

REVIEWS

Schmied, J., Haase, C. (eds) (2008) *English Projects in Teaching and Research in Central Europe: Proceedings of the Freiberg Conference, May 04-06, 2007. Research in English and Applied Linguistics. REAL Studies 4.* Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 155 pp.

The volume *English Projects in Teaching and Research in Central Europe* brings together projects in the areas of English language teaching and applied linguistics carried out by researchers as well as students and presented at an international conference organised by the Department of English Language and Linguistics at the Chemnitz University of Technology and Sächsisch-Tschechisches Hochschulzentrum in Freiberg, Germany, on May 4-6, 2007. The participants in the conference recruited from scholars and students of German and Czech universities and they largely continued their discussion of complexity and coherence issues dealt with in the previous volume of *REAL Studies*.

The contributions in the volume may basically be divided into three groups, as some authors focused on using new electronic technologies such as e-learning tools and video recordings, both for teaching and didactic analysis, some on their linguistic research (namely targeted at modality in academic student writing, lexical recognition in English language practice programmes, use of English quantifiers by Czech learners, and implications of coherence research for teaching), and others analysed methodological innovations and experience of various university courses.

The editors of the volume, Josef Schmied and Christoph Haase, have devoted much of their effort in recent years to encouraging linguistic and methodological research in English studies. They analyse the concept of research projects in the opening text *Introducing Projects in English Teaching and Research*, stressing the motivational, collaborative, interdisciplinary and experimental aspects of project work, as well as practical applications of project outcomes and a variety of sources used for funding.

The introductory summary of project benefits is followed by Josef Schmied's paper *Teaching Projects in English Studies*. The author outlines advantages of project work, especially the challenge stemming from time constraints, focus on a final product, collaborative effort, public relevance, use of the new media, interdisciplinary character, as well as the importance for participatory learning and gaining job-related experience. The suggested benefits are further discussed

and manifested on examples of project work in English studies, namely journalistic writing, academic writing (involving students' blog in Chemnitz), translation (focusing on evaluation of Internet-based machine translation) and web presentation (especially Moodle and Wikis). The paper emphasises contribution of projects to new learning and the current participatory culture.

The paper *Enhancing Learning Efficiency: A VLE Moodle Course in Stylistics* by Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova from the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno, presents experience gained from using a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle and some of its modules for the course in Stylistics. She claims that e-learning support promotes students' interaction, communicative approach and didactic competences (viz. involvement in course administration and self-study). The module Journal helps students to prepare for contact sessions with teacher's feedback, the module Assignment enables to practise writing texts suitable for certain genres (with teacher's feedback and assessment again), and Wikis are a tool for collective creation of web pages. The author concludes that, in addition to generally positive experience, the VLE Moodle also allows accommodation to individual learning styles.

Petr Najvar, a researcher at the Educational Research Centre (CPV) of the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, introduces a research project based on video study methodology in the article *CPV Video Study of English: Realised Curriculum Analysis in Czech Lower-Secondary Classrooms*. The research project was carried out in 2007-2008 in three regions of the Czech Republic and covered 79 English lessons at 21 schools. The collected video-taped material is transcribed and forms a vast resource of authentic classroom interaction for further analyses, whether from the general didactic or various subject-specific perspectives.

The process and methodology of making a student film as part of the practical language course at the English Department is described in the paper by Anna Kinovičová, Tony Lauf, Petra Teslerová and Lucie Vacková titled *Ústí nad Labem Student Project: New Ways of Creativity in English Language Learning*. In accordance with Lewin's theories of group dynamics and action research and several theories concerning division of roles in the classroom and other social settings, work on the film enabled students to develop their creativity while working on a complex and challenging task, as well as to practise English in real life situations, improve interpersonal and communicative skills, acquire technical skills, enhance critical thinking and learn new technologies. The project manifests the importance of student-centred, collaborative, experiential, and autonomous learning in teacher education, integrating technology and creativity at the same time.

The paper *Modality in Novice Academic Writing: The Case of African and German University Students* by Daniel Nkemele opens the linguistically-oriented section of the volume. The focus of the study is on comparison of the use of modals (central modal verbs and modal adjuncts) in academic essays written by Cameroonian, Tanzanian and Kenyan students with essays written by German (Chemnitz) students. Nkemele conceptualises Euro-English and African English as lingua franca variants used by non-native speakers for academic purposes. Two African corpora and an extrapolated (because smaller) German corpus reveal noticeable differences in the use of most modals, with German students displaying better ability to express different degrees of modality than (mostly East-)African students, probably due to a mix of factors, including a more complex system of modality in German, more exposition to English native speakers, better access to the Internet, and more dependence on authentic British learning materials in Europe.

Christoph Haase of the Chemnitz University of Technology in his contribution *Lexical Processing of Academic English: Recognition, Integration, and the Role of Corpora in Research and Teaching* analyses a specialised, “domain-specific” corpus of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in the fields of physics and biosciences. The study deals with propensity as the quantifiable feature of hedge expressions, and similarly with semantic depth as the relevant feature for semantic complexity. Several tests were incorporated, such as the test of lexical decision (word vs. non-/pseudo-word), the test of visual word recognition (comparing high- and low-frequency words) and the lexical integration test. The use of corpora in teaching linguistics and academic writing is addressed as well, drawing distinctions between academic and popular academic texts and native and non-native academic English.

Hana Coufalová, Ana-Ruxandra Iliescu and Andrew Tollet carried out a research into approximation of quantities and use of round numbers in Czech-English comparison. Their paper *Approximating Quantities and Use of Quantifiers: A Czech-English Comparison* addresses the way respondents used rounded or exact figures or matched quantifiers with underlying quantities. The data were collected by questionnaire research and show some important differences and misconceptions, such as in the use of *desítky//dozens/tens/*decades* and the exact number of letters in the English and Czech alphabets.

Renata Povolná focuses on the relation of coherence to cohesion and intertextuality as well as their practical impact on language teaching in her paper *Notes on Coherence in Spoken and Written Discourse (with Some Implications for Teaching)*. She outlines the views of cohesion and coherence in contemporary linguistic thinking, stressing the dynamic, negotiable, interpretative and text-

external properties of coherence. While spoken English as a co-operative process enables continuous negotiation of meaning, helped also by discourse markers, written English is characterised by a “split“ discourse context, which is why more explicit cohesive signals are used to help recipients decode the message. To achieve coherence, students must learn to focus on texts from both the text-producer’s and text-receiver’s point of view.

Methodological research is represented by the article *Course Design in an ELTE Study Programme* by Světlana Hanušová, Jana Zerzová and Hana Čujková. The authors address the recent phenomenon of Framework Educational Programmes, which make it possible for each school to establish its own School Educational Programme. Consequently, course/curriculum design has to be incorporated in the ELT curriculum (as it has happened at the English Department, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University). They provide a representative collection of samples of student beliefs concerning language, language learning and teaching. Hana Čujková’s project-based syllabus is used as an illustration of possible approaches to course design. Feedback obtained after a year’s teaching experience will be an integral part of the course design project.

Kristiane Dürich (Chemnitz University of Technology) applies her experience from teaching at Belgrade University in the text *The Culture of EAP: A Seminar Concept*. She claims that EAP can be looked at from an intercultural perspective, as a co-product of cultural, national and institutional norms. She defines the concept of culture and cultural standards and discusses author’s identity and choices of linguistic means. The course titled *The Culture of EAP* is then described in terms of its contents and goals. Apart from receptive and analytic skills, the course also aims to develop students’ productive academic skills.

The article *Corporate English Language Training: The Way to Customized Materials* by Brigitta Wegener is devoted to teaching materials used in corporate language courses (traditionally referred to as English for Specific Purposes, ESP). The author claims that specific needs of target occupational groups often require design of supplementary and customised teaching materials. She also outlines the types of corporate English course participants (i.e. pre- and post-experienced), criteria for assignment of learners to groups (viz. level of proficiency, different job-related needs, position in hierarchy) and the specific role of an ESP teacher. The practical section of the paper demonstrates a customised English course syllabus, tasks and materials designed for workers in automotive industry.

Lucie Betáková of the University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice, looks into the characteristic features of classroom discourse in the paper *Structure of Classroom Discourse*. The paper contains a representative survey of theoretical accounts of classroom discourse, focusing on the dominant, allocative and

controlling position of a teacher and shared features with other types of spoken discourse, particularly conversation. Based on her own recordings of classroom discourse, she demonstrates a typical three-part exchange (using Wells' structure IRF – Initiation, Response and Feedback/Follow-up), accompanying the authentic turns with their functional interpretation.

The whole volume *English Projects in Teaching and Research in Central Europe* manifests the permanent effort of educators and researchers at English departments of Czech and German universities towards application of their research in the teaching of English as a foreign language, incorporation of new technologies and learning methods into English teacher education and appreciation of the benefits of project work. The high scholarly quality of papers is supplemented by their methodological and didactic relevance.

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