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"5th Pacific Second Language Research Forum (PACSLRF)"

Subscription Information and Call for Submissions

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

by **Jarek Krajka**

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The sixth year of existence of *Teaching English with Technology, A Journal for Teachers of English* is marked with the new issue of the Journal, devoted to a variety of themes pertaining to various spheres of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning. As usual, the editorial team of the Journal is happy to give floor to contributions of different types, both articles documenting research done as well as tutorials exposing the potential of various tools in language teaching and learning. It seems that only by maintaining appropriate balance between academic data-supported and practical hands-on submissions will the wide readership of *Teaching English with Technology* fully appreciate the opportunities of CALL and TELL.

Thus, from a more theoretical side, this issue features the article entitled "Communication via E-Mail in ESP" by Galina Kavaliauskienė and Vilhelmina Vaièiūnienė (Lithuania), who describe recent research into the use of email to enhance the teaching of languages for specific purposes (ESP). The authors try to prove that appropriate use of multimedia encourages students to become more self-directed and autonomous in their learning through the integration of learner collaboration into e-mail exchange project.

Another article in the Journal, "Using Web-Based Research Tasks for the Promotion of Deep Learning" by Malgorzata Kurek (Poland), is based on the concept of using the cognitive and linguistic potential of online resources to involve students in deeper learning. The author concentrates on how Web resources can be used to train EFL college learners in approaching complex research tasks using deep learning strategies. It is worth noting that the contribution of Malgorzata Kurek was based on the excellent presentation at EUROCALL 2005 conference, held in Cracow (Poland) in August 2005.

"Using Corpora in Language Teaching and Learning", the article by James Thomas from the Czech Republic, is concerned with theoretical issues and practical applications of using a concordancing program. The paper is a written version of a successful presentation at another major CALL event held in Poland last year, namely 3rd International Conference ICT in ELT 6T/60 (Teaching Teachers To Teach Through Technology). It is to be noted that even though organised by different institutions, both EUROCALL and 6T/60 had the same conference manager, Grazyna Studzinska from Wellington Teachers' Development Centre in Gliwice, who needs to be praised as Poland's leading (and only) CALL conference organizer.

In A Word from a Techie section Wojciech Korput deals with the technicalities of grabbing audio and video materials from the Web. The article written by the Journal webmaster details the steps of downloading and recording different types of materials, which can be extremely useful in preparing materials for the language classroom. Finally, the Internet Lesson Plans section features two lesson plans written by the humble undersigned, demonstrating the use of Internet materials in teaching intermediate learners.

As usual, it is hoped that a rich mix of issues, aspects, views and solutions presented will stimulate the readers of *Teaching English with Technology* to their personal pedagogical endeavours. I wish you good reading.

ARTICLE

USING WEB-BASED RESEARCH TASKS

FOR THE PROMOTION OF DEEP LEARNING

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Introduction

This article draws on the concept of using the enormous cognitive and linguistic potential of Web resources for better and deeper learning. It concentrates primarily on how these resources can be used to train EFL college learners in approaching complex research tasks in a thoughtful manner, and, consequently, using deep learning strategies. It is based on the assumption that students' ability to use Web resources creatively cannot be taken for granted since their educational experience has taught them to be surface learners. Thus, the strategies they spontaneously turn to are those of memorization, repetition and, generally, passive reproduction of the input. Drawing from her teaching experience, the author of this article suggests a procedure for a Web-infused training, in which a special emphasis is placed on the process of framing research tasks and employing deep learning strategies in the process of their completion.

Deep learning vs. surface learning

Partly in response to the ever increasing accessibility of information provided by new technologies, much attention is currently being devoted to making learners active and autonomous participants of the learning process. With information of any kind being nowadays abundant and easily available, it seems that any learning situation should aim at coaching learners to treat it as a starting point for the creation of a new product. This is possible if they are not afraid to engage in a wide range of higher-order thinking processes nor discouraged by the intellectual effort that this kind of manipulation undoubtedly requires. Here, the deep-surface dichotomy, although relatively new in a pedagogical context, appears to best illustrate how students respond to resources.

First of all, it is common to point to the volitional aspect of the dichotomy using the two terms, namely *deep* and *surface,* to refer to learners' general approaches to learning. In brief, learners with deep approaches learn to understand whereas those with surface approaches learn for fear of failure (Biggs, 1987). This dimension appears to be closely connected with learners' motivation and has become the subject of several research studies (Marton, Saljo 1976; Biggs, 1987). The other aspect of the deep-surface dichotomy that has also been given enhanced attention is connected with the amount of cognitive manipulation that learners engage in. It can be linked to learners' general approaches to learning, yet it can also be prompted by a pedagogic task. Here, *deep learning* has come to encompass the kind of input processing that results in the creative production of a new quality. The deeper the processing of the input and the deeper the strategies that learners employ, the more valuable the learning outcome [1]. In contrast, *surface learning* is typically characterized by the uncritical acceptance of input and followed by its memorization and a possibly faithful recall. The most common strategies used in surface learning i.e. memorization, repetition and rote reproduction, do not require any intellectual manipulation of the material under study and, thus, result in learners' mental passiveness.

Desired as deep learning is for students' intellectual growth, it is rarely spontaneous and seems very unpopular, especially among academically struggling students. First of all, it requires much greater intellectual effort than surface learning. In practical terms, this means that even well motivated students may choose not to engage in deep learning due to time constraints or in order to reduce an over-heavy learning load. It can also be hypothesized that most learners, especially in the Polish reality, are not aware of the difference between surface

and deep learning strategies and they do not know how to transform the information they are exposed to. With the traditional transmission pedagogy conventionally prioritizing reproduction rather than creativity and expecting learners to absorb and reproduce as much factual information as possible, it is no surprise that the vast majority of them have been coached to be surface learners and that this type of learning is the only learning they are familiar with.

The issue of deep learning seems especially worth investigating in the context of foreign language instruction. Here, paradoxically, surface learning strategies make a valuable and efficient part of learning experience. Learners of any foreign language, especially at the early stages, are commonly expected to use memorization, repetition and rehearsal e.g. during drills or while memorizing new vocabulary items. Indeed, these strategies prove extremely efficient in learning small chunks of material. Interestingly enough, some methods of foreign language instruction e.g. the Callan's Method tend to rely almost entirely on these strategies. It comes as no surprise, then, that even advanced and mature language learners, being convinced of the efficacy of the strategies in question, tend to rely heavily on them even in academic contexts, where tasks commonly require deeper intellectual manipulation of the input. It can even be argued that it is the inadequate transfer of surface strategies to cognitively complex tasks of research work or term paper writing that is responsible for low quality papers devoid of learners' personal contribution, with information uncritically copied from other, usually electronic sources.

How to encourage deep learning?

The question is how to make learners employ deep learning strategies against the deeply ingrained habit of surface learning. Literature in cognition confirms that students' intellectual effort can be stimulated by means of properly designed tasks. It is worth noting that task cognitive demands, i.e. the quality of intellectual processing required for its successful completion can be regulated on the level of each of the three task components, namely the input, the output and the elaboration stage (Ellis, 2003, Robinson, 2001).

In the context of CALL, these are Web-based tasks that seem extremely promising for the promotion of deep learning. The unique features of web-resources serving as input for

task completion such as information noise, lack of clear structure, linguistic and cognitive authenticity, make them complex enough to foster the use of higher-order thinking skills. Yet, even the most cognitively stimulating input can be stripped of its cognitive potential if it is followed by a traditional data-reproducing activity. For example, making learners cite factual information from an authentic text will undoubtedly leave its cognitive potential unexplored. In contrast, the task of collecting information on two different products with the purpose of comparing or evaluating them requires much deeper cognitive manipulation of data. The differences in task cognitive complexity are best illustrated by scavenger hunt questions[2].

Question/ task	Level of cognitive difficulty	Cognitive processes involved
How tall is Mt Everest? Who wrote the book "Peter Pan"? What is another name for bird flu?	simple	Simple factual information retrieval. The answer is usually obtained by means of simple searching strategies. The key words needed are usually those which appear in the original question. The information does not have to be manipulated by the learner.
Which moon in the solar system has active volcanoes? How many Russian Rubles equal one U.S Dollar? Where on the Web can you see the world through the eyes of a honeybee?	medium	The questions require looking for relationships between different concepts. Obtaining the answers calls for well chosen searching strategies e.g. rephrasing (e.g. *money converter*), or combining several terms for precise information retrieval (e.g. "*solar system*" +*moon* +"*active volcano*")
Find English equivalents of the following Polish proper nouns: - *Sciana P³aczu* (the Wailing Wall) in Jerusalem, - *Glowa Cukru* (Sugar Loaf) in Rio de Janeiro.	cognitively complex	Successful task completion requires activating prior knowledge, looking for the right context, using pictorial clues to compensate for lack of comprehension. Searching strategies are sophisticated and will vary from person to person.

Table 1.Cognitive task sequencing illustrated on the example of scavenger hunt questions.

Training learners to approach research tasks

The question is how to make students exploit the cognitive potential of Web-based materials to its fullest. It seems safe to hypothesize that genuine practitioners use Web resources mostly for research-like tasks which require purposeful information gathering followed by its manipulation and creative production. This raises the possibility of implementing Web-enhanced instruction in academic contexts where most tasks are research-like[3]. Such tasks share certain characteristic qualities that contribute to their increased cognitive demands. They are enumerated in Table 2 below.

> ➢ require investigating an issue and solving a problem (Johns 1997);
>
> ➢ based on external sources either written or oral;
>
> ➢ interdisciplinary;
>
> ➢ the problem can be viewed from several perspectives, each of them affecting the final product;
>
> ➢ require independent individual work or team effort (whichever the case, teacher's assistance is limited);
>
> ➢ the learner needs to build on already practiced sub skills – note taking, summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, writing but also comparing, evaluating (Spack, 1998);
>
> ➢ the situation is ill-or non-structured, with multiple solutions available.

Table 2. Characteristics of research tasks.

As can be seen from the above presentation, research tasks unquestionably belong to the most challenging academic assignments. In fact, each of the above listed features requires the learner to engage in complex thinking processes. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss all the features in greater detail, the ill- or non-structured character of research tasks deserves a particular mention. Lack of clear structure means that such a task is perceived by the learner as a problem solving situation because it is disorganized, with multiple solutions, interpretations and goals available (Halpern, 1996)[4]. Thus, while approaching a research task learners in fact undergo the problem-solving procedure: they need to acknowledge the level of their familiarity or unfamiliarity with the subject, identify gaps in their knowledge and then use the pre-defined knowledge to recognize the nature and condition of the problem to be solved (Derry, 1988). Then, they need to recognize the cognitive goal of a task, e.g. whether it requires factual or procedural knowledge or whether the information needs to be detailed or general. In the process students not only need to make use of additional cues that arise from the context but also recognize and dismiss any irrelevant information that reduces their understanding of the situation. Thus, their reasoning skills are activated in the process of compensating for the lack of internal structure (Brown et al, 1989). In fact, all such activities call for intensive intellectual effort and constant manipulation of all the data available.

Obviously, the description provided above shows the desired procedure for tackling research tasks rather than the real one. Successful research work requires well developed research skills and the use of deep learning strategies – the ability that only top students develop on their own. It seems that average and academically struggling students, when placed in a research situation, inevitably turn to the strategies they are best acquainted with, namely the surface strategies of reproduction. As a result, they develop numerous learning pathologies hindering their learning progress. For instance, task instructions are persistently oversimplified so that they lend themselves well to reproduction strategies (Kurek, 2004). Also, numerous instances of plagiarism or procrastination occur. Once again it needs to be emphasized that it is most evident in situations where students are supposed to work with Web resources, since the intellectual challenge they pose is higher than that created by traditional materials.

It can be assumed that providing learners with sufficient experience and practice with using Web resources would help them develop appropriate research skills. Unfortunately,

even casual observation reveals that the majority of web-based tasks do not prepare learners for dealing with research situations. They are either well structured, with detailed instructions as to how to proceed, or they make learners operate on pre-selected, reliable and relevant web sites. Even webquests – web-based and inquiry-oriented long term tasks which have been designed with the purpose of promoting the creative use of web resources, only partially bridge the gap between classroom and real life practices[5]. Carefully designed and described stages of a typical webquest, as well as the pre-selected input that learners are supposed to use, leave students unprepared for the confusion, lack of knowledge and information noise that are bound to occur in real life tasks. Bearing the above in mind, there seems to be a need to provide college learners with Web-infused training that would equip them with strategies for task framing and, consequently, foster critical and purposeful use of Web resources in research work.

Training description

The training in question has been designed for sophomore EFL college students, with the purpose of sharpening their research skills and promoting the use of deep learning strategies. In particular, it aims at teaching students to use Web resources critically and creatively for research tasks and academic writing. Prior to the training, all the participants take part in computer-enhanced literacy sessions during which they learn how to efficiently search for information, evaluate its quality and cite it properly (Kurek, 2002). Thus, in practical terms, the training builds on all the previously learnt electronic and information literacy skills with the focus of transferring them into a new context.

Stage	Activities	Objectives
Stage I: Learning basic electronic tools	- learning basic electronic skills (typing and word processing in general, using email, locating information on the screen), - learning the metalanguage of the environment, - learning software tools: Power Point, Internet Explorer, - adapting Internet materials - working with sound	-to make students familiar with working in the electronic environment, -to make students synchronise manual and visual skills for efficient on-screen reading, - to equip students with basic skills in the use of selected software.

	and graphics.	
Stage II: Developing basic research skills	- learning basic searching tools (search engines) and strategies for complex information search, - evaluating Internet resources in terms of their credibility, validity, attractiveness, authorship, etc. - preparing a webliography, - developing strategies for avoiding plagiarism.	-to make students aware of the existence of various searching tools and searching strategies, - to equip students with criteria for evaluating web materials, - to introduce the concept of copyright and teach the rules of citation, - to make students sensitive to the issue of plagiarism.
Stage III: Teacher-guided research work	- performing a guided interdisciplinary research in which the process of framing ill-structured tasks is stressed - using foundation questions as a means of framing an ill-structured task.	- to introduce students to the concept of cooperative learning, - to make students work with a variety of interdisciplinary authentic texts and use them in texts of their own, - to introduce the concept of task framing.
Stage IV: Independent research work	Independent work- performing independent research work, in which a complex interdisciplinary issue is to be investigated from several perspectives.	- to make students combine and use all the previously learned basic electronic and research skills in a new context.

Table 3: Syllabus proposal for the computer-enhanced literacy course.

The process of task framing presented and discussed below belongs to Stage III of the above-presented literacy course. In brief, it teaches students how broad interdisciplinary research tasks can be broken into steps and given an internal structure. Exemplary topics range from *Submarines*, *Volcanoes*, *Deserts of the World* to *Acid Rain*. The procedure for the whole session has been attached in form of a students' handout in Appendix 1, yet due to the limited scope of this article only the process of task framing will be highlighted in the following sections, with the initial stages of topic negotiation and group forming excluded from a detailed analysis. A brief outline of the task framing process is presented in Table 3 below.

Step 1: Identifying knowledge gaps.
Step 2: Identifying different perspectives.
Step 3: Developing expertise.

Table 4. Suggested procedure for task framing.

The idea of training learners in task framing is based on two main assumptions, namely that a research task resembles a problem solving situation and thus inevitably breeds the feeling of confusion, which can be alleviated if learners are able to identify and close gaps in their knowledge (Step 1), and secondly, that the confusion, if not properly tamed, leads to the spontaneous use of surface learning strategies, since they are simpler and less cognitively demanding than the deep ones. In keeping with this, it can be hypothesized that instructing the learner how task perplexity can be successfully curbed is likely to promote deeper and better learning. In the discussion that follows, the topic *Earthquakes* has been used as an example of any research task which lacks precise instructions and which needs to be structured by the task participant himself.

Task topic : Earthquakes

Step 1: Identifying knowledge gaps.

Instructions for learners:

1. Make a list of basic questions that need to be answered in order to begin your investigation of earthquakes.

2. Use the Web to answer them.

3. Meet your partners and check/share what you have learnt.

The purpose of this stage is to make learners accept the fact that it is doubt, uncertainty and generally lack of knowledge that drive genuine research work. It seems that the majority of learners wrongly perceive lack of knowledge and the ensuing feeling of confusion as an inhibition discouraging them from further effort rather than intellectual stimulation. Thus, the first step imitates the initial stage of dealing with a problem-solving situation. In order to separate what is known from what is to be learnt, students compile a list of foundation questions, the answers to which will provide them with basic factual information. For example, students researching the subject of earthquakes are expected to generate the following questions:

> What are earthquakes?

> Where do they occur?

> Why are they dangerous?

> How do they happen?

The answers are to be found on the Web and then shared orally with other team members. Students work within set time limits (circa 15') and are instructed to take notes, although they are not allowed to copy the information verbatim.

Although this stage is seemingly simple, it reveals one of the major weaknesses of students' interaction with Web resources. While proceeding through numerous electronic texts in the attempt to unearth the answers, learners do not make the effort to internalize the information they find. Instead, they glide over texts focusing on the linguistic level only, without any deeper assimilation of the content. This becomes clear when they meet other group members to share search results. Even casual observation reveals that most of the students are unable to pass very basic information in their own words, without the support of the original text displayed on the computer screen - a pattern of continuous recurrence among surface learners. This leads to the further conclusion that having easy and unrestricted access to plentiful sources gives students the soothing appearance of possessing knowledge whereas what they have is raw information[6]. In the context of the training in question, this experience has a more universal dimension since it is warning that information needs to be

internalized and that this process is rarely effortless – an important lesson to be learnt as regards students' future encounters with electronic texts.

Step 2: Identifying different perspectives.

Instructions for learners:

1.   What are the different perspectives you can view the topic from?

2.   Choose the perspective that appeals to you most.

The aim of the middle stage of the training in question is to make students sensitive to the interdisciplinary aspect or research tasks and, consequently, to the counterarguments that might be provided by readers representing other areas of expertise. In fact, only traditional classroom activities are artificially kept within the bounds of one discipline, whereas tasks performed by genuine practitioners border on several ones. For instance, writing an essay on literature requires the knowledge of the history of a given period, social background and, obviously, the knowledge of literature heuristics. Similarly, the already mentioned research work on earthquakes will call for the background knowledge of geology, geography, seismology or even rescue techniques. The process of identifying these perspectives is likely to deepen students' understanding of the task and help them see the complexity of knowledge. Also, it fosters their critical thinking skills since it shows the importance of seeing things from alternative points of view.[7]

Step 3: Developing expertise

Instructions for students:

1.   Make a list of more detailed questions for the perspective you have chosen.

2.   Use the Web to answer the questions and explore your area of expertise in greater detail. Take notes but avoid copying somebody else's words.

3.   Meet your team mates and share what you've learned.

The last stage of the task framing procedure allows students to develop a sense of expertise and, at the same time, is intended to draw their attention to the role of cooperation. This stage reflects the multifaceted nature of contemporary real-life tasks undertaken by genuine practitioners. Since such tasks are interdisciplinary, they require team effort and, consequently, close cooperation between highly qualified team members. Similarly, each of the students in the process of developing their own expertise stands a chance of becoming a valued team member and contributing to the quality of the final product, be it an oral presentation or a written assignment. Also, since during this stage learners repeat the procedure of asking questions and working with Web resources with the purpose of sharing the information, it is hoped that this time they will employ deeper learning strategies and internalize the necessary information.

The procedure described above usually takes about 50-60 minutes and is followed by a distribution of precise instructions describing the nature of the final product and the assessment criteria. For instance, students learn whether they are supposed to write a report, present a talk show or prepare an itinerary. This converts the task from open to closed, the reason being that open tasks prove less motivating than closed ones (Jacob, 1996 in Robinson, 2001). It seems that the freedom that open tasks offer is often perceived by learners as a license to follow the simplest mental route and thus, contrary to teachers' intentions, may lead to surface learning. Indeed, observation reveals that despite having participated in the training, some students persistently employ surface learning strategies, even if this means task distortion and results in a low quality product (Kurek, 2005). Also, it needs to be stressed that the training described above is fairly teacher-controlled, yet in the subsequent research tasks the teacher's control is gradually fading away, with the final objective being to prompt students' automatic use of deep learning strategies

Conclusion

The need for the above presented training emerges from the observation that the cognitive potential of the Web, although enormous, all too often is taken for granted, with no

sufficient care taken over what learners actually do with Web resources. Literature in the field repeatedly links Web-materials with the promotion of critical thinking skills, yet daily experience shows that having been coached to be surface learners, students unwillingly break old habits and engage in effortful intellectual processing of information. More commonly, they slip into reproduction strategies.

As regards language learning contexts, the question emerges whether making students engage in deep learning results in better linguistic performance. Here it must be remembered that the deeper the intellectual manipulation the more likely it is that students will memorize the material being manipulated. As Robinson puts it, "the greater the cognitive demands of a task, the more they engage cognitive resources (attention and memory), and so are likely to focus attention on input and output" (Robinson 2001:305). Since in Web-based research tasks only authentic sources are used, in theory at least, their linguistic content should be easily acquired. Indeed, although no research has been done into the rate of language acquisition during deep learning, it seems that learners who use deep learning strategies perform much better, use more sophisticated vocabulary and are able to apply it in more varied contexts.

To conclude, it should be emphasized that the profusion of linguistically authentic electronic texts which are so easily accessible via the Internet creates great learning opportunities. Since they cover a huge variety of topics dealt with in a foreign language, they will be inevitably used by students seeking both language resources and factual information. Unfortunately, lack of research skills and deep learning experience frequently results in students' gliding over texts without the internalization of content. Also, numerous instances of web-based plagiarism, especially among academically struggling students, demonstrate the dominance of surface learning strategies. So, paradoxically, although the informative value of Web resources is well appraised, their abundance, accessibility and overwhelming cognitive complexity, if not properly attended, may lead to the fossilization of inappropriate learning behaviours, especially the surface strategies of mechanical reproduction.

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Notes

1. Deep learning strategies involve those of synthesis, analysis, evaluation, hypothesizing or decision making.

2. A scavenger hunt is an information retrieval activity in which individuals or teams search the web for answers to questions on a variety of topics.

3. The most representative task is writing in response to other texts which corresponds with Bereiter & Scardamalia's (1987) *knowledge transforming*. In an academic context it is best represented by term paper and thesis writing.

4. The concept of well and ill-structured tasks is partially reflected in the distinction between closed and open tasks.

5. More information about webquests can be found at http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about_webquests.html

6. In common view, knowledge is defined as internalised and utilised information.

7. This ability is described by R. Paul (1990) as "strong-sense" critical thinking and represents its highest level. It is contrasted with "weak-sense' critical thinking where the reasoning skills are used in defence of one's own views only.

Appendix 1

Framing research tasks

Students' task sheet

1. Have a look at the titles listed below and circle **all** the topics you find interesting or attractive.

- ❑ Ancient Greece and Rome

- ❑ Cloning

- ❑ The Crusades

- ❑ Submarines

- ❑ Deserts of the World
- ❑ The Himalayas
- ❑ Earthquakes
- ❑ China

2. Find 2-3 people you would enjoy working with.

3. Decide on the topic that all of you would be equally interested in. Once it has been decided upon, write it down in the space provided.

…………………………………………………………………

4. Cooperate with your group mates to make a list of basic questions that need to be answered to get started.

e.g. What is……………………………………………………?

…………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………….

5. Use the Internet to answer the questions you've just listed. Try to understand the answers rather than copy them.

6. Meet your partners and share what you've learnt.

7. What are the different perspectives you can view you topic from? List them below.

………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………….

8. Become an expert! Choose one area of expertise and list the more detailed questions that will guide you in your work. List them below:

……………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………….

9. Use the Web to answer the questions and explore your area of expertise in greater detail. Take notes but avoid copying somebody else's words.

10. Meet your team mates and share what you've learned.

11. Ask your teacher for detailed instructions as to what kind of product is expected of you.

COMMUNICATION VIA E-MAIL IN ESP

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> The greatest problem in communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.
>
> George Bernard Shaw.

Introduction

E-mail is a form of asynchronous communication via computer-mediated application of the Internet. Using an E-mail extends language learning time and place beyond the classroom, offers real communication in the target language, and provides possibilities to increase the amount of time that learners spend reading and writing in a communicative context. In spite of being a relatively plain medium, e-mail can offer effective pedagogical benefit of communicative interaction to the process of learning a foreign language.

This paper describes the research into the e-mail exchange activities between two English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes of different specializations. The primary accent of this research has been to investigate e-partners' ability to negotiate the choice of materials and the content of presentations on professional themes via e-mail exchanges. Such an approach emphasizes learner's ability to search for information online, critically analyze and sort materials out and select reliable information. Appropriate use of multimedia for this purpose encourages learners to become more self-directed and autonomous in their learning. Integration of learner collaboration into e-mail exchange project develops their skills of negotiating, planning, and sharing information. The secondary aspect of this research has been an analysis of the quality of online designed presentations that were delivered in face to face conference session. The implications of this experiment are discussed.

Literature Review of Contemporary E-Mail Learning

Current advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) affect the ways how English language is taught and students develop their language skills. In the 20th century, ICT was often referred to as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Lately nearly all learning has incorporated letter 'e', and e-learning has become natural part of English instruction.

Keeping up to date with e-learning is a fast-moving discipline on the Internet. Nowadays Internet offers the activities of reading daily e-learning newsletters, online magazines and attending e-learning conferences. Interpersonal exchanges engage learners in real life communication with key partners. E-partners can be found on the Net by employing common search engines. Unfortunately, e-mailing between at random found key pals does not lead to effective learning, and, as a rule, is limited to exchanging personal information. Even with suitable key partners, e-mailing can often be problematic in terms of time and reliability of the contacts.

E-mail seems to be the most important, unique method for communication and developing relationships since the telephone (Suller, 1998). First, it is easy to use. Second, people find it familiar and safe – it is similar to letter writing. Third, it is the most common and powerful. Unlike face to face encounters, e-mail exchanges are asynchronous, i.e. do not happen in 'real time'. A person has time to think, evaluate, and compose a message. Availability of thinking time can save e-partners from unnecessary misunderstandings and arguments. However, a person's ability to communicate effectively via e-mail depends highly on their writing skills (Suller, 1998): 'E-mail is a less spontaneous form of communicating than speech. Unlike verbal conversation - where words issue forth and immediately evaporate – writing places one's thoughts in a more visible, permanent, concrete, and objective format. Poor writing can result in misunderstandings and possibly conflicts'. Spelling, grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and style influence the quality of the writing and reflect one's personality.

ICT collaborative project between two schools in Singapore and Birmingham explored different writing tasks through the electronic exchange of information (Mei Lin Ho, 2000). The pupils' confidence, awareness and understanding of their own and their correspondents' cultures were enhanced in this project. The study also examines the role and place of the foreign language teachers over a period of project time, and discusses the implications for both the teachers and learners. Students proved to be more motivated and displayed a positive attitude towards writing. Analysis of the electronic messages showed a level of maturity in pupils' cognitive development. Learners learnt to work collaboratively and improved their communication skills. Pedagogical implications of the project include knowledge on who, what, why, and how. In other words, teachers need to know well the people who are involved in the project, the specific areas for research and follow-up that have to be worked out clearly with specific objectives, to understand overall purpose of the project and how it will help participants in specific areas, and, finally, to know a clear step-by-step process of implementation.

Rationale and suggestions for using e-mail in foreign language teaching are described in (Gonglewski et. al., 2001). Pedagogical benefits of e-mail are: extending language learning time and place, providing a context for real-world communication and authentic interaction, expanding topics beyond classroom-based themes, promoting student-centered language learning, and encouraging equal opportunity participation. A number of suggestions for using

e-mail are offered: group e-mail exchanges, e-mail interaction within the class, e-mail interaction between classes, one-to-one e-mail interaction.

The survey of computer use at the University of Canberra revealed that a little over half of the 128 respondents were regular users of computers, spending time surfing the Internet or e-mailing (Jones, 1998). According to survey conducted at the University of Urbon, in Thailand, (Jones, 2001), 100% of 68 respondents used computers for e-mail and expressed a desire to develop computer skills in order to improve their English.

Learners' attitudes and difficulties in learning ESP online were examined in (Kavaliauskiene, 2003). It was revealed that 71% of 74 respondents use e-mail, and 52% like learning English online. The major difficulty is evaluation of information caused by reading comprehension problems in English.

Majority of researchers concur with the opinion that e-mail writing is a hybrid of discourse, combining features of both spoken and written genres. Therefore, it has the potential to help improve language learners' oral skills. However, e-mail writing remains essentially written discourse. While writing in the target language, e-partners give each other a chance to read authentic expressions, notice grammatical structures, copy words when responding. What is paramount in e-mail learning experience is learner reflection on language and making use of various resources such as dictionaries and grammar books (http://www.well.ac.uk/wellclass/email.html).

The concept of etiquette in e-mail is known as 'netiquette', which includes some straightforward rules, like being positive, polite, accurate, brief, clear. Identifying oneself, pointing 'subject', and avoiding unfamiliar acronyms are rules of a thumb. Guidelines of e-mail writing in business communication extend netiquette rules further: clearness, conciseness, courtesy, consideration, completeness, concreteness, correctness (Jones & Alexander, 1996).

A survey conducted in Finland has shown that usage of e-mail increased five-fold in the last six years while the share of letters and faxes declined significantly (Wang & Aaltonen, 2004). In business communication, e-mails tend to be stylistically close to a writing-based telephone talk with the obvious trend from the formality of business letters to the informality of e-mails. The e-mail project between Chinese and Finnish students aimed at

placing students in authentic business situations, where they were expected to perform a series of negotiation tasks with partners. The exchange of e-mails constructed a continuous communication chain, from request, reply to request, order, order acknowledgement, to complaints and adjustments. The project participants were expected and encouraged to consider what, and how to communicate in the particular situation. Participants encountered some practical problems like different curriculum arrangements and choice of a group compatible with their counterpart group in another country. Project implementation problems included incorrect reading of e-mail addresses and the timing of the project. The international project was designed as an innovation to improve EFL Business Communication teaching and learning. Student participation was self-monitored and depended on students' motivation and willingness to take responsibility.

Certainly the most readily accessible key partners for students in a class are their classmates themselves (Porcaro, 2002). E-mail activities within the class can be effectively controlled, and structured communication is easily attainable. Possible disadvantage might be the excessive use of mother tongue in monolingual classes.

A valuable quality of e-mail communication is learners' collaboration. Collaborative learning provides the opportunities for learners and teachers to communicate, discuss and collaborate online – either one-to-one or in groups. It helps to bring together groups of learners for a learning event, i.e. create learning communities. The term peer-to-peer learning is used for groups of learners who learn together by setting up connections between the peers. A survey into quality of e-learning (Massy, 2002) indicates that EU respondents are unimpressed with e-learning. 61% of respondents rated the overall quality of e-learning negatively. Only 1% rated it excellent, and 5% - very good.

Summing up the literature, the language exchange activities via e-mail are thought to be beneficial to learners. We set up an e-mail project between two English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes of different specializations. The major objective of this research has been to investigate key partners' ability to negotiate the choice of materials and the content of professional presentations on suggested topics via e-mail exchanges. A final stage of a project is the collaborative delivery of prepared presentations in front of the audience.

Research Techniques

Each of us taught a class of learners with different specialization profile. We set up a pilot project between two classes with the objective of applying language exchange activities via e-mail for preparation of professional presentations. The project aimed to place students in authentic situation, where they could carry out a series of negotiation tasks with their e-partners. Attention was paid to outlining of ESP themes that students were expected to handle. The exchange of e-mails meant an on-going chain of communication on choice and selection of materials, negotiation on presentation layout and content, sharing and adjusting views and coming to a final consensus.

There were 24 participants – 12 from each class. Six ESP topics were assigned at random to each pair in both classes. Learner pairs were asked to contact their peers via e-mail, negotiate the choice of materials, contents of presentations and prepare PowerPoint variant for making a public presentation in front of the audience. Students were requested to send their exchange e-mails to each other and forward them to both teachers, who were able to monitor students' progress in preparation of presentations and analyze learners' difficulties. Teachers' task was to keep track of e-mail exchange, both incoming and outgoing, and not interfere into students' communication activities, i.e. let them work at their own pace. Regrettably, two students dropped out of this project soon after its outset for some vague reasons.

Results and Discussion

Research findings are described below. The data on students' emailing activities and effectiveness of their negotiations aiming at preparation of professional PowerPoint presentations are analyzed. The performance of students in front of the audience and feedback on self- and peer-assessment are presented.

Analysis of E-Mail Messages

The purpose of e-mail communication between key pals was the exchange of information and negotiation of content and choice of material for the final stage of the project - delivery of presentations.

Having no opportunity to meet face-to-face learners had to plan their final product of the project - a PowerPoint presentation. Learners could enjoy full independence in use of information sources, choice of material, frequency of e-mail correspondence. E-mail provided students with an opportunity to interact with their key pals in the 'specialist' language, thus increasing their fluency in writing on professional topics. Teachers have been able to monitor learners' progress in preparation of their presentations via e-mails forwarded to them. There has been no teachers' interference into students' activities.

52 e-mail letters were exchanged by the participants of the project in the allotted period. However, the frequency of correspondence between partners differed greatly. The most active learners communicated on regular basis sending 15 e-mails, whereas one group of learners sent only 3 messages.

Every message dealt with some kind of information or data on the chosen topic, very often with attached files of information dealing with a specific question. Thus, e-mailing between key pals performed a referential function. The most typical scenarios of correspondence were as follows: a) introducing; b) suggestions on the plan for the presentation on the selected theme; c) exchange of information, website addresses; d) negotiating the content of the presentation, agreeing or disagreeing on the chosen material; e) discussing the delivery of the presentation, technical aspects, possible difficulties with PowerPoint equipment.

The most challenging aspect of the e-mailing between key partners from two groups of different specializations was students' autonomy and collaborative responsibility in decision making process. All collaboration and e-negotiations proceeded in the learners' spare time at their own convenience.

Learning Effects

Learning effects are usually estimated by analyzing the students' performance. When learners manage to get the message across correctly, this part is categorized as successful communication. When learners fail to get their message across at the first attempt, the second attempt is usually categorized as reformulation. The remaining parts of erroneous communication are coded as other attempts (Sakai, 2004).

In our settings, there have been neither reformulations nor other attempts. Learners have been able to get their messages across at the first attempt, and their performance can be coded as successful communication.

However, the learners produced a variety of writing errors, such as lexical, grammatical, and syntactic errors, which were counted for each learner. The analysis of the present study is based on error points defined as the absolute number of errors identified in learners' e-mail messages. The errors included the omission of the definite or indefinite articles, the 3-rd person singular form, and the word order in the main or subordinate clauses. Errors in spelling have not been taken into account because this type of errors has not caused any misunderstandings in communication.

Two types of statistics are used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics are used to characterize a set of data in terms of central tendency and to show how the numbers disperse or vary around the centre. Central tendency is defined as the propensity of a set of numbers to cluster around a particular value. The important thing, however, is to note that descriptive statistics do not allow drawing any general conclusions that would go beyond the sample, but data would show a trend in the research area. Three computations are often used to find central tendency: the mean, the mode, and the median. The mean is the average of all numbers. The median is the point in the distribution below which 50% of the values lie and above which 50% lie. The quantitative statistics are usually used to find the level of significance in obtained data, and a variety of tests is used for this purpose. The most reliable for small samples is considered to be the *t*-test.

The aim of analysis has been to compare the performance of two groups - 12 women and 10 men. Individual scores of error points are summarized in Table 1. Participants are presented in pairs.

Participants	Gender	Error Points
Saule & Marija	Female	14
Aukse & Egle	Female	16
Gintas & Povilas	Male	6
Ilona & Darius	Female & Male	8
Algis & Simas	Male	6
Rasa & Rimas	Female & Male	14
Rita & Daiva	Female	16
Tomas & Mindaugas	Male	6
Migle & Daina	Female	10
Simona & Ruta	Female	8
Petras & Gediminas	Male	16

Table 1. Error Points for Each Pair of Participants. (Note: all names are fictitious).

Let us look closely at the differences in performance between females and males. At the first glance, the males seemed to make fewer errors than the females. As it can be seen in Table 1, the learners of the female group ($N_w = 12$) made a total of 75 errors, and the learners of the male group ($N_m = 10$) made 51 errors. The average number of errors, or the mean value M_w calculated for the female group is 6.25, and the mean value M_m for the male group is 4.5. Computed Standard Deviations are $SD_w = 1.358$ and $SD_m = 1.597$, respectively. Thus, on the average it seems that males performed better than females.

However, it is important to know if the difference between the two mean values is significant or not. The *t*-test is the most frequently used measure in second language research to solve such a problem when comparing mean scores for two groups. The adjustment for group size is made by using a table showing degrees of freedom *df* (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). A degree of freedom *df* for *t*-tests can be determined by subtracting 1 from the number of participants in each group and then adding the two resulting numbers together. In our settings, *df* = 20.

Our application of t-test computation to the data in Table 1 gives the t-value of 2.738. In the t-test Table (Brown & Rodgers, 2002), for $df = 20$ the critical values for t are:

at the p = 0.01 level of significance (two-tailed) t is equal to 2.845,

at the p = 0.02 level of significance (two-tailed) $t = 2.528$,

at the p = 0.05 level of significance (two-tailed) $t = 2.086$,

at the p = 0.10 level of significance (two-tailed) $t = 1.725$.

The t value that we calculated using the Means and Standard Deviations for both groups was 2.738. This value is greater than the critical values in the t –test table both at the 0.10, 0.05 and 0.02 levels of significance, but smaller than tabled value at 0.01. Therefore it means that statistically we have found a significant difference between men and women at p < 0.01, i.e. men are significantly better than women at avoiding errors in e-mail writing.

Analysis of E-Mail Language Style

The vast majority of people, 82%, believe good manners matter online, and 56% of 2000 adults questioned get annoyed by e-mail messages that were over-familiar, included spelling or grammatical errors, or lacked a proper greeting (Ward, 2001). Debrett's and MSN have provided a short guide to help the e-illiterate, which suggest adopting the correct tone for each occasion and remind e-mail users 'you are what you write, you will be judged by the content and style of your e-mail so do yourself justice'.

Analysis of email language supplied information on students' abilities to explore a foreign language for meaningful communication. Students use a typical mixture of formal and informal styles. Beginning a letter with "Hi!" or "Hello!" they finish it with "Sincerely yours". Many researchers note that e-mail communication reminds of a delayed conversation. The analysis of students' correspondence indicated this similarity with the oral communication. Some letters had no introduction or greeting, and just delivered important information. This is peculiar to male letters.

e.g.

"It looks like we are in the final stage of our project……"

Or

"If you have the blue book, you can find information related with our subject…."

All students who participated in the project benefited from the opportunity to negotiate the contents of the professional topics and develop their social and collaboration skills. It is known that e-mail language performs referential and affective functions. Referential function is to convey information or content, whereas affective expresses feelings, emotions and social relationships between partners of correspondence. Women use more compliments and apologies. Generally speaking, women's e-mail language is more affective than men's. Lithuanian female students' letters contain more features of affective language, i.e. thanks, compliments, or apologies. The women's letters sound more personal and friendly.

E.g. Female message:

"Hello,

Thanks for your letter, and sorry we haven't written for so long……."

"Hello, Simona and Ruta.

Sorry for not replying to you at once…….."

E.g. Male message

"Hi, you know I had time, therefore I have made an example of our presentation. …."

Some findings on gender-based affective aspects of e-mail messages are presented in Table 2.

Affective aspects	Female	Male
Apologies	4	0
Compliments	5	1
Thanks	6	1

Table 2. Affective Aspects in Participants' e-mails.

Gonglewski et.al. (2001) in their research into e-mail use in foreign language teaching among other positive aspects note that it is a practical opportunity to improve vocabulary and writing. The aim of Lithuanian e-mail correspondence was particular: to discuss and negotiate the material for preparation of PowerPoint presentations upon professional topics. Therefore, no visible improvement of written language was observed. Students had an opportunity to clarify their opinion, or offer some help, or reject peers' suggested plan or idea. Thus, the focus was on communication.

Timing and Delivery of Presentations

Students were allotted five weeks to prepare their presentations via e-mail negotiations with e-partners they have never met before. Teachers have been able to monitor learners' progress in preparation of their presentations via e-mails forwarded to them. There was no teachers' interference into students' activities. All collaboration and e-negotiations proceeded in the learners' spare time at their own convenience.

All the teams met the day before the formal presentations in order to practise using multimedia and to check the adherence to e-specification. Next day students delivered their presentations in front of the audience, and their performance was video-taped. Presentation

time for each team was limited to 20 minutes. Regrettably, not all presenters managed to deliver their talks within the time limit.

Self- and Peer-Assessment of Preparation and Delivery

After the delivery of presentations, we conducted the self-assessment and peer-assessment session by administering a specially designed questionnaire. Students were asked to assess the difficulties that they faced in stages of preparation and delivery of presentations.

Learner self- and peer-assessment provides teacher with extensive first-hand information about their anxieties and reactions to teaching techniques and materials. The major benefit of learner self-assessment is its impact on the learning.

The results of self-assessment of difficulties are shown in chart 1. It is seen that slightly more than a fifth of respondents (23%) had problems in searching for relevant materials, which is shown by the lowest bar in the chart. Only 5% of students found it difficult to coordinate their efforts in choosing the contents – this is revealed by the second bar in this chart. 18% of learners had problems in using PowerPoint software – the third bar in the same chart. Interestingly, only 9% of learners have admitted being familiar with the PowerPoint software before this project. Therefore, the vast majority of students had to master the technique in the process of preparing their presentations. Almost half of respondents (45%) had difficulties in delivering their presentation – it is depicted by the fourth bar in the chart 1.

Chart 1. E-partners' difficulties in preparation of presentations online.

These results are consistent with the findings shown in chart 2. Multitude of respondents (86%) feel their performance was successful – the upper bar in chart 2. Over the third (36%) consider their talks interesting, and 14% - professional. None of the respondents ticked other choices of a questionnaire like an unsuccessful, unprofessional, or boring performance. Nobody considered their performance faultless and perfect, although some of them were extremely good. Learners' modesty or shyness explains such responses.

Chart 2. E-partners' feedback on their performance

In a questionnaire section of specifying one's responses about quality of performance, there were such answers as lack of allotted time for presentation, a necessity to contemplate and reflect on delivery, and anxiety and thrill during performance. None of respondents thought they were relevant.

Peer-assessment allowed identifying the best presentation. It happened to be 'War on Terror' as the most informative and picturesque. All participants expressed feelings of fulfilment at having accomplished their assignments.

Conclusions

The research was conducted into gender differences on error points in e-mail messages in ESP. Female participants had a mean value M_w of errors of 6.25 and Standard Deviation $SD_w = 1.358$ while male participants had a mean value M_m of errors of 4.5 and $SD_m = 1.597$. A t –test analysis of the differences between the Means yielded a $t = 2.738$. This is significant at the $p < 0.01$ with freedom degrees $fd = 20$. Therefore, statistically men participants are proved to be significantly better at writing e-mails than women participants.

The significance of this study is its relevance to meaningful communication in ESP. Language exchange activities via e-mail with the objective of preparing presentations demonstrated their expedience as teaching tools in English for Specific Purposes. Learners succeeded in preparing presentations online and successfully delivering professional presentations in front of the audience.

Analysis of e-mail messages and delivery allows concluding that inter-group collaboration fosters learners' autonomous learning, improves writing and speaking skills, develops learners' ability to negotiate and get the meaning across, demonstrates the significance of the meaningful learning, i.e. learning subject through English, and allows learners to experience sense of accomplishment.

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INTERNET LESSON PLANS

GETTING EQUIPPED FOR THE MOUNTAINS

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I. Introduction:

1. Brainstorm students how they get dressed for the following occasions: a party, a wedding, a class.

2. What special clothes do you need to perform these sports?

swimming, boxing, karate, mountain hiking?

3. Which of these objects do you need to take to go mountain hiking?

googles, skis, sandals, boots, a vest, a hat, sunglasses, a jacket, shorts, swimming trunks/suit

II. Online work:

1. go to North Face (http://www.northface.com), then click on "Products",

   - click "Products", then either "Men's" or "Women's", then go through the products and choose one jacket or vest, shirt, gloves, a hat, pants and footwear

   - put down the name, the price, short description, sizes, weight

Article of clothing	Name	Price	Sizes	Weight

2. now you need to be equipped in some other essentials –

   - to find out what, go to http://www.backpacking.net/ten-essl.html (or http://www.backpacking.net, then click 14 Essentials in Gear Checklists menu on the left)

   - put down the essentials: map, compass, flashlight/headlamp, extra food, extra clothes, sunglasses, first-aid kit, pocket knife, waterproof matches, firestarter, water/filter/bottles, insect repellent, sunburn preventatives

   - now work in groups, go to Campmor online shop (http://www.campmor.com), scroll down the page, and from the list all departments choose some other equipment that might be useful on your expedition

   - note down the name and the price

III. Post-Internet work

1. get back in groups and try to convince your partners to buy this or that piece of equipment. Attention! You have a limited budget of 1,000 dollars per person for all the equipment.

2. go back to http://www.backpacking.net/ and "Checklist 1 or 2" from "Gear checklists" on the left (or http://www.backpacking.net/cheklist.html) and find out if there are some other things you really need

3. if necessary, go back to http://www.campmor.com and get the prices of other equipment

4. make a roleplay of parents and almost adult children wanting to go on a backpacking trip and needing money for the gear

Note: for great backpacking links, go to http://www.johann-sandra.com/backpacking.htm and then "Backpacking links" in the menu on the left. For a list of backpacking gear suppliers, go to http://www.backpacking.com, click on "suppliers".

INVENTIONS

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I. Introduction:

1. divide the class into groups. Ask them to put the things in the order from the most to the least useful:

bubble gum, theory of relativity, printing press, Kellog's corn flakes, Hula Hoop, tea, can opener

2. now match the inventor's to the inventions:

Walter E. Diemer (bubble gum); Albert Einstein (theory of relativity); Johann Gutenberg (printing press); Will Keith Kellog (Kellog's corn flakes); Richard P. Knerr (Hula Hoop); Emperor Shen Nung (tea); Ezra Warner (can opener)

II. Internet work:

1. one part of the class go to check the answers in ex. 2 above

- go to www.ideafinder.com - click "Enter", then "History facts and myths" on the left in the menu, "Inventor profile"; or go to http://www.enchantedlearning.com/inventors/

2. now give a few names of inventions, with inventors' names and years:

	Invention 1	Invention 2	Invention 3	Invention 4
Inventions help us expand our universe				
Inventions help us live healthier and longer lives				
Inventions help us				

communicate with one another				
Inventions make our lives easier				
Inventions entertain us				
Inventions take us from one place to another				

To check, go to http://www.worldalmanacforkids.com/explore/inventions.html

3. Now go to http://www.ideafinder.com, then click on "Enter", then "Idea showcase" on the left of the page, then "Idea wish list" (or directly

http://www.ideafinder.com/features/wishlist.htm)

     - read the wishes, find three most necessary, according to you

Wish 1	I wish …
Wish 2	I wish …
Wish 3	I wish …

4. think about the things that you really like to be invented. Work in pairs and create a description

I wish I had ……

It would be a thing that we could use to …….

It would help us do …

5. scroll down the page "Idea wish list" (http://www.ideafinder.com/features/wishlist.htm) and click "If you didn't find it here, then tell us what consumer product you wish were available. You can enter a wish here (or directly

http://www.ideafinder.com/forms/makewish.htm).

     - students enter the wish in the box provided and click Agree and Submit (they do not have to put in personal information, if they do not wish so).

III. Homework:

1. collect the idea wish list from the whole class and display it on the board.

SOFTWARE

USING CORPORA IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Introduction

In June 2005, I attended Lexicom 2005[1] which was held at the Faculty of Informatics, Masaryk University (FI MU) in the Czech Republic. The workshop was run by Adam Kilgarriff, Sue Atkins and Michael Rundell, who together form the Lexicography MasterClass[2]. Dictionaries for language learners was a recurring topic, in particular the criteria for deciding which lexical items to include, and how to present this distilled information to learners. Some of the corpus-based methodology employed by modern day lexicographers is similar to the approaches taken by language teachers and students using corpora for their own study of language.

It is with a statement from Michael Rundell's opening session that I would like to begin this article proper. In considering types of knowledge, he quoted the American Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld:

Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know. .... *DoD Press Briefing*.[3]

Michael Rundell pertinently adds that there are also *unknown knowns.* These are the things we do not know we know, i.e., things we know only subconsciously. For example, in the case of language, it can be quite difficult to account for how one chooses a particular word instead of one of its synonyms, or what difference word order makes, or the effect of pragmatic devices, or in English, the use of *for* in the sense of *because*, or *I'll think about it* vs. *I'll think it over* vs. *I'll give some thought to it* or *take a photo of something* vs. *photograph something*. These language choices are particularly puzzling to native speakers, who by and large use language subconsciously.

Starting with Language

To account for language phenomena, we need to examine a large sample of genuine, or *attested*, language not invented "possible" sentences. John Sinclair (1991: 6) effectively pruned the argument in favour of invented sentences when he wrote: "One does not study all of botany by making artificial flowers." Regardless, there are not enough artificial sentences to draw meaningful conclusions from and furthermore, they are created purely on the basis of intuition, to which he optimistically commented, "the stranglehold of intuition is being relaxed" (ibid. p.6).

As is well-known, the large samples of attested language come in the form of language corpora. These now exist for many languages and sub-languages, such as corpora of academic language, legal, medical, tourist and computer language. Using a concordancer, the type of program that searches corpora and presents the findings, the existence of *unknown knowns* can manifest and the constraints on particular language choices can be observed. From such data comes information which, given the necessary conditions, can become knowledge.

Here is an example. A post-graduate computer science student emailed me recently asking about the use of *against* after *robust*. Intuitively it sounded wrong and *robust against*

was not found in the *Cobuild Dictionary* (1995) – this was not surprising as it does not appear in the 56 million words of the Cobuild's *Corpus Concordance Sampler*[4] - nor in the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2002). In addition to these learner dictionaries, *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (1998) was consulted with the same result. The student remained convinced that he had seen *robust against* often enough.

The concordancing program, *Word Sketch Engine*[5] (Kilgarriff and Rychlý, 2004), presents computationally intelligent summaries of corpus data in very straightforward formats. I used this program to consult the British National Corpus[6] (BNC) with its 100 million words of naturally occurring English between 1960 and 1994 (94% between 1985-1993). It accorded with my intuition in finding no such bi-gram. A search of texts from the computer domain, however, find that *robust against* did indeed occur in that domain.

From this example, a number of points can be observed. A corpus of general English demonstrated that *robust against* is not core English, while consulting an appropriate corpus showed that it exists in a specific domain. From a pedagogical point of view, the student consulted the teacher who consulted the resources. With a little training, the student can now consult the resources himself.

This leads us to ask who uses corpora in language pedagogy: on the one hand, teachers, teacher trainees and students of language and translation, on the other, resource writers ranging from teachers producing ephemera to textbook authors, grammarians and lexicographers.

Before describing some of the activities these applied linguists undertake, I would like to make a point about vocabulary study. It seems that while students of English acquire a sophisticated range of concepts and metalanguage relating to grammar and syntax, lexical and semantic concepts do not figure to nearly the same extent. And this is despite the oft repeated cry that vocabulary teaching has finally assumed its rightful place alongside grammar. See, for example, *The Lexical Approach*, (Lewis: 1993), *How to Teach Vocabulary* (Thornbury: 2002) and *Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education* (Hatch & Brown, 1995). On another level, the fuzzy border between vocabulary and grammar, and the interdependence of them, seem to be under continual investigation.

Some of the concepts that language students are partly, rarely or never acquainted with include:

- synonymy, antonymy, polysemy;

- hyperonym, hyponym, troponym;

- metonym, meronym, synecdoche;

- collocation, semantic prosody, lexical support;

- colligation, complementation, valency, frames;

- denotation, connotation, metaphor;

- lexeme, chunk, phrase, lexical unit;

- homonym, homophone, homograph;

- affixation.

Being unaware of these concepts renders it improbable that the student can make the vocabulary choices that depend on them. There are several practical examples below. Corpora also yield a wealth of data that reveal some of the *unknown knowns* of grammar. *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber, et al: 1999) is perhaps the most graphic example of this as the authors present their statistical findings about grammar using graphs and charts. Here are two examples from pp 488-9, which present some of the findings concerning the frequency of modal verbs.

Pedagogical Applications and Implications

       The teacher's practical application of corpora can be divided into in-class use and out-of-class use. Illustrative sentences are used widely in language teaching and testing, and a corpus is an excellent source of them. Concordancers efficiently find very specific language phenomena. A practical example is the issue of how to avoid using the same word repeatedly.

While synonyms are often seen as a remedy to this, synonyms are often mutually exclusive because of the very features that distinguish them from each other, i.e., constraints. Hypernyms are often a better option, and the corpus can exemplify this:

vehicle → car

1. … upon her getting out of the car, they manoeuvred the vehicle so as to ….

2. whether it be ratings out of 10, defects per vehicle or warranty costs on each car leaving the factory gate .

3. Heron -- which builds houses, owns petrol stations and imports Suzuki vehicles as well as selling other cars including Rolls-Royce

Another example: *Ready for First Certificate* (Norris 2001: 45), the textbook I am currently using with a class, introduces some uses of *take.* As a supplementary activity, I created a pairwork questionnaire using some of the commonly occurring instances. The WSE displays a table[7] of the grammar patterns (colligation) that the search word engages in. And under each grammar pattern, the statistically significant words (collocates) are listed.

From that data, questions such as the following were written.

- Did the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina take you by surprise?

- Does your family take precedence over your friends?

- Have you ever been taken for a ride?

- Have you ever taken in a lodger?

- Who in your family do you take after?

- Were you surprised by eBay's buyout of Skype?

- What do you take off when you enter a house in winter?

From the same textbook comes the instruction: "Write down three more adjectives to go with the noun *device*". Students can think of three and then the WSE can show them the full gamut, either in real time using a data projector, or by passing around some printouts or displaying as overheads. In the process, the students are making not only observations of language per se, but of a procedure that they can employ in their language study and in their practical use of English. Click here[8] to see the word sketch of *device* and here[9] to see the first one hundred concordances of *adjective + device* (note that if you click on any of the buttons in these examples, you will be asked for a password. Click the Cancel button and you will be able to register for the Sampler version of the program).

Correcting written work[10] is another sphere of activity in which teachers use corpus data. Whether free writing or translation, students' deployment of words can be compared with attested native speaker language. Since the process of improving one's foreign language skills manifests in using the language more and more idiomatically, the statistical probability of words being used in each other's environments needs to be considered. And a corpus can provide this. Some examples follow.

A student recently submitted a paper which included *In my point of view*. By simply typing *point of view* into the phrase field, *from my point of view* is immediately apparent. In the same paper, *to have to their disposal* appeared. By typing in *disposal, at* is the most frequent preposition – 597 times, the next being *of*, 196 times, and that reveals a different meaning of the word. He also wrote *copiously repeated mistakes.* The most frequent adverbs preceding *repeated* which indicate *a number of times* are *often* (17 time), *frequently* (11), *endlessly* (10), *constantly* (8), *regularly* (5), *oft* (4), *consistently* (4), *widely* (3), *usually* (3), *persistently* (3), *continually* (3), *perpetually* (1), *interminably* (1). The less frequent of these have the negative connotation that was probably intended by *copiously.*

We shall now turn to students' use of corpora. Tim Johns[11], the father of Data Driven Learning (DDL), evolved his approach around the time when John Sinclair et. al. were developing the first COBUILD dictionary. The BU in the acronym stands for Birmingham University where they were both working. DDL has its pedagogical foundation in such thinking as Tarone and Yule (1989:11) who recommend:

> a task-based, problem-solving, interactive learning approach for fostering sociolinguistic competence
> with the learner as ethnographer, making observations from data they find. (Tarone & Yule, 1989:11)

While their statement was not made with any reference to Johns' work, DDL answers their call admirably, for this is largely how a *kibbitzer* works. A kibbitzer is in some ways like action research on an isolated linguistic item in that it presents the question or quandary, the process and the data, and the results. Click here[12] to see some examples of kibbitzers on display at MICASE[13], the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English.

One of the basic tenets of Dalton Education[14] is *if the teacher does all the work, the students don't learn anything.* Applied to DDL, the process of researching language to answer one's own queries is maximally involving. For example, students can use corpora to check forms of words, infer meaning, find collocations and colligations, observe register, genre, mode, etc, and observe the contexts and co-texts in which words are used. This usually works as guided discovery activities.

Such an involved and multi-faceted process also enriches students' linguistic awareness. Whether or not students need this linguistic sophistication is a moot point[15]. It is my view that the more information someone has, the better equipped one is to make choices while speaking and writing.

However, the practicality of engaging students in DDL tasks is not without problems. The reality of learning styles and classrooms and teachers and textbooks and examinations cannot be denied. A basic issue here is that students can be overwhelmed with language that is incomprehensible due to its richness in cultural references, figurative language, undecodable syntactic structures, and the like, in short, the very elements that make such language desirable input. This richness is a far greater contribution to *learner input* than many an artificial sentence, which typically lacks any sense of anchoring in time or place, are devoid of cultural or attitudinal stance, and seem committed to a matchstick scaffolding for the word or phrase it is illustrating. Such a poverty of input cannot lead to a healthy and vigorous *learner output.* One solution offered to the problem of incomprehensible data has been the creation of a corpus of readers, i.e., of simplified language. However, research undertaken by Ramesh Krishnamurthy[16] demonstrated that this compromised language did not constitute a rich linguistic diet.

The sheer volume[17] of the data presented can also overwhelm, so it is fortunate that the newer concordancers are able to present user-friendly summaries of large amounts of data. Some complain that the time taken to solve a quandary is disproportionate to the

information gleaned, while others believe that in working with the language so closely, one is incidentally gaining additional language experience in terms of quantity and quality. This is in addition to learning a skill with the potential life-long benefits of learner independence.

A more principled solution then is to adapt the task, not the language. A few examples of task type follow.

1. Lexical Support

Words are sometimes used in the environments of other words which have a similar meaning, force or function. This idea of *lexical support* can be observed simply by observing the frequent collocates and by examining concordances. For example, the top 20 collocates of the word *disgusting,* are *disgusting, revolting, ugh, disgraceful, vile, gust, sill, urgh, Camille, shocking, obscene, filthy, horrible, Lydia, absolutely, fucking, unpleasant, bloody, ugly, dirty*.

Here are four sentences from the BNC that exemplify this.

- It was absolutely filthy, horrible and scuzzy, with disgusting stains on the floor.
- They said 'It stinks, it 's disgusting, it 's horrible stuff!'
- It is difficult to imagine any of the jargon-junkies who preside over American psychology writing, for example, that 'nothing filthy, disgusting, foul, loathsome, nauseous, offensive, revolting, vile, squalid, feculent, or obscene' seems to have escaped the attention of modern 'artists'.
- It is disgusting and immoral and a disgrace.

2. Polysemy

Here are three sentences containing *abandon*. And, following them, three of the meanings from the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* online[18]. The students are required to decide which of these meanings is employed in each sentence. They are also required to explain how they arrived at their conclusion. And finally, they should locate some more illustrative sentences for each case.

1. Some teachers, in starting from "what was there", even abandoned the attempt to expose students to "the best that has been thought and said".

2. The Communist Party had not yet abandoned its attempts to gain control of the ILP, despite the assurances made in the previous year.

3. This is not to imply that expressions of sophisticated learned eloquence should be abandoned in favour of popular writing.

   a) to stop supporting or helping sb; to stop believing in sth

   b) ~ sb (to sth) to leave sb, especially sb you are responsible for, with no intention of returning

   c) to stop doing sth, especially before it is finished

3. Colligation

Which prepositions follow these verbs? (a) believe, (b) depend, (c) rely, (d) hope

Which prepositions follow these adjectives? (a) keen, (b) enthusiastic (c) good (d) interested

What difference does the choice of prepositions make with (a) dream (b) struggle (c) laugh (d) die.

Which of these verbs is followed immediately by a *to* infinitive? (a) let (b) make (c) manage (d) allow

4. Combined skills

In this activity, the students have to choose the only possible word from among the underlined words.

Two to three hundred Czech doctors are deserting/leaving/going for western Europe every month, according to digits/numbers/figures from the Czech Doctors Association given/released/published in Monday's Mlada fronta Dnes. The Association bases its digits/numbers/figures on applications it gets/receives/takes for a certificate needed to work abroad. Britain is one of the most popular/desirable/trendy destinations for Czech doctors, with some of them commuting home to the Czech Republic at weekends, the paper writes/says/reports. *[Cesky rozhlas, June 2005]*

Conclusion

This article has been concerned with some theoretical issues and practical applications of using a concordancing program. We have done so using a monolingual snapshot corpus of general English, namely the BNC – it is a representative sample of English. Another type of corpus is the *monitor corpus* which is continually added to, and there are *bi-lingual* and *parallel* corpora which have texts in two or more languages. As mentioned above, there are many specific corpora representing a domain, a genre, an author, etc. Of particular interest in pedagogical spheres are *learner corpora,* which contain language written by non-native speakers. This is used in error analysis, language acquisition and interlanguage studies. We can also make our own corpora of song lyrics, fairy stories, news items, texts about fishing or swimming, and of our students' writing.

As a weapon in the armoury of language study and teaching, it is still early days for the use of corpora and concordancers. Given that many teachers and students have ready access to computers and the internet, that DDL came with a sound pedagogical pedigree, and the steady growth in e-learning, it seems likely that sooner than later, consulting corpora will become a standard instrument in revealing the unknown knowns in language deployment.

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Notes

1. http://nlp.fi.muni.cz/lexicom2005/

2. http://www.lexmasterclass.com/

3. http://www.rotten.com/library/bio/usa/donald-rumsfeld/

4. http://www.collins.co.uk/Corpus/CorpusSearch.aspx. Some years ago I created a web-site called "A Ten-step Introduction to Concordancing through the Collins Cobuild Corpus Concordance Sampler" which can be found at http://www.fi.muni.cz/~thomas/CCS/.

5. The Word Sketch Engine evolved from the program *Bonito*. It is a web-based concordancing program. The sampler version which can be found at http://www.sketchengine.co.uk/ uses the British National Corpus. To register for the sampler, go to http://www.sketchengine.co.uk/reg/reg.cgi/registration_form. There is also another website linked to that explaining its functions and how to create searches: The Sketch Engine User Guide at http://www.sketchengine.co.uk/Sketch-Engine-User-Guide.htm

6. http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/

7. http://www.fi.muni.cz/~thomas/EAP/take_WSE_files/home.htm

8. http://www.fi.muni.cz/~thomas/EAP/device_WSE_files/home.htm

9. http://www.fi.muni.cz/~thomas/EAP/adj+device_WSE_files/home.htm

10. See also http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/j_soft18.htm

11. http://www.ecml.at/projects/voll/our_resources/graz_2002/ddrivenlrning/whatisddl/resources/tim_ddl_learning_page.htm

12. http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/micase/kibbitzer.htm

13. http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/micase/index.htm

14. http://www.edith.nl/telmie2/reforped/princ/princ.html

15. "moot" occurs 67 times as an adjective in the BNC, 43 times in the phrase "moot point".

16. in personal correspondence, Sept 2004.

17. This collocation occurs 51 times in the BNC. This is the fifth most frequent adjective preceding *volume* after *large, total, free, high.*

18. http://www.oup.com/elt/catalogue/teachersites/oald7/?cc=global

A WORD FROM A TECHIE

GRABBING AUDIO AND VIDEO STREAMING FILES

FROM THE WEB

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You may have faced a problem of not being able to use some of the Web materials in class due to the simple reason of them being provided in a streaming format. Unless you have a reasonably fast connection and can use the school lab for that purpose, you are helpless trying to provide your students with a chance of enjoying audio/video clips with intriguing interviews, songs whose lyrics you may want to analyse or any other material of that kind you find perfect for enhancing your class. Whether audio or video, RealAudio or MS Windows Media format, they are usually equally non-downloadable.

Long ago, I managed to find a solution to the problem of capturing the audio files of my choice I wanted to include in the listening practice of my classes. In fact, it was the piece of software called Audiograbber which did the job for me. Audiograbber (http://www.audiograbber.com-us.net) is a free programme that basically copies music and

stores it on your computers hard drive. Its main purpose, I believe, was to copy music from CDs. There is also an option to copy music through the soundcard (though with a slight sound degradation) as well as copy sound via the soundcard from an external source, such as the cassette player or the radio.

Picture 1. Audiograbber's main window

Also, Audiograbber can connect to a database on the Internet and download disc information such as track names. It has a "normalise" function to make tracks from different CDs sound equally loud. The tracks can be saved as WAV files or converted to MP3 or WMA files with external programs or internal codecs such as the LAME freeware MP3, or MS Windows Media Audio codec.

Yet the function I found the most useful for my purpose was grabbing the sound from the Internet audio streaming sources. The whole procedure is fairly simple: once you have downloaded the software and installed it, you have to set it up at least to be able to find the captured files on the hard drive later on after the session. Also the output format needs to be specified. You have to choose options of e.g. saving the sound files as MP3s at 128kb/s quality, which is good enough for majority of applications while playing the output files in class. Remember, if you go for MP3 format, you will have to download and install its codec first, such as The LAME, free software ideally serving the purpose, by copying the lame.dll file into the Audiograbber directory. For more information on codecs go to: http://www.free-codecs.com

Picture 2. Audiograbber's Line in recording window

In order to grab audio online with Audiograbber you have to use the menu [File|Line in sampling], set the controls to the manual mode, if you like to monitor the recording and control it manually, then use the 'mixer' option to check one of the available boxes responsible for grabbing sound. From my experience, checking either 'line in' or 'mixed source' box should do the trick. Once you have done that, play some music from the Net, a saved sound file or a CD to see if the sound level is visible on the volume meter. Finally, adjust it with the mixer slide bar or, if the volume levels do not appear, check another box choosing e.g. 'mixed source.' Now you are ready to start your audiograbbing session.

Nevertheless, I have recently faced another challenge, namely the problem of downloading streaming video files. Since I happen to train Air Force officers and try to upgrade their command of military English, I found it reasonable to look for authentic materials on the Web, ideally briefings, as part of their duty is understanding them to be able to operate within NATO and possibly brief/debrief others as well. The sites which I found perfect in that respect are http://www.pentagonchannel.mil and http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/. The former is a Website for a TV channel offering you a streaming video with live coverage of their programme, which I assume is typically available for American cable TV. Also, it provides you recorded programmes broadcast on their channel. Clicking on any of the pictures listed in the main window opens up a separate panel for video broadcasts which includes a sidebar with lots of subchannels to choose from such as *Newscasts, Top Stories* or *Briefings,* the last one with recent US military briefings directly from Pentagon or Iraq itself to a large extent. The latter site offers current as well as

archived transcripts of the briefings available from the Pentagon Channel in the video format. Combined, they are perfect authentic materials to analyse in any English for military class for watching, listening and text analysis. In the above case the download is basically easy as each video screen is supplemented by a comment with an icon allowing you for a direct download of the video file.

Much more of a problem, though, posed capturing some video files from certain other sites. As my college students find it highly appropriate to be exposed at listening/phonetics classes to a variety of English dialects enhancing their understanding of regional differences in the language, I found the BBC's *Video Nation* (http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/) be cut out for that purpose. The site is a way to meet people from across the UK and hear what they say about their lives and the world around them. You can watch the video clips and test your comprehension in *Listen out!*, check what you have heard by looking at tapescripts, discover facts about life in the UK in *Did you know*, practise your grammar and vocabulary skills in *Language Fix*, then *Get talking!* to develop your speaking skills.

Actually, the site offers a RealVideo clip database providing you with several logically arranged categories of database search. You may want to focus on the dialects throughout Britain and all you have to do to watch people from e.g. Leeds is either to locate the region/person on the map or use a drop down menu with a list of places around the UK. If your preference is to learn what some British people's opinions on different subjects are, go for a thematically arranged option at http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/archive/, providing a wide choice of clips from such Categories as *Tees, Pets* or *Sport*, Features such as *Summer, Race UK* or *Fat Nation*, or Local Sites and other search array of your choice including alphabetical arrangement (both by video title and author's surname) as well as keyword search.

Although most of the clips mentioned above are too small to be displayed in a regular full screen mode as they lose much of their video quality then, it is worthwhile downloading the files in a video format to make the activities even more attractive to the class since the sound quality is preserved while the students will still have the advantage of watching the real people talking. If you lack video presentation facilities in your classroom allowing you to play the video files directly from the computer, one other option would be applying Audiograbber to capture and then play just the sound files. Still one other might be copying the videos from the computer onto a VHS tape and make use of a regular combination of a

video player/recorder with a TV set to make the presentation possible. Yet, in that case, it is advisable not to rely on the speakers from the TV set, unless it is a state-of-the-art device, but play the sound from the videotape via cable through some standalone HiFi or an amplifier to preserve initial quality of the recording and provide your students with as much degree of listening comfort as possible.

The piece of software I found worth recommending for the video capture purpose is HiDownload from http://www.streamingstar.com/, which makes it possible to download files, record RealMedia, Windows Media, MP3 streams as well as recently added QuickTime Streaming. As the streaming files' URLs are usually hidden behind JavaScript or ActiveX scripts, you are typically able only to save some *.ram address redirecting you to the actual file which is played live only and cannot be saved the way you normally do it to e.g. *.doc or *pdf files available on the Web. Yet, the program also features *URL Helper* to locate the actual files to record.

Picture 3. HiDownload main window

Once you have downloaded the software and installed it, you should start it to have a look behind the *Options* button to configure the programme al least to specify the location of your virus scanner and set up the download directory, which is C:\hidownload\ by default. When you start the programme (hit *Evaluate* button to start working with it due to its temporary 30-day licence), apart from the main window, you will see its icon residing in the tray and a bigger *Drop Target* icon (which you can disable by clicking the right mouse button on it and choosing the option) hanging on top of the screen in central location. That means you can now start your Web browser to locate the video files you want to record onto the hard drive of your computer. Once you find the link, use the right mouse button to choose the

Copy the URL/link option which activates the *add task* window (*see below*) with an automatically entered file source address.

Picture 4. 'Add task' window

Now, you have to click OK and watch the file download/record into the directory you specified to be able to locate it later (check for *Save to* option like in Picture 4).

Picture 5. Recording in progress

You can monitor the progress in the main window which pops up immediately (see Picture 5) until you see the whole file in the specified directory. One piece of advice on actually making use of the files is that although the session is saved in one directory, it leaves you with a wide confusing range of similarly named files including the video you wanted to have. Locating the right one is usually simple since it is usually the biggest file on the list with the extension '*.@@@1'. When you get rid of the extra extension (e.g. in MS Windows

Explorer or working directly with the files in the folder) and possibly some additional redundant numbers standing for the name of the session such as [1], [2], etc., the remaining should be your downloaded video file name with the proper extension depending on the type of the recorded file: *.rm, *wmv, *.asf, etc.

Finally, in case you do not like handling RealMedia or Windows Media files, an extra piece of software from the same site, namely *Digital Media Converter*, makes it easy for you to convert video and audio files from one format to another. Now you can organise and batch convert all your video and audio files between: VCD, DVD, AVI (DivX, MS MPEG4, uncompressed, etc), MPEG-1, MPEG-2 (PAL, NTSC), MP3, MOV, WMA, WMV, and WAV formats. Unfortunately, its availability is also limited to just 10 days after installation. Yet, you may try out one other option for converting only audio files for you might be dBpower AMP Music Converter available from: http://www.dbpoweramp.com.

References

More information on downloading streaming media:

http://all-streaming-media.com/streaming-media-faq/faq-streambox-vcr-download-problems.htm

More information on codecs:

http://www.free-codecs.com

Other recommended sites for downloading educational grade streaming media:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/multimedia/index.shtml

http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/songlyrics_frame.html

http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/poetry/outloud/

http://www.english-trailers.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF FUTURE EVENTS

IADIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WEB-BASED COMMUNITIES 2006

February 26-28, 2006

San Sebastian, Spain

http://www.iadis.org/WBC2006

Keynote Speakers (confirmed):

Professor Peter Kollock, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Cliff Figallo, SociAlchemy, USA

Conference background and goals

The mission of this conference is to publish and integrate scientific results and act catalytically to the fast developing culture of web communities. The conference invites original papers, review papers, technical reports and case studies on WWW in particular the emerging role of so-called WWW-based Communities.

Domain

It is increasingly important for our culture to bring people together and to promote dynamics in professional organizations, mutual understanding, learning and harmony. Creating "virtual

communities" is one major way to do this. The Web Based Communities 2006 conference aims at sharing and aggregating scientifically proven methods on how to organize and moderate WWW-based communities. These communities do not limit participants to particular locations - the international and multicultural dimension is a most challenging one. Good WWW communities undergo a continuous evolution and adapt to the changing world. The nature of these communities can be corporate, scientific, social or educational.

Pragmatic questions which need to be addressed include: What software tools are the most adequate and how to use them? How to promote your community so that new members can find it? How to protect the members' privacy? How to moderate discussions and how to provide information that people can use? How to create and maintain a sense of trust and commitment among the members? In addition, sociology, education, communication and philosophy issues are addressed as the main disciplines reflected in building WWW-based communities, although critical theories on societies and post-modernism are also relevant starting points. New and imminent technologies will be discussed.

Objectives

The Web Based Communities 2006 Conference aims atbringing together new vital understanding of WWW communities and what new initiatives mean. Each new perspective is potentially a catalyst for finding new architectures. National and regional-oriented communities may soon be relegated to a subordinate position compared to interest-oriented communities. Multiculturalism, critical thinking, expressing aesthetic aspects of our identity, and finding sparring partners for sharpening our ideologies, are all processes that need the new communication infrastructures.

The targeted audience is scientists and members and moderators of WWW communities who feel responsible for optimizing its quality and effect.

Format of the Conference

The conference will comprise invited talks and oral presentations. The proceedings of the conference will be published in the form of a book. The better papers will be candidate for the "International Journal of Web Based Communities" (IJWBC); ISSN: 1477 - 8394 [4 issues per year]

Types of submissions

Full and Short Papers, Posters/Demonstrations, Tutorials, Panels and Doctoral Consortium. All submissions are subject to a blind refereeing process.

Important Dates (2nd Call):

Submission Deadline: 6 January 2005

Notification to Authors: 23 January 2006- Final Camera-Ready Submission and Early Registration: Until 3 February 2006

Late Registration: After 3 February 2006

Secretariat IADIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WEB BASED COMMUNITIES 2006
Rua Sao Sebastiao da Pedreira, 100, 3, 1050-209 Lisbon, Portugal

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For the full Committee Members list please access http://www.iadis.org/wbc2006/committees.asp

TESOL 2006 ELECTRONIC VILLAGE SPECIAL EVENTS

TESOL 2006: "DARING TO LEAD"

March 15-18, 2006

Tampa, Florida, USA

INTERNET FAIR, APPLICATIONS FAIR, EV MINI-WORKSHOPS, and DEVELOPERS'
SHOWCASE

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: January 17, 2005***

For Early Acceptances, Deadline for Submissions: December 17, 2004

You are invited to submit a proposal for participation in one or more of these TESOL 2006
CALL Interest Section Special Events, according to the guidelines below. Submit a separate
proposal for each demonstration you wish to be considered for. You are welcome to submit
proposals to more than one event, and it is possible to have more than one proposal accepted
(depending on space availability and quality of the submission). Windows and Macintosh
equipment will be available at no charge, along with CD ROM drives, Internet connections,
and (for the Showcase only) projection equipment. Plan to bring a minimum of 100 handouts
per Fair/Showcase acceptance slot since these are very popular events!

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE FAIRS:

Presenters have approximately 20-30 minutes to demonstrate their material. Participants walk
around the EV, dropping in and out of demonstrations, thus precluding highly structured

presentations. A demonstration may be repeated a second time (an additional 20 to 25 minutes), if interest warrants and space allows.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE MINI-WORKSHOPS:

One presenter introduces a topic to a small group of workshop participants. The workshop is "hands-on."

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE SHOWCASE:

There is one presenter at a time, demonstrating her/his program. Seating is provided for the audience.

Please submit your proposal(s) online at the TESOL CALL-IS website http://www.uoregon.edu/~call/

_____INTERNET FAIR_____

Coordinator: Steven Sharp   Email: ssharp@pgcps.org

_____APPLICATIONS FAIR_____

Coordinator: Susanne   McLaughlin   Email: smclaugh@roosevelt.edu _____EV MINI-WORKSHOPS_____

Coordinator: Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou   Email: yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy

_____DEVELOPERS' SHOWCASE_____

Coordinator: Sookhee Kim Plotkin   Email: sookhee.plotkin@pgcps.org

CALICO 2006 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

Online Learning: Come Ride the Wave

University of Hawaii, Manoa, Oahu, Hawaii

May 16-20, 2006

http://calico.org

Preconference Workshops: Tuesday, May 16 - Wednesday, May 17

Courseware Showcase: Thursday, May 18

Presentation Sessions: Thursday, May 18 - Saturday, May 20

Use CALICO's on-line proposal submission form at http://calico1.modlang.txstate.edu or click on CALICO 2006 on the homepage: http://calico.org. You will need to register on the site ("Proposer registration") before being able to submit.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: OCTOBER 31, 2005

All presenters must be current members of CALICO by the time of the confernce and are responsible for their own expenses, including registration fees.

CALICO is a professional organization dedicated to the use of technology in foreign/second language learning and teaching. CALICO's symposia bring together educators, administrators, materials developers, researchers, government representatives, vendors of hardware and software, and others interested in the field of computer-assisted language learning.

For more information, contact

Mrs. Esther Horn, CALICO Coordinator

512/245-1417 (phone), 512/245-9089 (fax)

214 Centennial Hall, 601 University Drive

San Marcos, TX 78666

e-mail: info@calico.org or ec06@txstate.edu

TELECOLLABORATION:

INTEGRATING ON-LINE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGES INTO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

19-21 May, 2006

University of León, León, Spain

http://www.eurocall-languages.org/news/items/workshop190506.html

Theme of the Workshop:

Telecollaboration refers to the activity of engaging language learners in intercultural exchange with students from other cultures through the use of on-line communication tools such as e-mail and message boards in order to improve their communicative and cultural skills in the foreign language.

The learning outcomes of these exchanges can be both powerful and enlightening with a great potential for both language and culture learning. However, for every example of success which is reported in journals and teacher magazines, teachers have usually heard about 'failed exchanges' from disenchanted colleagues. Organisational difficulties, misunderstandings and the reinforcement of stereotypes are often the order of the day.

Starting from this premise, the participating researchers and educators will aim to introduce the skills and knowledge which teachers and students will need in order to ensure that their telecollaborative projects are rich learning experiences which provide ample opportunities for both language practice and intercultural learning.

Participants:

Participants should ideally be involved in foreign language education at secondary or university level. No previous experience of using on-line technologies in education is necessary although a basic level of electronic literacy (i.e. knowledge of how to send e-mails and how to use a web browser etc.) is recommended. Due to the international nature of the event, the working language of the workshop will be English. However, educators working with other foreign languages (e.g. French, German, Spanish as a Foreign Language) are welcome to attend and participate.

Workshop moderators:

Moderators from Spain, Germany, Ireland and the United States have been invited to lead the sessions. The moderators are all foreign language educators and are also experienced practitioners of telecollaboration

Participants will have an opportunity during the workshop to present and discuss their own experiences with on-line exchanges and on-line learning in general. (Please inform the organisers in advance if you would like to speak during this session.)

Contact details:

To find out more information about the workshop and how to register, visit the Eurocall website at: http://www.eurocall-languages.org/news/items/workshop190506.html or contact Robert O'Dowd at the University of León:

By e-mail: robert.odowd@unileon.es

By post:

Robert O'Dowd,

Universidad de León, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras,

Departamento de Filología Moderna, 24071 León, Spain

Registration:

The registration fee for participants is 30?. As places are limited, it is necessary to book and pay in advance.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A STEP CLOSER TO THE FUTURE

26-28 May, 2006

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

http://www.iateflcompsig.org.uk/cyprus2006.htm

Deadline for proposals: 10th January 2006

A conference organized by the University of Cyprus and the IATEFL Learning Technologies SIG. The conference aims to host a variety of practical and theoretical presentations catering both to experienced and novice teacher-users of learning technologies.

Plenary Speakers:

Prof James Coleman, Open University, UK

"The past, present and future of research into technology-enhanced language learning"

Dr Stephen Bax, Canterbury Christ Church University College, UK

"How can we make CALL more effective?"

Gavin Dudeney, the consultants-E, Spain

"The DoS, the Trainer, the Teacher & Technology: And Ne'er the Twain"

For more information: http://www.iateflcompsig.org.uk/cyprus2006.htm

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2006 INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING

June 2-4, 2006

Beijing, China

http://call2006.fltrp.com/

Paper Proposal deadline: February 15, 2006

Early Registration: March 15, 2006

The 2006 International Symposium of Computer Assisted Language Learning is a joint event to be co-hosted by the Learning Technologies Special Interest Group, International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL Learning Technologies SIG) and the National Research Centre for Foreign Language Education, Beijing Foreign Studied University (NRCFLE, BSFU).

Symposium theme: Digital and Networked Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Organizer: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing Foreign Studies University (FLTRP, BFSU)

Venue: FLTRP Conference Centre, Daxing, Beijing

Plenary Speakers:

Mike LEVY, School of Languages & Linguistics at Griffith University, Australia
Theme: CALL research paradigms

Phil HUBBARD, Linguistics Department & Language Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, US

Theme: CALL teacher education

Gary MOTTERAM, IATEFL Learning Technologies SIG, Faculty of Education at the University of Manchester, UK

Theme: Social contexts of E-learning: an international perspective

GU Yueguo, Institute of Online Education, Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), Contemporary Linguistic Section, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China

Theme: E-learning and online education

WEN Qiufang, National Research Centre for Foreign Language Education, Beijing, Foreign Studies University (BFSU), China

Theme: Learner corpora and interlanguage studies

We cordially invite presentations or posters on topics relevant (but not limited) to the following: CALL environment, CALL & L2 teacher education, CALL & online education, CALL courseware, CALL evaluation, CALL learners, Modality of learning, Web-based & resource-driven learning (RDL), Corpus-based & data-driven learning (DDL), Computer applications in second language acquisition (CASLA), Computer applications in second language research (CASLR)

Working language: English

All abstracts (500£800 words, with 3-5 key words), as well as other conference-related queries, should be directed to:

Mr. LIU Xiangdong

Email: celea@fltrp.com, Telephone: +8610-88819582

Further details and updates of this conference can be found at the Symposium website. URL: http://call2006.fltrp.com/

5TH PACIFIC SECOND LANGUAGE RESEARCH FORUM (PACSLRF)

Brisbane, Australia

July 4-6, 2006

http://www.emsah.uq.edu.au/pacslrf2006/

The 5th Pacific Second Language Research Forum (PacSLRF) will be held on July 4-6, 2006 in Brisbane, Australia. It will be a part of LINQ 2006 (http://www.linq06.une.edu.au/), a series of linguistic and applied linguistics meetings to be held at the University of Queensland during that month.

PacSLRF is a venue for data-based and theoretical papers on areas of basic research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Topics include, but are not limited to, SLA in instructed and naturalistic settings; the effects of second language (L2) instruction on the rate and route of L2 development; the role of individual differences (in e.g., aptitude, age, personality, motivation) in SLA; competing models of SLA processes; SLA theory construction; the acquisition of L2 pragmatics; bilingualism; the influence of cognitive

variables (e.g., memory and attention) on L2 learning and use; the assessment of L2 use and development; and methodological issues in research into L2 acquisition.

Conference keynote speakers tentatively include David Birdsong (University of Texas), Patricia Duff (University of British Columbia), Rod Ellis (University of Auckland), and Bonnie Schwartz (University of Hawaii).

PacSLRF 2006 is accepting proposals for individual papers (40 minutes) and colloquia (2 hours and 10 minutes). The deadline for submission is January 15, 2006. For full details, see the Call for Papers section of the conference website.

Questions? Contact m.haugh@gu.edu.au

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

"Teaching English with Technology" (ISSN 1642-1027) is a quarterly electronic journal published by IATEFL Poland Computer Special Interest Group. The Journal deals mainly with issues of using computers, the Internet, computer software in teaching and learning languages.

The editorial board of "Teaching English with Technology":

- Jarek Krajka (Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland) – Editor-in-Chief (Articles, Lesson Plans, Software, On the Web)

- Jozsef Horvath (University of Pecs, Pecs, Hungary) – Editor (Articles, Book Reviews)

- Maria Jose Luzon de Marco (University of Zaragoza, Spain) – Editor (The Internet for ESP)

- Guo Shesen (Luoyang University, Henan, P.R China) – Editor (A Word from a Techie)

You can access the journal from the IATEFL Computer SIG website at this URL: http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/callnl.htm, where the past issues can also be accessed, downloadable as zipped .html or .pdf file.

The next issue of "Teaching English with Technology" will be published in April 2006. Submission deadline for the next issue is March 1, 2006. Detailed submission guidelines can be downloaded from http://www.iatefl.org.pl/call/guidelines.doc.

We invite submissions covering the following categories:

- Article: articles describing classroom practice or discussions of work in progress, being of immediate relevance to teachers, or articles presenting case studies or work in progress

- The Internet for ESP: practical discussions of Web-based activities/classroom ideas for the ESP environment

- Lesson plan: plans of lessons done in the Internet or using computers, set in the reality of the education system, detailing the procedure, technical requirements, skills needed by students and teacher, together with URLs used in the lesson and any worksheets/checklists students are asked to complete

- On the Web: discussions of websites having potential for organising Internet lessons around them or relevant in some way to the field of English language teaching and learning

- Software: descriptions, evaluations and recommendations of widely available language learning software or articles pertaining to the use of software in language learning

- A Word from a Techie: discussions of applications of computer programmes to teaching English, outlining new possibilities given by software to the process of learning and teaching, explanations of technological issues

- Reports from Past Events: brief accounts of conferences, methodological workshops, commercial presentations, courses that relate to the field of using computer technology in teaching English

- Announcements of Future Events: as above, together with contact addresses.

We invite also works published elsewhere, but please give precise reference.

Please forward the following details with each submission:

- author(s) full name(s) including title(s)

- job title(s)

- organization(s) full contact details of all authors including email address, postal address, telephone and fax numbers.

Submissions should be sent by email as attachments to the Editor, Jarek Krajka, at jarek.krajka@wp.pl, with the subject being "Journal Submission." Please specify in the letter what word-processing program you are using, and preferably send .rtf version as well. All submissions undergo the process of blind peer review and are returned to authors with suggestions for changes/corrections.