have to manage, materials in ESP are composed of elements putting the task at the centre of the methodological focus; thus corporate language training can basically be regarded as task-based. The task is prepared by form-focused exercises covering structural issues, and skills-centred activities covering functional strategies needed for the task. Finally, the input topic dealt with in an initial text follows the subject matter and is therefore content-based, while the learner-centeredness derives from the learners' needs which find expression in the supply of authentic materials, questions and feedback to the course and materials.

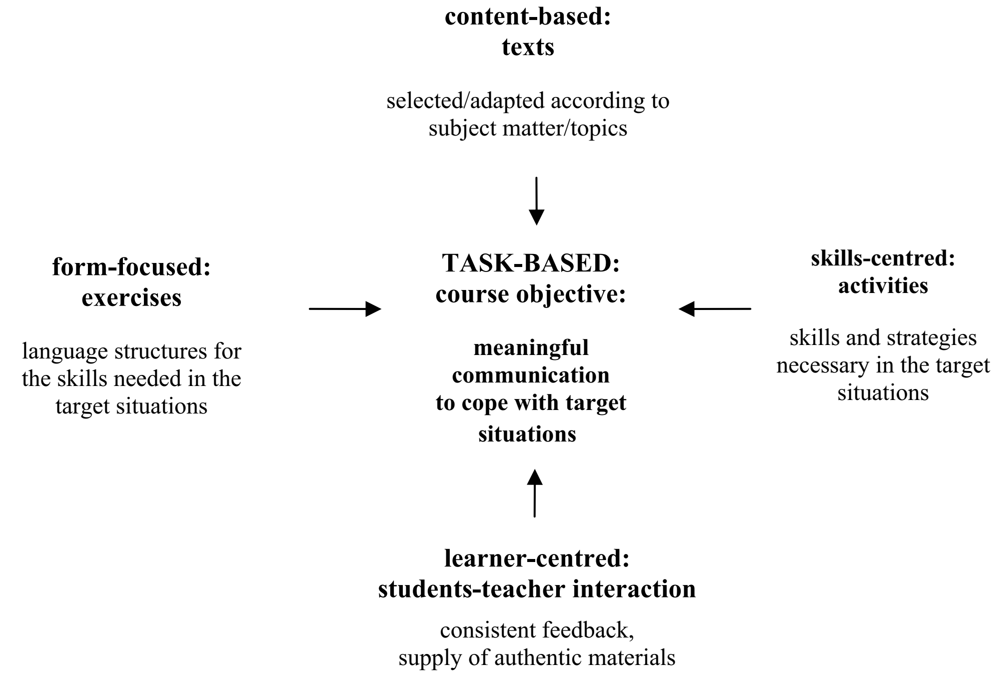

Fig. 3: Methodological specificity in ESP materials

MATERIALS PURPOSES

Four significant purposes of materials in ESP can be identified:

1) sources of language
2) learning support
3) motivation and stimulation
4) later reference (cf. Dudley-Evans and St John 1998: 170-171).

(1) Teaching materials contain vocabulary, linguistic structures and communication strategies that are needed in the students' target situations. Texts introduce new vocabulary, help check existing knowledge, allow revision and are often starting points for discussions in the classroom. Instructions are also sources of language; in view of the fact that most ESP learners are not really beginners, they can be written in English. A supply of additional materials for individual studies at home often needs some preparation in the classroom; advice on how to cope with potential problems will motivate learners to really work through them.

(2) Materials deliver opportunities for learners to use their existing knowledge and skills both of the language and the subject matter for making progress. A range of diverse activities at the appropriate level allows learners to obtain knowledge and lasting skills. They should not be too repetitive but stimulate cognitive processes, i.e. learners may be encouraged to find meanings of words, answers to questions and solutions to problems themselves whenever possible in order to develop usable strategies for coping with new linguistic items and communication problems. Finally, the suggested exercises should not be rigid in their order or totally depend on each other, as potential flexibility helps the teacher sensitively respond to the learners' needs, interests and condition of the day.

(3) Teaching materials are able to stimulate the students' desire to gain language competence. The input should discuss a topic the learners are familiar with and then, new ideas and information can be added. Challenging language practice allows enough room for creativity, but does not pressurize the learners to be imaginative all the time. ESP courses commonly take place in the late afternoon when the learners are frequently tired after working. Consequently, tasks should not be totally free but guided, giving at least some basic ideas. A well-structured layout of work exercises is important; it attracts the learners' attention, facilitates work and gives the impression of professionalism and clarity.

(4) For later brush-up, learners usually prefer consulting their classroom copies with handwritten remarks to using other sources of reference. Therefore, materials must provide models of correct and appropriate language use as well as clarity that allow revising language knowledge after the classroom period. For more comprehensibility, Dudley-Evans and St. John recommend contents pages

similar to the construction of a syllabus in a course book (cf. 1998: 172). A list of contents is certainly purposeful, e.g. at the beginning of a reader, compiled and completed before the course starts. But since in ESP the course syllabus is often shaped through the course development itself with the result that materials are prepared at rather short notice, a fixed content would restrict the flexible approach to the course. Especially ESP learners, who are continually observing what is happening, will certainly compare the initially planned syllabus with its ongoing implementation.

MATERIALS SELECTION

As careful materials selection is one cornerstone of ESP, trainers must be good providers of materials they can obtain in three ways:

materials evaluation	→	selection from existing materials
materials adaptation	→	modification of existing materials
materials development	→	generation of own materials

(cf. Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 96)

If appropriate textbooks are available and there are funds to buy them, both the teacher and the learners will benefit, as the teacher's job is made easier, and the students benefit from having access to individual copies of textbooks. However, books corresponding to the specific subject area and objectives of the course may not be available on the market. As production costs for a limited market product are high, publishers are reluctant to provide course books for highly specified subjects; they commonly wish to meet the needs of wider groups of English students. Books covering specific subject areas are likely to treat general topics within this field, so that they can aim at a larger clientele. Nevertheless, course books with a broader scope can often be used as the basis for a course and may be supplemented with further, teacher-generated materials. Ellis and Johnson acknowledge that

> [i]n situations where a group of learners is relatively heterogeneous and the objectives for learning are non-specific, […] a published […] course book may well provide an effective core of material for a course, provided that its level and methodology are appropriate (1994: 124).

The teacher has to think about the value of a course book in terms of its effectiveness, (in order to produce the learning result) and efficiency (to do this in a high quality and without any waste of time) for the learners and for the teacher himself. He should therefore also estimate how much effort it takes to modify and complement the items in the book. Hutchinson and Waters suggest considering "which unsatisfactory features are easier to remedy. Is it, for example, easier to adapt content or methodology? You might find it difficult to find alternative texts, while it may be relatively easy to change the exercises based on the texts" (1987: 98).

Once the teacher has found a book for the course where the general subject fits, he is facing the following main questions:

1) Does the proficiency level fit?
2) Which are the main topic areas covered?
3) Is the material attractive and suitable for the learners?

(1) Short-listed course books should have the level of difficulty which is supportive of the course. Input which is too easy may reduce the amount of progression; texts which are too difficult, however, could demotivate learners if they felt that their productive skills did not have the slightest chance to keep pace with the receptive input. Course books available on the market are categorized according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which is a useful tool for teachers for comparing objectives, levels, materials, tests, and achievements.

(2) If the biggest part of the topics covers the content needs identified in the needs analysis, the teacher will have a reliable source of materials with basic vocabulary and jargon. Sub-topical requirements, i.e. more specified subject matters, can be met by means of materials taken e.g. from other published materials, the Internet or brought in by the course participants. It has been proven that flexibility of the syllabus is an important quality and helps customize the order of units to the existing or occurring needs of the learners.

(3) The physical appearance of the book must not be underestimated, as it has quite a considerable impact on the learners' motivation. Both the structure of the whole book and the individual pages should be designed with great clarity. To support the written text and to avoid confusion, illustrations ought not to be too dominant and busy. Lists of vocabulary, technical specifications, concise language skills points, or phrase lists for functional skills are purposeful sources of information for students. Moreover, tests at the end of each unit are useful possibilities for strengthening the learners' motivation, as they demonstrate the students' level of progression. Finally, topicality determines the attractiveness of a course book to a large extent. Hardly any book will be as topical as authentic materials, and especially in the field of technology where development is rapid, the books selected for the classroom should be up-to-date to allow discussions about current trends in the subject field.

It is certainly of advantage if the techniques - guided or free, for group or individual work, receptive or productive – fit exactly the demand and size of the course, but instructions can usually be modified without any problems and tailored to the classroom situation. Much effort can be saved by checking existing materials that cover the needs of the course, at least partly. However, experienced teachers would be able to modify and supplement exercises for practising particular language structures and functions and skills activities. And even if the teacher eventually decides to generate his own materials, "the evaluation of existing materials can provide a good source of ideas (of what to avoid as well as what to do) and techniques" (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 105).

SPECIFICITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Teachers are faced with the problem of how specific materials for corporate courses should be. Hutchinson and Waters state that "[t]here is no grammatical structure, function or discourse structure that can be identified specifically with […] any particular subject" (1987: 166). They argue that "[a]lthough the passive is common in EST, the learner still needs both the active and the passive, and the fact that a form is more common does not make it any more difficult to learn […] and the rules for their creation and use do not vary with subject" (ibid.) and deny the necessity of using highly specialized vocabulary in classroom texts (cf. ibid. 1987: 165-166).

The results of an extensive, corpus-based study conducted between 1973 and 1975 shows that in scientific and technical writing, technical vocabulary accounts for only 21% of the total range of lexis (cf. Inman 1978: 246). Considering the fact that these findings are based on research on written English in the seventies and that now the biggest part of the ESP classroom work aims at oral language competence, it can be estimated that the actual percentage is considerably lower.

ESP teachers must be able to understand authentic scientific and technical texts and to design worksheets on the basis of their content. However, learners who are invited to contribute English texts from their workplace to the course commonly bring emails, their preparation for a presentation, realia from their last business trip, or reports on trends in the company's industry - items rarely containing highly specified words. Besides, post-experience learners usually do not have difficulties with English vocabulary of their specialist field. They are more likely to need typical language structures and common core vocabulary in order to gain fluency and to manage business skills. As all participants of one group usually work in the same industry, vocabulary should concentrate on semi-technical terms from the subject matter and general vocabulary.

Concerning business skills and strategies, the redundancy of highly specified materials becomes still more obvious. The world of business is extremely diverse, but the practical functions carried out in comparable workplaces are similar to a large extent. For example, many business people have to give presentations, and although the content of such presentations will vary, the functions that people need to perform when giving their speeches are predictable: they will have to welcome their audience, introduce the subject, outline the structure of the presentation, refer to visual aids, conclude, invite questions etc., no matter if they work for an automobile manufacturer or an IT company, in the engine plant or as a software developer.

The learners' coping with target situations in the authentic business world is the objective of ESP courses. Therefore, authentic texts are a valuable source of information and authentic discourse and bring the 'real world' into the classroom. They serve various functions. First, inviting authentic materials from the learners' work environment to the classroom, the teacher offers assistance, e.g. if learners repeatedly have problems with certain text types. Second, the ESP teacher always looks for texts that are as close to the learners' target situations in their jobs as possible which enable him to design meaningful materials. Newsletters, technical specifications, and brochures show ways, in which the learners have to use English at work; they introduce the subject matter and specific topics to the trainer and provide an overview of the industry.

So, third, authentic texts serve as sources of information for the teacher and may already be collected during the needs analysis period.

The Internet has positively affected the teachers' possibilities of gathering authentic, content-specific, and topical materials. Texts from the Web are usually very motivating, as they take up up-to-date figures and information, and the latest news interesting for people working in the respective industries. As they are highly specialised in terms of topicality, they become outdated quickly with the result that they can often be used for only one group. As the exploitation of any authentic text for the classroom requires much time, teachers should check thoroughly the potential of an authentic text in question and balance expenditure time with the expected benefit for the learners.

MATERIALS PRODUCTION

Materials production is an established tradition in ESP, since identified needs can often not be satisfied by available materials. Hutchinson and Waters believe that "[m]aterials writing is one of the most characteristic features of ESP in practice. In marked contrast to General English Teaching, a large amount of the ESP teacher's time may well be taken up in writing materials" (1987: 106).

Materials generating is rarely performed from scratch. If a course textbook has been selected, it adds to and consolidates the treatment of issues not covered in the book. If no published materials are available, the teacher usually starts from a point he finds appropriate according to the content or business skill focus, and exploits this input by e.g. modifying the text and/or developing new activities and suitable tasks. Authentic texts may be presented in their original form to advanced classes or edited for learners at a lower level.

Figure 4 summarizes Jolly and Bolitho's framework for materials writing (cf. 1998: 97-110).

PREPARATION

needs identification
needs analysis or occurrence of questions/problems during the course

exploration
teacher's examination of what is necessary to respond to the needs

↓

REALISATION

contextual	**pedagogical**	**physical**
input selection	focus on content and language, production of activities and tasks, writing instructions	layout, type size, visuals etc., reproduction

↓

IMPLEMENTATION

use in the classroom

evaluation

modification

Figure 4: Sequence of activities involved in producing classroom materials following Jolly and Bolitho

MATERIALS STRUCTURE

The unit of a textbook or a worksheet covers a particular learning module and is divided into different parts which can be assigned to the elements of a standard structure of materials design. Activities must be sequenced in a way that allows the students' learning process: from comprehension to production, from clearly structured activities to real language use. The worksheet example after the following explanations has been designed for people working in the automotive industry and can be used on its own or as an extension to a textbook[1]. The following model of Hutchinson and Waters, who define it as "coherent framework for the integration of the various aspects of learning" (1987: 109), identifies the four elements 'classroom materials' (1), input, (2) content, (3) language, and (4) task.

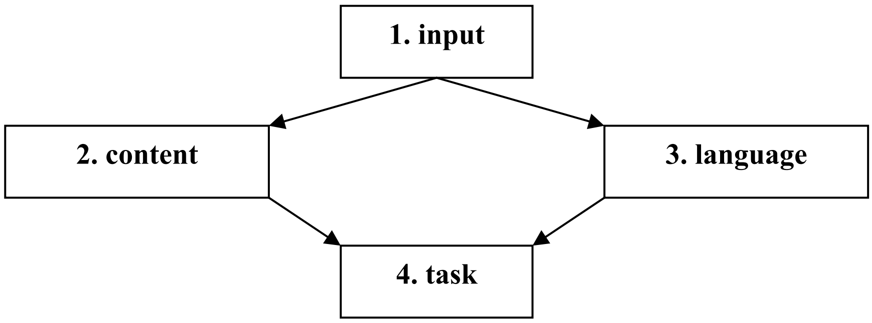

Figure 5: Materials design model by Hutchinson and Waters

The input (1) is represented by a piece of communication data, preferably an authentic or realistic text, a dialogue or diagram, which is selected according to the topic and should serve the general purposes listed earlier in this article. It covers a special part of the subject matter and at the same time linguistic structures to build up meaningful sentences and an understandable, coherent text. Texts from the internet (like the worksheet example on page 13) offer up-to-the-minute relevance and cannot, due to their topicality, occur in a printed textbook.

'Content' (2) is built on the topic and, in the worksheet, demonstrated by the vocabulary section. On the one hand, it helps consolidate difficult expressions occurring in the authentic text or exploit groups of words with a similar structure in order to provide development in vocabulary. On the other, it takes up, revises and introduces subject-related words to provide learners with specialist terms and ideas for the task discussion. The majority of ESP students will be more interested in the topic than in the form of language. If the topic discussed in the classroom is connected to the learner's subject in his working situation, he feels both the relevance of the course for his job and self-confidence, because he is already familiar with the topical contents. It is therefore advisable to introduce vocabulary exercises before dealing with grammar.

'Language' (3) concentrates on linguistic structures and practice, i.e. grammar exercises and activities are combined with functional use. The exemplified worksheet is concerned with typical phrases for polite discussions using modal auxiliary verbs to train business skills that are needed in the task.

Most learners in corporate language courses have already a reasonable grasp of the basic grammar; the exercises are not designed for teaching them grammar from scratch, but for

i) checking their knowledge about core applications, revision and consolidation,
ii) filling gaps in their understanding about the creation of speech intentions using language structures, and
iii) stimulating their creative thinking and deeper understanding of semantic patterns and practical use.

The final lesson objective is the task (4) where learners, finally, have the opportunity to use the skills they have trained in the ‘content’ and ‘language’ stages. It should simulate activities from the learner’s real situation at work as closely as possible in order to enable them to accomplish meaningful and spontaneous communication in their authentic business environments, as task activities are comparable to real-world activities (cf. Skehan 1998: 95).

Tasks usually involve pair or group work where learners have to communicate in order to solve a simulated real-world problem. Working on the same task, but having different information needed to complete the task, students have to perform an ‘information transfer’ in order to bridge an ‘information gap’. (cf. Richards & Rodgers 1986:22). Tasks should be guided in so far as the situation is given and an outline of the roles offered. In role plays, students train to hold their own opinion, but controversial roles present them with points of view they might disagree with. So they get the possibility to ‘walk in the shoes’ of their business partners who take a different view and argue against them in real life. Diverse importance of roles ensures that the task is a challenge for eloquent members of the group and, at the same time, allows participation of learners with less self-confidence or competence.

The task procedure is divided into three parts: (1) the preparation period, (2) the production and (3) the follow-up.

1) To prepare their task roles, learners can (individually, in pairs or small teams) invent facts, discuss and define their points of view, and take notes as support for their argumentation. The teacher should define a time-setting and encourage the learners to keep it.

2) Although the teacher is in the observer’s role, he has to make sure that everybody is involved in the discussion and might help with the organization of the discussion. However, he should not interrupt for explanations or corrective remarks.

3) The teacher has to make sure that there is some time left for going over some problems again. This allows learners to ask questions that might have risen during the task procedure and to evaluate their own performance. They often feel the need for further discussion on the topic, once they are released from their roles. After highlighting positive points of the learners’ individual performance, the teacher should focus on the main mistakes made during the production period and correct them in general.

After the successful completion of the task, the learners could be invited to apply the knowledge they have gained to the specific situation in their own places of work. For example, the students could hold a meeting discussing an issue relevant to the students’ company; their contributions would reflect their own points of view and, ideally, they would take on responsibilities they normally carry out at work.

Like the four basic elements, a starter can be regarded as indispensable, as the work on materials does not usually start with the reading of the input text but with an introduction to the topic dealt with in the input. In course books, units begin with a warm-up activity, either offering basic information or questions which support some brainstorming about the topic. Even if teacher-generated materials sometimes lack written starters, the teacher will certainly use an introduction to the content of the material for checking existing knowledge, introducing key vocabulary, asking for opinions to find out the learners' special interests, or simply for arousing their interests.

WORKSHEET EXAMPLE (B1 CEFR)

Warm-Up

Do you think that more safety features in the car reduce the danger of accidents? What can drivers do to avoid crashes and, in case of an accident, serious injuries? Does information on vehicle fatality rates influence your decision to buy a car or not?

Text: A Closer Look at Vehicle Safety (input)[2]

The midsize-car category covers the widest range of models, from bargain-priced sedans to luxury/performance models. They have going for them a low centre of gravity that <u>resists</u> rollover accidents, and also can be equipped with the latest safety features. But their modest size means they begin to be <u>vulnerable</u> in collisions with larger vehicles, and their <u>diverse</u> owner population include younger, inexperienced drivers.

Large pickup trucks share many of the same vehicle characteristics as large SUVs, primarily ride height and a heavy frame. But the pickup-truck driver population tends to be younger and less family oriented. It's a higher <u>risk demographic</u> that drives less <u>prudently</u>, an important factor in the most deadly type of accident affecting trucks and SUVs: the <u>rollover</u>.

Minivans tend to be family vehicles and are driven conservatively by a <u>mature</u>, experienced driver population. The same holds true for large cars. Both have generous crush zones and tend to be equipped with such important safety features as head-protecting curtain side airbags and antilock brakes.

Vehicles with a high centre of gravity are less stable in changes of direction and have the highest <u>incidences</u> of rollover accidents. A <u>prime</u> cause of death in rollovers is <u>ejection</u> from the vehicle. Pickup drivers, statistically, wear seatbelts less often than drivers of any other type of vehicle.

Compact SUVs also have a tall ride height and high incidence of rollovers, plus a relatively inexperienced driver population. And they are of a size and weight that does not give them a decided advantage in passive safety.

Compact cars are light and small, and while some are relatively costly, most are expensive transportation for a young, high-risk driving population.

Large SUVs have size and weight on their side, and also are built on sturdy truck frames. That frame enhances their passive crash protection, though this rigid metal under structure, combined with the tall ride height of a full-size SUV, means these vehicles can be deadly to occupants of smaller vehicles in a crash. Large SUVs are not inexpensive, and so tend to be driven by a mature driver population, as well. Compact pickup trucks combine the least-desirable safety-related characteristics: relatively small and lightweight, tall centre of gravity, high incidence of rollovers, high-risk drivers who tend not to wear seatbelts. Midsize SUVs include both truck-type wagons, wagons that are built on car frames, and the latest blend of car, SUV, and minivan: the crossover wagon. They also cover a broad range of price ranges, safety equipment, and driver demographics.

Vocabulary (content)

1. Find words in the text to put into the following groups:
   a) car types   b) car equipment   c) technical features
2. Match the following expressions from the text (underlined in paragraphs 1-4) on the left (a-j) with their explanations on the right (1-10).

a) vulnerable	1)	avoiding unnecessary risks
b) diverse	2)	most important
c) ejection	3)	in a sensible way, like an adult
d) incidence	4)	easily damaged
e) prime	5)	group of people that is more likely than others to cause accidents
f) prudently	6)	very different from each other
g) rollover	7)	the act of being thrown out of sth.
h) resists	8)	the extent to which sth. happens
i) mature	9)	the turning over of a car during an accident
j) risk demographic	10)	stops sth. from happening

Grammar/Skills Phrases (language)

- Phrases for discussions. Rewrite each sentence using might, can't or must without changing its basic meaning.

a) I'm sure you are wrong.   You ……………………………
b) Perhaps this is a good idea.   This ……..……………………
c) I'm sure you're not serious.   You ………………………..…

d) I'm convinced that he is wrong.	He …………………………………
e) It is possible that you are right.	You …………………………..
f) I'm certain that is the answer.	That ……………………………..
g) Maybe that's true.	That ………………….....

- Consider the different types of cars in the text. Based on the information given, make up a ranking list of vehicle fatality from lowest to highest. Then compare your results with a partner. Offer suppositions using the structures in bold.

Perhaps midsize cars ……………………………………………..…….
People driving a compact car may/might ………………………………………...
SUV drivers possibly/probably ……………………………………………………
It is quite likely that ……………… are mainly driven by……………………….

Task

Your company produces three different types of cars: minivans, midsize SUVs, and compact cars:

Model group	Currently equipped with
minivans	2 front airbags, 1 side airbag for driver
midsize SUVs	2 front airbags, 1 side airbag for driver
compact car	2 front airbags

You are developing the new models for the 2009 model line. On the basis of the information in the text on safety features, driving behaviour, and vehicle fatality, you have to agree on the equipping of the 2009 models with

additional side airbags for front-seat passengers

seat-belt airbags for rear-seat passengers (latest technology)

Roles

Student A You are the CEO of the company. On the one hand, more safety would make cars more expensive. On the other hand, your target customers expect the latest safety features in new models, as your company's slogans are 'safety at a reasonable price' and 'more safety for little money'.

Student B You are the production manager. You are concerned about the increasing costs for more airbags. Designing and fitting effective side airbags is difficult, and you are not convinced that seat-belt airbags will bring real benefits for back-seat passengers.

Student C You are the safety engineer of the design department. You think that your company should make use of as much safety technology available as possible. With regard to safety, your company has always been a trendsetter on the market and increasing customer repurchase can be put down to this approach.

CONCLUSION

In the face of ongoing globalisation, more and more companies do business internationally and consequently, their employees have to speak English at work. Their special language needs are determined by the industry the learners are in, and their areas of responsibility. As topics with highly-specialised vocabulary are rarely discussed in ESP, the concept of specificity in corporate language courses can be interpreted as the effective combination of the particular subject matter with functional skills in defined corporate contexts, supported by activities dealing with language structures that are needed for these skills.

ESP teachers have to respond to the learners specific target situations and may have to select and/or produce materials for the classroom in addition to the course book. Moreover, transmitting latest information in authentic texts to the classroom fills the 'topicality gap' left in the materials supply of course books. Work on an interesting, topical text, sub-technical vocabulary, linguistic structures, nd skills phrases prepare the learners for the successful performance of a task, which should ideally reflect exactly the different job responsibilities and potential workplace situations where the learners have to speak English. So teacher-generated materials, customized to corporate language courses help learners discuss subject matters of their industries, i.e. put their language skills into authentic work practice.

Materials production is time-consuming, however, it enables the teacher to incorporate his view of language teaching and learning into the activities. Furthermore, he can respond more individually to the needs identified prior to the course or occurring during the classroom period and thus may maximize the learning success.

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The Structure of Classroom Discourse

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The aim of this paper is to look at typical features of classroom discourse as described by various authors and to provide examples from English classes taught by both native and non-native speakers (teachers) and recorded in local schools by the author. The scope of this paper does not allow that presented research data would become a basis for evaluating the discourse from a pedagogical point of view, i.e., which type of classroom discourse is more effective as far as learning is concerned. It will only provide a possible tool for analysing classroom discourse and will show its typical features.

INTRODUCTION

Before approaching a practical analysis, it would be useful to find out whether classroom discourse in general somehow differs from everyday spoken discourse, especially from conversation.

Cook (1989) says that classroom discourse is rather formal and ritualistic, whereby one participant (the teacher) has the institutionalized power to direct the discourse.

Cazden (2001) points out that classroom discourse can be found in one specific place only: the classroom. In other places, she claims, simultaneous conversations are normal, whereas in classroom, one person, the teacher, is responsible for controlling all the talk that occurs while class is officially in session. The teacher is the person who plays the dominant role in most classes all over the world. The teacher has the authority to decide who speaks, on what topics and for how long. Teachers can speak at any time and to any person; they can fill any silence or interrupt any speaker; they can speak to a student anywhere in the room and in any volume or tone of voice. (Heath 1978)

Johnson (1995) explains the distribution of power in the classroom context this way: “In classrooms, the structure of communication is easily recognizable. Teachers tend to control the topic of discussion, what counts as relevant to the topic, and who may participate and when. Students tend to respond to teacher-directed questions, direct their talk to teachers, and wait their turn before speaking. Teachers can ignore students who talk off-topic, or listen patiently and then direct back on-topic. They can allow students to call out during a lesson, or insist that they wait to be called on before speaking. Teachers can place their students into small groups so they have more opportunities to control their own talk, to select which topics to talk about, and to direct their talk to whomever they wish. At any point however, teachers retain the right to regain control over the structure of classroom communication. Thus, teachers, by virtue of the status they hold in their classrooms, play a dominant role in determining the structure of classroom communication." (1995, 4)

Mehan (1985) declares that discourse in lessons and discourse in everyday life have many features in common. Classroom lessons are a member of the family of speech events (Hymes 1974) "routinised forms of behaviour, delineated by well-defined boundaries and well-defined sets of behaviour within those boundaries. Classroom lessons, like other speech events, are interactional, that is, dependent upon participation by many parties for the assembly of their structure. Classroom lessons have a sequential organization, in which talking shifts from party to party as the event unfolds, and a hierarchic structure marked by recurrent behavioural configurations. In lessons, as in other polite speech events, speakers take turns, overlapping utterances are not highly valued, and access to the floor is obtained in systematic ways. Despite these similarities, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between discourse in everyday life and discourse in classrooms." (1985, 125) It especially concerns the ways in which speakers take turns.

He continues: "Teachers allocate turns by identifying students by name, inviting bids for the floor, setting up recyclable and automatic turn-taking procedures. While speaker allocation is open for negotiation at the end of each turn in everyday conversation, this is seldom the case in educational discourse. The floor is open for negotiation only at certain junctures. Furthermore, teachers not only allocate the floor, they take it back at the end of a student's reply or extended sequence of discourse. We seldom see students directly selecting the next speaker as part of their turn at talk during lessons." (1985, 126)

Morrison and McIntyre (1973) describe two possible approaches to the control of the classroom discourse - the more and the less traditional: the traditional one is seen as a single channel of communication between the teacher and the pupils, with the emphasis upon the teacher initiating and controlling the whole class at a common place of teaching. The second pattern potentially has more channels: teacher to individual and reverse, teacher to a group and reverse, teacher and class, pupils within the group, group to group.

Kumpulainen and Wray (2002) explain that during group-work social interaction among students tends to differ from traditional teacher-student interaction in its degree of reciprocity. In peer interaction, turn- taking and selection of content is distributed among the students. Students take over the responsibility for managing the talk and must cope with silences, negotiate how, when and who talks, and assess the relevance and quality of communication. It gives the students extended opportunities for using language and meaning-making and knowledge construction.

Walsh's argument comes from the era of communicative language teaching, thus from the era of non traditional classroom discourse, in terms of the classroom discourse control. He believes very strongly that teachers should, and indeed do, as he claims, play a much more central role than that advocated under both Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based Language Learning. Only the teacher can manage learner contributions which will determine the success of the lesson, he argues. "Peer interaction is not as effective as was once thought in promoting acquisition," (he believes). (2006, 4)

Malamah-Thomas (1987) uses the term classroom interaction instead of classroom discourse. She stresses the collaborative nature of the classroom discourse. She claims that classroom interaction serves an enabling function: its only purpose is to provide conditions for learning.

Interaction is, in her view, more than action followed by reaction. "Interaction means acting reciprocally, acting upon each other." (1987, 7) It means that the teacher acts upon the class, but the class reaction subsequently modifies his next action, and so on.

Spoken language plays a crucial role in any teaching situation. It is the medium by which much teaching takes place, and in which students demonstrate to teachers numerous of what they have learned (Cazden 2001).Walsh draws a distinction between content-based subject and language classrooms:

"The communication patterns found in language classrooms are special, different from those in content-based subjects. Communication is unique because the linguistic forms used are often simultaneously the aim of a lesson and the means of achieving those aims. Meaning and message are one and the same thing, the vehicle and object of instruction; language is both the focus of activity, the central objective of the lesson, as well as the instrument for achieving it." (2006, 3)

IRE – IRF Structure

Johnson (1995) sees the classroom as "a unique communication context with highly regulated patterns of communicative behaviour."

The underlying structure of classroom lessons generally consists of a sequence of acts known as IRE (initiation – response – evaluation). It represents the most basic interactional sequence of classroom lessons (Cazden, 1986). Mehan (1985) refers to it as an elicitation sequence. "The presence of the third slot, which evaluates the completion of the immediately preceding initiation – reply pair, is a distinguishing feature of educational discourse," Mehan claims. (1985, 126)

Cazden (2001) points out that the three-part sequence IRE represents a traditional lesson. It still may be the most common classroom discourse pattern at all grade levels, she adds.

She also reports Wells (1993) who reevaluates the traditional lesson structure IRE and uses the term IRF, where the F stands for feedback. Feedback is used, he claims, to extend students' responses, to incorporate some specialized register into student's answers, to reinforce processes. I would like to point out, though, that the term feedback instead of evaluation was used already by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975).

It is important to notice that a similar three-part exchange was introduced by Bellack and his co-workers in 1966. Bellack uses solicit, respond and react for the IRF structure; Walsh (2006) uses the term essential teaching exchange.

Initiation

(Note: all examples to follow have been recorded by the author of the paper)
Sinclair and Brazil (1982) present various kinds of initiation:

OK. Well, I have brought something for you …it's not a test.

Last time we talked about the relations but we didn't have time to finish reading the article about the Gallagher brothers.

Yeah, right. I think that we have done it. Yeah, we have done it twice, you know vocabulary. We have talked about getting on well or badly with someone.

And we are at the next unit. We have about three minutes.

Eliciting - anticipates some contribution of information from the addressee.
By eliciting we seek
A) decisions (yes/no questions):

Did you enjoy the performance?

Did you enjoy the holiday or were you happy to come to school?

Did you catch anything, did you catch anything…any fish?

Can you play golf?

Do you want to keep it?

B) agreement: In this case the speaker indicates his own position more or less clearly:

Isn't that a good idea?

Possible responses:

Yes, of course, it is.

(Acknowledgement is not enough here.)
In case of disagreement:

Well, actually, I don't think so.

Such an exchange could be found only in advanced or very advanced classes, I believe. In the examples I have found, the teacher usually uses this type of elicitation to check understanding:

I think the vocabulary is clear, isn't it?

Everything is clear, yeah?

In the other examples the teacher summarizes what the student has said and asks him/her to approve it:

So you spent all the time doing it… the activity?

You mean on the Internet...

Content (wh-questions):

And what did you do at home?

What was it about?

Where do you have the weekend house?

What computer game are you playing at the moment?

How old are you?

There is an interesting type of elicitation in teacher talk where the initiation and response are members of the same syntactic structure (Sinclair and Brazil 1982):

T: In the satellite there was a small…

P: Radio.

The teacher requires the addressee to finish the syntax. The intonation at the end of the utterance is usually levelled, indicating that more is to come in the pupil's turn.

Directing - equals getting pupils to do things:
Various forms can be used as can be seen from the following examples, some direct, others indirect:

So read the first sentence please, Maruško.

Read it well and try to think of the topic.

Can you think of a situation people can use such a sentence in?

And your task is to think about the situation the people can use it in.

OK, Luboši, you haven't told me what you did.

I can hear you chatting.

The response to a directive has usually two parts: an acknowledgement and an activity to suit the content of the directive, often nonverbal.

Response

Response is a reaction to initiation. The most typical type of response is an answer - an utterance that fits in with the question.

Feedback (Follow-up)

A very interesting study on the functions of the F- move is that of Cullen (2002).

The teacher's F-move has a primarily evaluative function, Cullen revises: it gives the students feedback about whether the response was acceptable or not. The older term feedback was changed into a more common term follow- up on the assumption that the move may also serve other functions.

The follow- up move, according to Cullen, serves either evaluative or discoursal role. The F-move with the evaluative function is used to provide feedback to individual students.

Evaluative follow-ups typically co-occur with display questions in the I-move.

Example: (The F-move in bold, all examples by Betáková)

T: What's the plural of luggage if it's uncountable?

S: Luggage.

T: Yeah, the plural of luggage is luggage. Good.

The discoursal role has a different purpose: to pick up students' contributions and to "incorporate them into the flow of classroom discourse."(Mercer, 1995 in: Cullen, 2002: 120). The emphasis is thus on the content rather than on form:

T: You'll go to visit your uncle. OK, you like your uncle?

S: Yeah.

T: Yeah, so you'll have fun the next time.

Johnson (1995) also mentions that teacher's evaluation may seem more like rephrasing or paraphrasing of students' responses, and acts as a means of sustaining and expanding student's responses. Such expansions are similar to the expansions that mothers provide for their very young children. The teacher's use of expansions may enable the exchange of ideas to continue regardless of the linguistic limitations of the students, she claims.

Cullen (2002) goes on: "The teacher is using the follow-up move to focus the attention of the whole class on individual student responses, rephrase them in a more acceptable form, and then elaborate on them in order to extend the dialogue and encourage further contributions. The aim is thus not so much to provide corrective feedback to individual students… but to feed students' contributions into the emerging class discussion. The teacher reformulates the children's contributions and presents them back to the class so that their meanings are more closely aligned with what has already been said." (Cullen, 2002: 122)

As far as learning is concerned, Cullen shows that the F-move with the evaluative function supports learning through the formal correction. The F-move with the discoursal function supports learning through the teacher providing a rich source of message oriented target language input and derives further initiating moves from them. The focus is on the content, not on the form.

Cullen deals with four specific strategies which are used by teachers in the follow-up move:

Reformulation. The teacher provides the class with a model of correct usage. The teacher's reformulations act as a way of ensuring that the content of an individual student's contribution is available and also audible to the rest of the class. In a sense, the teacher is converting the students' attempts at/of? output into comprehensible input for the whole class: (all examples by Betáková)

T: Where is that? East, West?

S: Middle.

T: Middle. OK. Hmm. It's in the middle. In the middle of Slovakia

Elaboration. The teacher elaborates on students' responses in some way. The teacher's elaborations provide a linguistically richer source of input for the class, while, at an affective level, they serve to show that the teacher listens to what the students have to say with interest:

T: Did you send a postcard from Slovakia last time when you were in Slovakia,

Ondra?

S: No.

T: No, you didn´t. Not even to your grandmother? Your poor grandmother!

Comment. The teacher is simply adding a spontaneous comment on their own. It is often a personal, often a humorous response:

T: How is the night life in České Budějovice? Is it good?

Ss: (some say yes, some say no.)

T: You've got Cinestar, you've got bowling. More than Český Krumlov has. Český

Krumlov only has one theatre. It has only dress balling.

Repetition. Repetition is used as a way of acknowledging a student response, and confirming that it is acceptable and at the same time ensuring that all the students have heard it.

T: Where did you go, Anna?

S: Ireland.

T: To Ireland. Great!

In many cases it is very difficult to identify the function of the F-move precisely because very often the two functions are combined as in the following example. The teacher first corrects the mistake of form and then he/she elaborates on the student's response or adds a comment of his/her own:

T: Do your friends play any musical instruments?

S: My best friend plays on electric guitar.

T: My best friend plays. My best friend plays the guitar. So you play guitar during

the holidays together.

I think we can draw a conclusion from Cullen's research that for an effective teacher it is necessary to use both types of F-move – evaluative and discoursal. Both of them support learning, the former concentrates on the form, the latter focuses on the message and at the same time provides a valuable source of comprehensible input for the learners.

To finish the discussion of the typical structure of classroom discourse, I think it is important to note that there are many possible varieties of classroom discourse, depending on the pedagogical aim of the particular lesson. Even in a highly communicative classroom, though, we will always find the typical IRF structure described above. Or the other way round: "[d]espite the existence of rather stable interaction patterns present in classroom contexts, each interaction situation is still a unique and complex phenomenon. Classroom interactions are continuously negotiated and recreated – they evolve over time" (Kumpulainen and Wray, 2002, 44).

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