

ICT IN ELT
2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Teaching Teachers To Teach Through Technology 6T/60
Gliwice, Poland
June 20-22, 2003
<http://www.ictconference.gliwice.pl>

The conference was organized by The British Council Poland, IATEFL Poland Computer Special Interest Group and Wellington Institute of Languages at Technical University of Silesia in Gliwice. This was the second conference, following the success of the first event "East European IATEFL Poland Computer SIG Conference" held also in Gliwice in June 2001. The organization of the conference was made possible thanks to the hard work and devotion of Grazyna Studzinska, Conference Manager, Marcin Golaszewski, Conference Webmaster and a team of unnamed but devoted conference staff. Also, at the moment it should be mentioned that the conference came into being largely due to the support of various institutions and sponsors, such as The British Council Poland, Wellington Institute of Languages, Young Digital Poland, Macmillan Polska, Pearson Education Longman, MM Publications, BILA Trading, Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Tenvirk Systemy Informatyczne.

The conference was attended by 107 participants, teachers, teacher trainers, CALL researchers, publishers' representatives, from different parts of Poland, as well as from Germany, Egypt, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. The participants had the undeniable pleasure of listening to 14 academic presentations and 7 commercial ones. Plenary lectures were given, in the order of delivery, by Jan Rusiecki, Raf Uzar, Elzbieta Gajek, Pawel Topol, Paul East, Przemyslaw Stencel, Carol Clark, Włodzimierz Sobkowiak.

Apart from the sessions, the important part of the conference constituted less formal encounters in a variety of contexts, which really helped participants get to know each other and start new projects. This was done at publishers' stands, where everyone could test-drive the new products, most notably Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English version 4.0. Also, what should be highly appreciated are the organisers' efforts to provide the conference participants with opportunities for entertainment, such as a Multimedia Show, a guided tour "Gliwice by night" and a reception, which helped to strengthen the ties in a less informal atmosphere.

The conference is unique in one feature: there is some kind of balance between academic and commercial presentations, which on the one hand enables informing teachers about new products, but on the other hand the publishers are given the chance to hear the teacher's views, needs and expectations as for new developments for upcoming versions of programs.

Although it was not physically possible to attend all the presentations, most of them were given over on a CD-ROM, which enabled all to explore them in detail after the conference finished. Thus, what follows is a brief overview of only some selected presentations.

Raf Uzar, representing University of Lodz, Poland, in his plenary "Teaching Translators To Translate Through Technology", showed how one can use corpus methods together with other new technologies (including hyper-text) in translation training and teaching English as a foreign language, trying to show how specific technologies can be used to improve the quality of both fields.

"Multimedia, the Web and Formal EFL Exams" was the plenary session delivered by Pawel Topol from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland. The author makes an overview of CALL software available on the market as either being material-presenting packages or sets of exercises and tests (or a combination of both). The article discusses two examples of how computer technology can support real EFL exams, a local one constituting a multimedia CD-ROM package and multimedia distant English courses for students of technical universities.

Developing ebooks was the topic of the presentation by Paul East, who discussed a number of issues arising when producing, promoting, selling ebooks, all supported with a number of examples of actual materials.

Magdalena Derwojedowa and Magdalena Zawislawska (Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland) dealt with the issue of e-language-learning from an author and a teacher points of view. For that purpose, they presented two existing solutions for Polish as a foreign language: a 3-CD interactive multimedia program and a www survival course, also describing the design, advantages and disadvantages of using such materials in the teaching process.

Aleksandra Wojnowska and Przemyslaw Kaszubski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland) gave a very interesting demonstration of "TestBuilder", a corpus-based test authoring application that can be used for making different exercises (open cloze, hangman, gap-filling, sentence and paragraph reordering). The participants were really impressed with the quality and user-friendliness of the program, what is more, available as freeware.

An interesting point of view, from the commercial side, was represented by Michal Tasiemski. In his presentation entitled "*Lexitools* – linguistic software. On-line bilingual phrasal dictionaries and computer aided translation platform" he showed the process of

development and applications of *Lexitools*, a set of language tools encompassing a dictionary browser, a translator's assistant and installable dictionaries. The author's competent and informative presentation really encouraged all the participants to try the free language tools on their own.

Przemyslaw Stencel, from Wyższa Szkoła Lingwistyczna, Częstochowa, Poland, introduced the basics of online learning, talking about features, strengths and weaknesses of distance learning projects, giving the example of D.E.L.T.A. (Distance English Language Teaching), created and run by the presenter.

Włodzimierz Sobkowiak, representing Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland, raised the issue of rule-based Text-to-Speech synthesis approached from the point of view of English as a Foreign Language. The presentation was extremely competent and at the same time lively and suitable for the audience, that is why Sobkowiak really inspired the audience to try the technology outlined.

The humble undersigned, Jarek Krajka from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland, provided a thorough analysis of CD-ROM EFL dictionaries in the respect of all the phases of vocabulary teaching and learning. Special focus was devoted to the possibilities but also shortcomings, with some possible solutions to the problems encountered.

All the other presentations added value to the conference, namely "Language Skills and Technology – What's Shakespeare Got to Do with It?" by Carol Clark, "Teaching Lazy Teachers – BC ICT Project" by Grzegorz Juraszek and Grazyna Studzinska, "Training Teachers to Teach Through Technology" by Ela Gajek and "English Interactive Quizzes" by Agata Zieba-Warcholak.

To sum up, it must be said that ICT in ELT – 2nd International Conference was a highly successful event, grouping academic researchers, teacher trainers, teachers and publishers. Thanks to such a heterogeneous audience, the participants were treated with an effective blend of theory and practice. It is hoped that if everything goes well, the readers of *Teaching English with Technology* will be able to benefit from some of the ideas presented during the conference in a Journal issue devoted to the publication of conference proceedings.