

# e-TEFL

Zborník vedeckých príspevkov z medzinárodnej konferencie  
Proceedings from the International Scientific Conference

UKF Nitra

2014

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## Uplatňovanie interdisciplinarity v nových trendoch vo vzdelávaní

**Alena Hašková – Eva Malá – Tomáš Kozík**

Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre, Nitra, Slovensko

**Abstrakt:** Príspevok je zameraný na prezentáciu ukážok výsledkov vzájomnej spolupráce dvoch, vzhľadom na ich zameranie zdanlivo heterogénnych pracovísk, a to Katedry techniky a informačných technológií a Katedry lingvodidaktiky a interkultúrnych štúdií PF UKF v Nitre. Uvedené pracoviská spoločne participovali na riešení rôznych vedecko-výskumných a vzdelávacích projektov, hlavnými výstupmi ktorých boli predovšetkým odborné publikácie, učebnice a e-learningové kurzy.

**Kľúčové slová:** interdisciplinárna spolupráca, elektronické kurzy, zvyšovanie efektívnosti vzdelávania

### Uplatňovanie princípu Svätoplukových prútov vo vede

Pojmom interdisciplinarita je označovaná integrácia vedomostí a zručností z rôznych odborov do jedného systému. Uplatňovanie interdisciplinarity znamená prekračovanie hraníc, v rámci ktorých sa bežne pohybujeme, vzájomné konfrontovanie rôznych prístupov k riešeniu problémov, nachádzanie styčných bodov medzi tradične izolovanými systémami, otváranie nových smerov vývoja a myslenia na základe spájania poznania z doposiaľ separovaných disciplín. Uplatňovanie interdisciplinarity je čoraz významnejším predpokladom nachádzania čo najefektívnejších spôsobov riešenia novovznikajúcich problémov, či už spoločenských, národohospodárskych, materiálno-technických alebo iných. Pochopenie zmyslu uplatňovania interdisciplinarity možno odvíjať od známej legendy o Svätoplukových prútoch, resp. synoch. Tak ako každý syn mohol zabezpečovať rozvoj svojej časti kráľovstva, tak každá vedná disciplína posúva rozvoj poznania v príslušnej špecifickej oblasti poznania. Ale tak ako pri ohrození bývalej Svätoplukovej ríše bolo potrebné, aby sa jeho synovia spojili, tak pri riešení mnohých problémov súčasnosti je potrebné, aby vedné disciplíny vytvárali „interdisciplinárne Svätoplukove prúty“ poskytujúce platformu pre vývoj optimálnych riešení vznikajúcich problémov založených na hľadaní vzájomných väzieb a súvislostí.

### Uplatňovanie interdisciplinarity vo vzdelávaní

Interdisciplinarita sa najčastejšie uplatňuje (z nevyhnutnosti) pri riešení problémov, ktoré sa vymykajú z tradičného vnímania systému vedných disciplín, t.j. v situáciách, kde „klasické“ vedné odbory nie sú schopné (resp. v niektorých prípadoch „ochotné“) zvažovať príslušný problém. Jedným z takýchto problémov je napr. multidisciplinárny fenomén globálneho otepľovania. Iným príkladom sú sociálno-vedné disciplíny, napr. antropológia a sociológia, ktoré sa a-priorne nezaobierajú sociálnou analýzou fenoménu rozvoja techniky v 20. (a následne v 21.) storočí. V súčasnosti sa veľká pozornosť venuje problematike sústavne udržateľného rozvoja, čo je tiež oblasť výskumu, ktorá si vyžaduje dokonca transdisciplinárne analýzy a syntézy zohľadňujúce ekonomické, sociálne, environmentálne aspekty a pod.

Špeciálnym prípadom uplatňovania interdisciplinarity je využívanie tzv. integrovaného vyučovania na školách. Integrované vyučovanie je založené na modeli integrovaného tematického vyučovania S. Kovalikovej a K. Olsenovej (Kovaliková – Olsenová, 1996). Ako vyplýva z názvu, tento model je založený na spájaní rôznych okruhov učiva do jedného tematického celku, pričom sa výraznou mierou využívajú medzipredmetové vzťahy a spájanie teoretických a praktických činností. Podstatou tohto vyučovania je vnútropredmetová integrácia vzájomne súvisiaceho učiva toho istého predmetu, ale najmä vzájomne súvisiaceho učiva dvoch alebo viacerých predmetov v jednom tematickom celku, pričom táto integrácia rozvíja

komplexné vnímanie sveta, dáva do vzájomnej súvislosti separovane osvojované poznatky a umožňuje ich aplikáciu v širšom praktickom kontexte.

V našom prípade však nechceme sústrediť pozornosť na uplatňovanie interdisciplinarít priamo vo vyučovacom procese (čo je prípad integrovaného tematického vyučovania), ale pri vývoji materiálov, resp. tvorbe nástrojov podporujúcich zvyšovanie kvality a efektívnosti vyučovania. Ide nám o aktivity, pri ktorých sa stretávajú odborníci s rôznymi špecializáciami a spoločne riešia otázky ďalšieho rozvoja vzdelávania.

Katedra techniky a informačných technológií (KTIT) a Katedra lingvodidaktiky a interkultúrnych štúdií (KLIŠ) PF UKF v Nitre vzhľadom na svoje zamerania predstavujú dve heterogénne pracoviská. Napriek tomu potreba riešiť aktuálne problémy vzdelávania v súlade so súčasnými trendmi vyústila do ich vzájomnej spolupráce. Uvedené pracoviská spoločne participovali na riešení rôznych vedecko-výskumných a vzdelávacích projektov, hlavnými výstupmi ktorých boli predovšetkým odborné publikácie, učebnice a e-learningové kurzy (Hašková – Malá, 2014).

### E-MORPHOLOGY

V období rokov 2008 – 2010 sa pracovníci KLIŠ a KTIT PF UKF v Nitre podieľali na riešení projektu KEGA 3/6045/08 E-príručka anglickej morfológie: E-MORPHOLOGY, ktorého vedúcou riešiteľkou bola PaedDr. Mária Hardošová, PhD. (FF UMB Banská Bystrica). Hlavným cieľom projektu bolo vytvoriť v elektronickej verzii študijnú príručku anglickej morfológie, ktorá by umožňovala užívateľom na pokročilej úrovni predkladať učivo zamerané na rôzne morfológické javy a následne ho precvičovať pomocou rôznych úloh a cvičení, pričom by prostredníctvom autotestov bola zabezpečená aj spätná väzba (Hašková – Malá, 2009; Hašková – Hardošová – Malá, 2010).

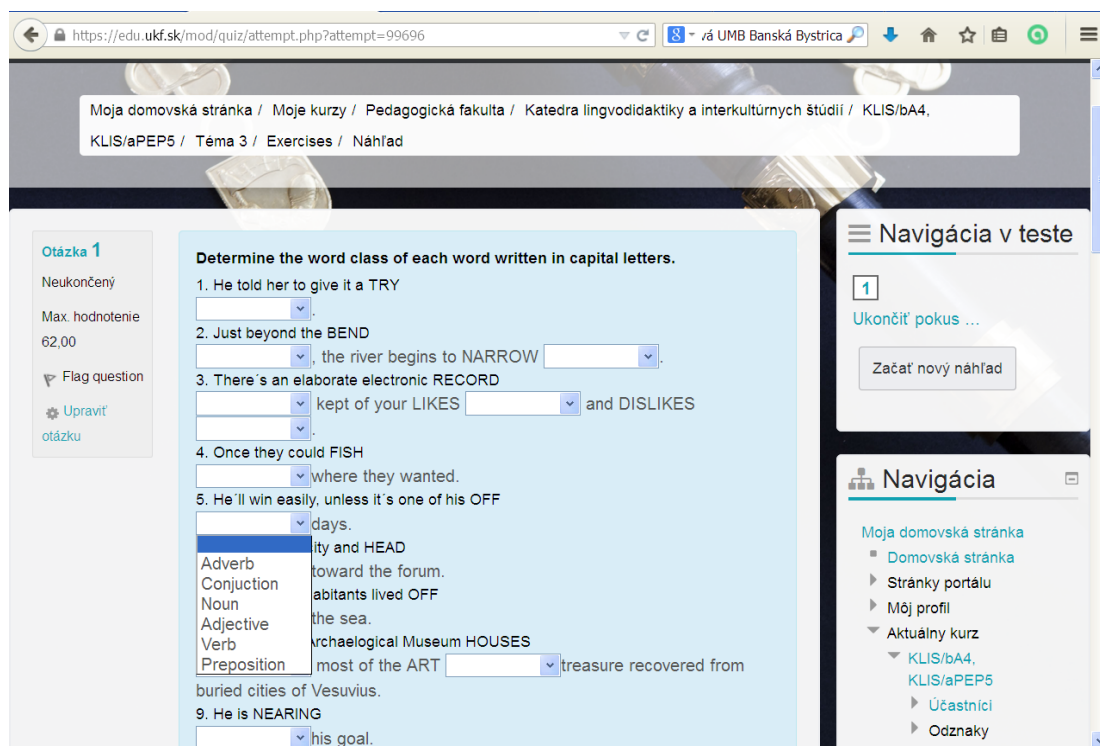
Vytvorený elektronický kurz obsahovo pokrýval osnovy morfológie anglického jazyka študijného programu učiteľstva anglického jazyka, ktoré boli rozdelené do 23 modulov tematicky zameraných na problematiku morfému a slovných druhov (podstatných mien, zámen, adjektív, prísloviek a slovies). Z formálneho hľadiska predstavoval elektronickú verziu cvičebnice Practical English Morphology (Hardošová, 2009), pričom sa snažil o rešpektovanie rôznych metodologických požiadaviek kladených na vyučovanie a osvojovanie si cudzích jazykov (Gadušová, 2007).

Cvičenia k jednotlivým tematickým celkom boli založené na autentických materiáloch prevzatých z anglických časopisov a mali charakter cvičení viacnásobného výberu, priradovania, dopĺňania a substitúcie (obr. 1). V súvislosti s využívaním elektronického kurzu v porovnaní s využívaním printovej verzie cvičebnice študenti oceňovali najmä vyššiu efektívnosť osvojovania si preberaných morfológických javov pri opakovanom riešení príslušných učebných úloh (cvičení) a poskytovanie okamžitej informácie o správnosti, resp. nesprávosti ich riešenia.

Napriek pozitívnym reakciám zo strany študentov na tento kurz sme si uvedomovali, že sú tu veľké rezervy na jeho skvalitnenie v zmysle umožnenia väčšieho spektra učebných aktivít študentov a hlbšieho pochopenia preberaných morfológických pojmov a s nimi súvisiacich javov a pravidiel. Vychádzajúc z charakteristických prvkov kvalitných elektronických kurzov, ako ich identifikoval Madden (1999) a ktoré korešpondujú aj s požiadavkami kladenými na tvorbu elektronických kurzov Munkovou a Munkom (2010), sme považovali za oblasti najväčších rezerv, resp. dokonca za nedostatky vytvoreného e-kurzu dve skutočnosti, a to:

- obmedzenú atraktívnosť použitých textov (študijných materiálov) v zmysle ich obsahu aj formy (design samotného obsahu textov i prezentovanej problematiky prostredníctvom využívania farebných a dynamických efektov, obrázkov, zvukových nahrávok, videosekvencií, animácií a pod.), zvýšenie ktorej by prispelo k nárastu motivovanosti a zaangažovanosti (zaujatosti) študentov;

- absenciu hyperlinkových prepojení na doplnkové študijné materiály, zabezpečenie ktorých by prispievalo k efektívnejšiemu osvojovaniu si poznatkov študentmi s rôznymi učebnými štýlmi.

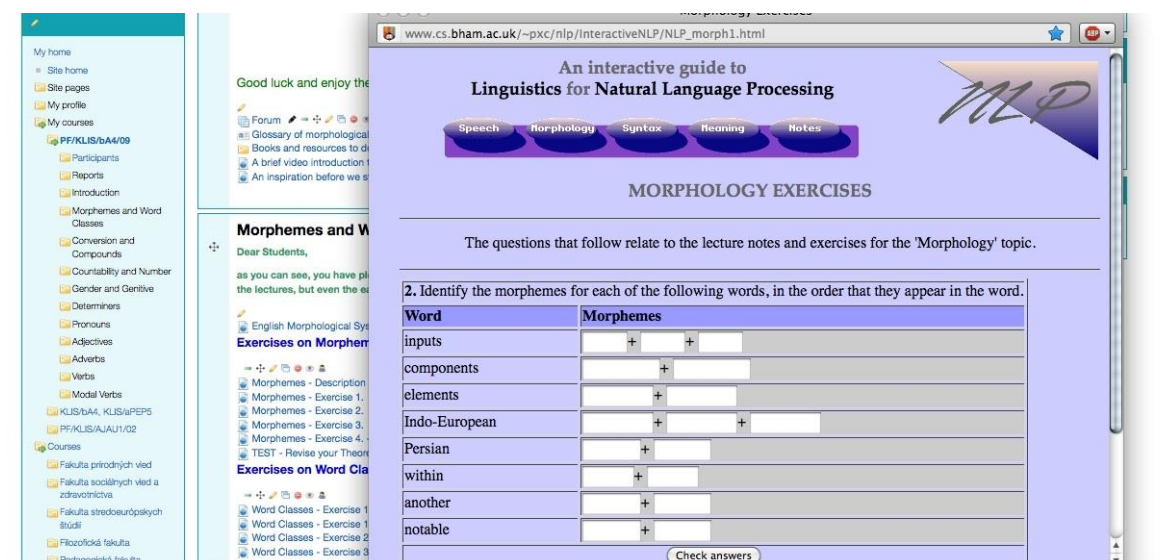


Obr. 1 Ukážka z e-príručky anglickej morfológie *E-MORPHOLOGY*

Vyššie uvádzané skutočnosti boli impulzom k vytvoreniu inovovaného elektronického kurzu (obr. 2), ktorý by poskytoval učiacim sa prístup k väčšiemu množstvu kvalitných a pútavých a k obsahu jednotlivých častí relevantných vzdelávacích materiálov, umožňoval im vo väčšej miere nadobudnúť „zautomatizovanie“ používania osvojovaných gramatických javov a pravidiel a aktívne ich zapájal do rôznych foriem vzájomných diskusií (Turčinová, 2013).

K najvýznamnejším inováciám následného kurzu oproti prvotnému patrí:

- vytvorenie diskusného fóra ako platformy umožňujúcej vzájomnú komunikáciu účastníkov, t.j. komunikáciu učiacich sa navzájom, ako aj komunikáciu učiteľa s nimi,
- zaradenie hyperlinkových prepojení na rôzne publikácie a ďalšie zdroje učebných materiálov,
- zaradenie elektronických verzií knižných publikácií a ďalších učebných materiálov k priamemu stiahnutiu,
- zaradenie videosekvencií v záujme zatraktívnenia kurzu,
- vytvorenie glosára v zmysle „osobného“ slovníka, do ktorého si učiaci sa vkladajú termíny, ktoré považujú za užitočné alebo zaujímavé (ak je určitý termín zaradený v glosári, automaticky je v textoch kurzu farebne zvýrazňovaný a prepájaný s definíciou uvádzanou v glosári).



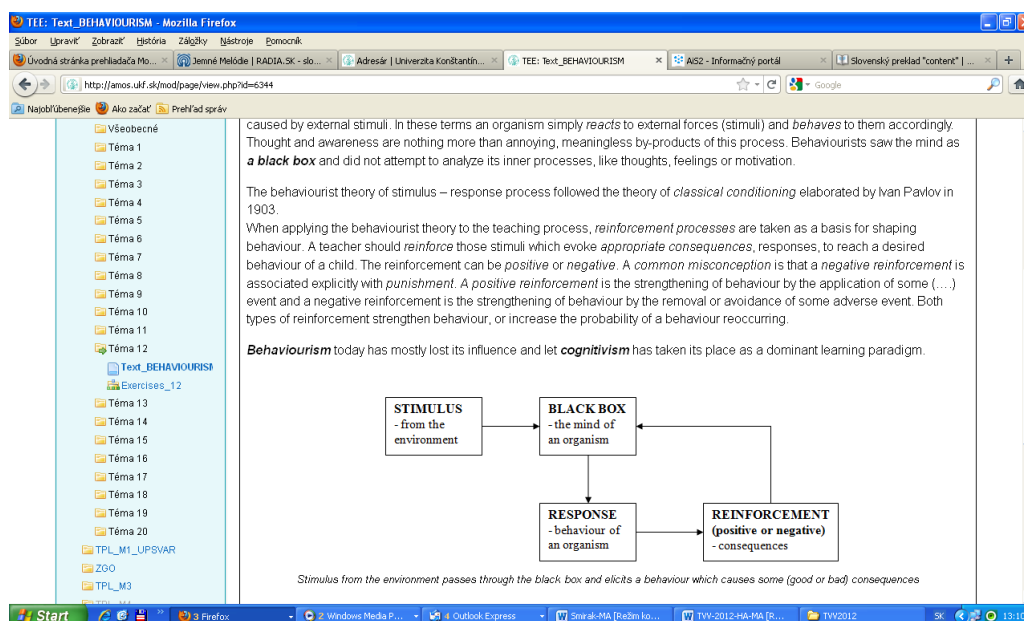
Obr. 2 Ukážka z inovovaného e-kurzu anglickej morfológie *E-MORPHOLOGY*

Novovytvorený elektronický kurz bol pilotne overovaný na KLIŠ PF UKF v Nitre (Turčinová, 2013) na výskumnom súbore 68 študentov prvého ročníka denného bakalárskeho štúdia prihlásených na predmet morfológia anglického jazyka (letný semester akademického roku 2011/2012). Metodológia overovania bola založená na pedagogickom experimente, na základe ktorého bola vyhodnocovaná implementácia predmetného elektronického kurzu do jazykovej prípravy študentov na vysokej škole. Na zistenie nárastu vedomostnej úrovne v experimentálnej (34 študentov) a kontrolnej skupine (35 študentov) boli použité pretesty a posttesty (rovnaké pre obidve skupiny). Veľkosť účinnosti pedagogickej intervencie vytvoreného e-kurzu bola stanovená prostredníctvom Cohenovho  $d$ , pričom jeho výsledná hodnota  $d = 0,488$  potvrdila mierny efekt vytvoreného elektronického kurzu.

### Pokračovanie spolupráce - interdisciplinarita v zameraní výstupov

Pokračovaním predchádzajúcej spolupráce KLIŠ a KTIT PF UKF na riešení projektov KEGA bola v období rokov 2010 – 2011 participácia oboch pracovísk na riešení projektu KEGA 198-025UKF-4/2010 *Personálna a obsahová príprava výučby bakalárskeho študijného programu Informačné technológie v edukačnom prostredí v anglickom jazyku* (zodpovedný riešiteľ: prof. PaedDr. Alena Hašková, CSc.). V nadväznosti na tento projekt bol vytvorený e-learningový kurz *Technologies in Educational Environment*.

E-learningový kurz *Technologies in Educational Environment* je zameraný na rozvoj odbornej jazykovej kompetencie učiteľov. Kurz vznikol ako reakcia na aktuálnu požiadavku internacionalizácie vysokého školstva. Za základný predpoklad internacionalizácie vzdelávania považujeme adekvátnu jazykovú zdatnosť učiteľov príslušnej vzdelávacej inštitúcie. Jazyková kompetencia učiteľov musí byť na takej úrovni, aby boli schopní realizovať výučbu jednotlivých študijných disciplín zaradených v určitom študijnom programe v príslušnom cudzom jazyku (Gadušová, Hartánská, 2000). To si od učiteľov vyžaduje nielen fluentnosť v bežnej cudzojazyčnej komunikácii, ale aj adekvátnu úroveň vedomostí z odbornej terminológie. Za prienikovú oblasť pre učiteľov rôznych špecializácií, podieľajúcich sa na príprave budúcich učiteľov, považujeme oblasť technológie vzdelávania. Z uvedeného dôvodu sme sa rozhodli predmetný jazykový kurz, zameraný na rozvoj odbornej terminológie učiteľov, nasmerovať na problematiku technológie vzdelávania. Kurz tak na základe štúdia odborných textov, ktoré sú poskytnuté v anglickom jazyku, umožňuje učiteľom prehĺbovať si okrem samotnej jazykovej kompetencie aj poznatky z oblasti využívania informačných a komunikačných technológií vo vzdelávaní a precizovať a systemizovať relevantný terminologický aparát.

Obr. 3 Ukážka časti odborného textu z kapitoly *Behaviourism*

Kurz pozostáva z 20 kapitol, ktoré sú zamerané na zavádzanie jednotlivých technických prostriedkov do procesu vyučovania, teoretické východiská aplikácií technických prostriedkov do procesu vyučovania, ukážky najznámejších modelov vzdelávania a na súčasné trendy využívania informačných a komunikačných technológií vo vzdelávaní a tvorbe vzdelávacích prostredí:

1. Instructional Technology
2. Technology of Education
3. Two Phases of Technology of Education
4. Audiovisual Movement in Education
5. Development of the Process of Instruction Through Media
6. Systems Theory
7. Systems Approach
8. Application of the Systems Approach in Education
9. Individualized Instruction
10. Winnetka Plan
11. Dalton Plan
12. Behaviourism
13. Programmed Instruction
14. Linear and Branched Programmes
15. Computers in Education
16. Computer Assisted Instruction

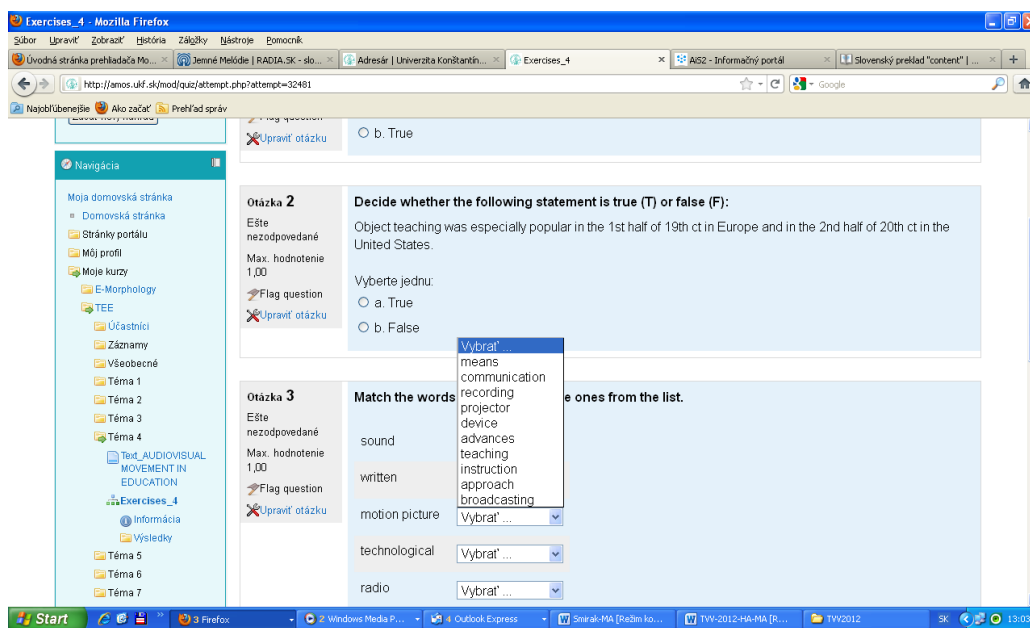
## 17. Computer Assisted Learning

## 18. E-learning

## 19. Blended Learning

## 20. E-learning Technological Dimension

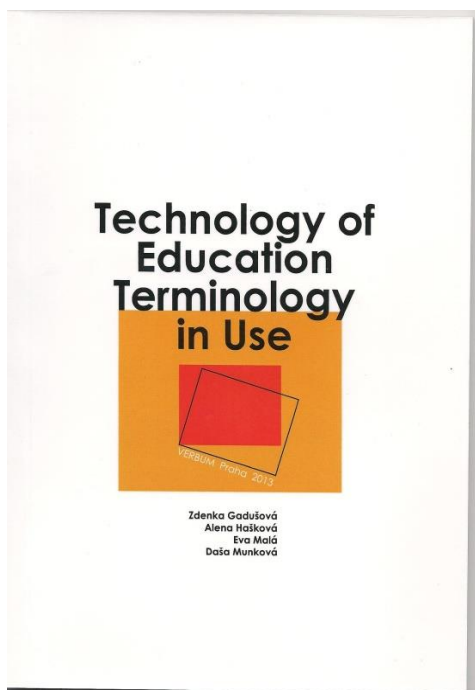
Jednotlivé kapitoly sú štruktúrované do dvoch častí. Jednu časť tvorí odborný text s vyznačenými kľúčovými pojmami (obr. 3) a druhú časť tvoria cvičenia (obr. 4). V niektorých kapitolách súčasťou textov sú aj grafické schémy ilustrujúce vzájomné súvislosti medzi prezentovanými pojmami, prípadne fotografie predstaviteľov prezentovaných pedagogických smerov.



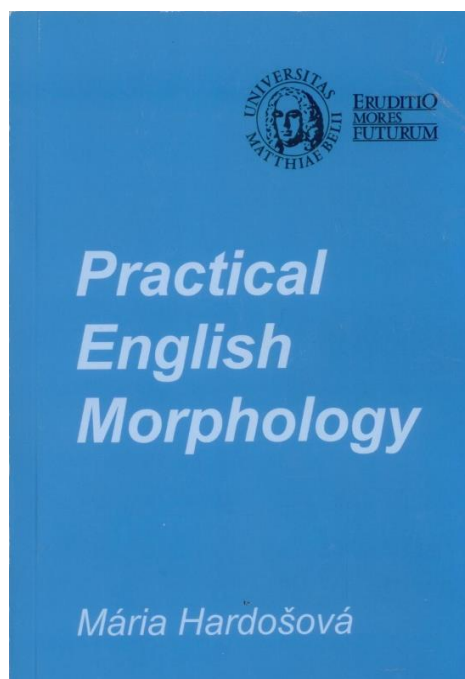
Obr. 4 Ukážka časti cvičení z kapitoly *Audiovisual Movement in Education*

Zameraním a hlavným účelom kurzu nie je preberanie gramatických javov (predpokladá sa, že užívatelia kurzu ovládajú základné gramatické javy a disponujú slovnou zásobou na úrovni jadra najfrekvencovanejších anglických pojmov) a úlohou zaradených cvičení nie je utvrdzovanie gramatických javov, ale precvičovanie odbornej terminológie a overovanie a prehľbovanie osvojenia si a pochopenia preberanej odbornej problematiky, resp. terminológie. Čo sa týka charakteru použitých cvičení, vychádzali sme zo skutočnosti, že už pri tvorbe, resp. využívaní predchádzajúcich e-learningových kurzov sa nám osvedčila aplikácia takých cvičení na prezentáciu, nácvik a kontrolu osvojenia si učebných materiálov, v ktorých reakcie možno vyjadriť krátkym zápisom a pri ktorých počet a forma správnych odpovedí je známa a vysoko prediktabilná. Z uvedeného dôvodu sme sa zamerali na cvičenia transformačné, doplňovacie, prirad'ovacie, substitučné a cvičenia na výber z alternatívnych možností.

Vytvorený elektronický kurz mal pozitívnu odozvu aj v Čechách, výsledkom čoho bolo vydanie s ním korešpondujúcej učebnice *Technology of Education Terminology in Use* v pražskom vydavateľstve Verbum (Gadušová, Z. – Hašková, A. – Malá, E. – Munková, D.: *Technology of Education Terminology in Use*. Praha : Verbum, 2013. ISBN 978-80-87800-03-4).



Obr. 5 Publikácia *Technology of Education Terminology in Use* autorského kolektívu Z. Gadušová, A. Hašková, E. Malá, D. Munková



Obr. 6 Publikácia *Practical English Morphology* autorky M. Hardošovej

### Záver

V súvislosti s prezentovanými výsledkami interdisciplinárnej spolupráce Katedry lingvodidaktiky a interkultúrnych štúdií a Katedry techniky a informačných technológií PF UKF v Nitre môže vzniknúť na jednej strane dojem dominancie vednej disciplíny anglistiky a na druhej strane otázka vyváženosti využitia výsledkov tejto spolupráce. Toto by však bol veľmi mechanický prístup k hodnoteniu uplatňovania interdisciplinarity v praxi. Dosiahnuť ideálnu rovnomernú vyváženosť je vždy problematické a navyše nie vždy je to vôbec žiaduce. Preto je úplne prirodzené, že v závislosti od konkrétnej situácie (t.j. v závislosti od povahy konkrétnych problémov, ktoré sa snažíme riešiť vo vzájomnej spolupráci) raz prevažuje jedna strana (disciplína) a v inej situácii to môže byť druhá strana (disciplína). Ako príklad „otočenia“ tejto situácie môže slúžiť spoločné podieľanie sa KLIŠ a KTIT PF UKF na aktuálne realizovanom medzinárodnom projekte TEMPUS s názvom *Development of Embedded System Courses with Implementation of Innovation Virtual Approaches for Integration of Research, Education and Production in the Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia* (2013 – 2016), ktorého hlavným koordinátorom je Thomas More University College (Belgicko). Projekt je ťažiskovo zameraný na vývoj učebných materiálov rozvíjajúcich pedagogické kompetencie učiteľov technických predmetov na vysokých školách v Arménsku, Gruzínsku a Ukrajine a v rámci projektu bol už pre týchto učiteľov práve na KTIT PF UKF v spolupráci s KLIŠ PF UKF organizovaný letný kurz *New Teaching Approaches in Engineering* (14. – 21. september 2014).

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## Corpora of English in Sensitising Polish Users to Common Errors in English Grammar

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on selected constructions in the English language shown through authentic examples of usage accessible through eight corpora of the English language. The linguistic elements or expressions are perceived as constructions from the perspective of cognitive grammarians, with Ronald Langacker's key thesis on linguistic constructions. According to the symbolic thesis, constructions are form-meaning pairings at different levels of complexity. This paper highlights the rigidity of the Subject-Verb-Objects (S-V-O) linear order of elements in an English simple sentence, i.e. English noun phrases, verb phrases with particles, verbs accommodating specific prepositions, different senses of prepositions in prepositional phrases. Transference of Polish schema constructions into expressions formulated in English is stressed as a source of errors in spoken English constructions. Self-study by means of language corpora is recommended for Polish advanced users of English in revising and creating accurate meaningful expressions.

**Key words:** language corpora, linguistic constructions, English, Polish, contrast, context, cognitive linguistics,

### Introduction

This study concerns selected English constructions used by Polish (L<sub>1</sub>) students of English (L<sub>2</sub>) communicating at an advanced level in English as the target language (TL), which serves as reference of linguistic correctness being called "Target Linguistic Form (TLF)" (see Arabski 1979:12; see also *interlanguage* in Selinker 1972). This text addresses selected linguistic constructions, such as the rigidity of the Subject-Verb-Objects (S-V-O) linear order of elements within an English simple sentence, English uncountable nouns and articles in noun phrases, senses of particles in English verb phrases, meanings of prepositions in prepositional phrases. Based on various aspects of the aforementioned constructions, it is argued that grammar explanations supported with grammar exercises in workbooks require further in-depth practice, especially in studying interesting extracts of text accessible through the corpora of the English language published on the Internet. Language corpora, considered modern up-to-date encyclopaedic lexicons, according to Harmer (2001), are results of the work of lexicographers and other researchers who compile fragments of text with huge numbers of words and expressions in "banks of language data". This author exposes eight corpora of the English language, seven are accessible after registration at <http://corpora.byu.edu>, the eighth corpus signalled in the present paper, the British National Corpus at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk>, is readily accessible without the requirement of registration. Language corpora serve in the creation of self-administered exercises done in relation to different grammatical constructions. The constructions listed above have been chosen as illustrations of the practice incorporated in a variety of linguistic constructions requiring repetition to strengthen retention. This author argues that exposure to interesting diversified authentic contexts in language practice leads to regular acts of "immersion" in everyday English utterances, both formal and informal, and thus fosters correctness in the usage of numerous constructions in English grammar in specific communicative situations. The statement follows Maria Dakowska's approach to teaching and learning L<sub>2</sub> called the "Organic Cultivation Approach" (Dakowska, 2001), who advocates learning through a communicatively useful text or discourse.

### Methodology applied

The corpora-based view on studying English grammar shown in the present paper is set within the assumptions of cognitive linguists. Accordingly, the fundamental unit of grammar is a linguistic **construction** and construction of meaning is associated with the process of **conceptualization**. The notion linguistic *construction* refers to a *form-meaning pairing* which is known as a *symbolic unit* or a *symbolic assembly* (see Langacker, 1987). Constructions, or chunks of language, range from morphemes (Langacker, 1987), through phrases (see Goldberg 1995, 2006), through syntactically-semantic assemblies (see Croft, 2001), to utterances which are processed through language use (see Bergen and Chang, 2005). Hence, cognitive approaches to grammar are based on the **symbolic thesis**, holding “that grammar is composed of form-meaning pairings” (Evans 2007, p. 208). Moreover, cognitive linguists acknowledge the **usage-based thesis** in grammar, which holds that the mental grammar of the language user is formed by his or her abstraction of symbolic units from particular instances of language use (Evans 2007, p. 216–7). Therefore, meaning has a dynamic character in cognitive linguistics (see Herskovits, 1986/2009; Lakoff, 1987; Brugman, 1988; Fauconnier, 1994, 1997/2006; Fauconnier and Turner, 1998, 2002/2003; Coulson, 2001; Cruse, 2004; Evans, 2009; Bybee, 2010). According to Ronald Langacker (2008, p. 30), “... meaning is not identified with concepts but with **conceptualization** ...”, i.e. with construction of meaning.

Thus, cognitive semanticists accept the **encyclopaedic thesis** in advocating the encyclopaedic nature of meaning, which treats words as points of access to vast areas of structured knowledge (see mainly: “semantic frames” in Fillmore 1977, 1982, “cognitive domains” in Langacker, 1987; see also: “idealised cognitive models” or ICMs in Lakoff, 1987, “mental spaces” in Fauconnier 1994, 1997/2006, “conceptual blends” in Fauconnier and Turner 1998, 2002/3). The above thesis holds that “words provide access to represent an organised inventory of knowledge” (Evans 2007, p. 72). Vyvyan Evans argues that “[...] the sort of encyclopaedic knowledge, to which the word provides **access** is a function of the context in which the word is embedded” (Evans 2009, p. 10). Words and other constructions are “building blocks” of language (see Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 202–3, Langacker 1987, p. 452–7). In this model, “the pieces of language that are stored in the lexicon are like bricks, and the grammar is the mortar that binds those simple and solid pieces together to form larger structures” (Tuggy 2005, p. 235). Therefore, in the present paper, the context limiting the encyclopaedic knowledge to which the given expression relates is cited from eight internet corpora of the English language, demonstrating real usage of English utterances in various circumstances, social spheres, cultural settings, geographical areas, and time space.

This study indicates selected English constructions and suggests self-developed exercises, structured by means of eight corpora of English. Differing from the Polish usage (see e.g. Saloni and Świdziński, 1998/2007), the constructions are susceptible to errors. As a result, misleading transference of schemas of Polish constructions into English ones is considered the main source of errors in sentences with the highlighted expressions. Hence, this author stresses deep “immersion” in authentic English utterances, which are compiled in the corpora of English, featuring inscrutable sources of encyclopaedic examples of usage.

### Direct transference of L<sub>1</sub> expressions into English constructions at the advanced level

Although this author advocates the approach to language represented by cognitive linguists, the view that contrastive analysis of two languages contributes to the comprehension of potential problems in the L<sub>2</sub> system (see e.g. Larsen-Freeman and Michael Long 1993, p. 53) is also included in the present article. This author, however, perceives natural language as a system of constructions, in agreement with the cognitive constructional views on language. The expression “interference of constructions” resounds another expression, “transference of schemata”, mentioned by Lukas Pietsch, or “transfer of complete constructional schemata that may surface in various different realizations” (Siemund, p. 9–10).

Interference is linked to contact linguistics, whose beginnings are strongly associated with Uriel Weinreich's "Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems" (1953). Ronald Kim and William Labov (2011, p. xx) introduce the scholar as a proponent of a "wholistic" view of a given language when contrasted with another language. Kim and Labov (*idem*) state that "Weinreich argued that any proper study of language contact has to take into account facts, but also descriptions of the communities in which two or more languages were spoken". The contemporary language corpora combine a vast array of social, cultural, demographic, etc. variables, addressed by Weinreich's thesis formulated in 1953. "Weinreich's thesis has since been universally accepted in contact linguistics [...]" (*idem*). It correlates with "interference" or "transference" exposed as a source of L<sub>2</sub> mistakes in the present text.

Attempts to define "interference" have been scrutinised for several decades since 1953. For example, David Lott (1983) developed a definition within the formal perspective of language, and linked it to the students' *errors*. The theorist argues that "approximately 50 percent of errors were due to interference" (*idem*, p. 258). Lott's (*idem*, p. 258–9) research demonstrated and claimed that an error caused by interference from the native language referred to "overextension of analogy". As perceived in L<sub>2</sub> vocabulary, "transfer of structure" from L<sub>1</sub>, and an "interlingual/intralingual error" occur in those L<sub>2</sub> words and structures which do not have equivalent ones in L<sub>1</sub>. According to this author, the definition expressed above lists the three basic criteria underlying the transference of the Polish grammatical schemata to the English language used by advanced users of L<sub>2</sub> system.

Substantial consideration is also appropriated to texts on teaching and learning L<sub>2</sub>, i.e. the notions of *interference* or *transfer* (see Lott, *idem*, p. 256), analysing the linguistic transference problem from different perspectives. For example, *interference* is discussed as *interlingual* v *intralingual* (see Lott, *idem*, p. 260) v *intralingual-interlingual* (see Katreniaková and Nemčoková, 2003). Most attitudes observe the formal perspective on interference in language, which is a system of structures governed by rules. For example, Sarah Thomason (2001, p. 59) claims that "the crucial information does not lie in the specifics of the structures themselves, but rather in the fact that there are so many different kinds of structural interference features and that these features range over all components of linguistic structure (phonology, morphology, syntax, etc.)". Moreover, according to formal researchers, learners of English rely on "familiar linguistic rules that govern their first language to help them learn and navigate English" (Zuñiga and Weisman, 2006/2007, p. 16). While the students' knowledge of the native language can sometimes be helpful in learning L<sub>2</sub> (see, *idem*), applied linguists argue that "influence from the first language may cause difficulty, or «interference», with English" (*idem*). Formal linguists analyse language as a system of separate components, where syntax deals with structures of linguistic elements, next to phonology, morphology, pragmatics, and semantics. Interference occurs within specific components. This author, however, associates *interference* with *transference* of L<sub>1</sub> constructions, or "symbolic assemblies", into utterances in L<sub>2</sub>, having their own conventionalised expressions. As proclaimed by cognitive linguists. Language corpora are expansions of contemporary lexicons by numerous examples of usage of a given word or linguistic construction, through the relations between the particular word, especially a dependent grammatical category, and its arguments.

### Language corpora in sensitising Polish users to selected English constructions

First, the present part lists the specific constructions in the English language which are submitted to analysis by this author in language corpora. Then, it briefly demonstrates the eight corpora chosen as the resource material for self-administering linguistic exercises leading to "distant immersion" in authentic English. Finally, a brief outline of a possible search technique for constructing exercises is presented.

### Selected constructions recommended for practice through language corpora

Constructions, as defined above, are symbolic assemblies of various degrees of complexity emerging from language usage. For example, linguistic elements which are autonomous, i.e. nouns (see “nominal predications” in Langacker, 1987), e.g. *book*, combine with those elements which are dependent on other lexical categories occurring in sentences (see “relational predications”, idem). The dependent elements, such as verbs, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, determinatives with the articles *a/an* and *the*, combine with their arguments according to “valency” (see Langacker, 1987). Correspondences occur between the particular dependent and its arguments, e.g. *a book*, *read a book*, *read an interesting book*, *read an interesting book fast/with pleasure*, etc. Thus, constructions of increasingly larger constituent structures are developed. The constructions submitted for the student’s attention through the corpora-based exercises in the present paper are canonical, i.e. typical, English clauses and selected phrases, respectively:

- (1) The S-V-O rigid order of elements in canonical English clauses (against a relaxed order of S-V-O type clause elements in the Polish language)
- (2) Noun phrases:
  - a. determiners before head nouns (no equivalent elements to the articles *a/an*, *the* in Polish)
  - b. count nouns v non-count nouns and collective nouns, resulting in the subject-verb concord (i.e. agreement): grammatical and notional, subject-pronominal concord (mistakes in concord in translation from Polish into English)
- (3) Verb phrases:
  - a. verb patterns, such as root verbs and prepositional phrases, i.e. prepositional verbs (wrong preposition in English due to literal translation from Polish, e.g. *depend* \*<sup>1</sup>*from* instead of *depend on*, Pol. *zależeć od*, lit. *depend* \**from*)
  - b. phrasal verbs, i.e. root verbs and spatial particles (prefixed verbs and other patterns in Polish translation, see Chłopek, 2008a,b and 2014)
  - c. verbs introducing the Mandative Subjunctive Mood (no *tertium comparationis*, i.e. “common platform of reference” in Polish)
- (4) Prepositional phrases – frequent difficulties in selection of adequate prepositions (wrong prepositions in English because of transference of senses of Polish prepositions, e.g. \**on the sky* instead of *in the sky*, Pol. *na niebie*, lit. \**on the sky*)

The constructions introduced briefly above are selected on the basis of contrast with Polish. Questions such as *Which preposition do I use after nouns?* or *Which preposition do I use after verbs?* are generally asked in discussions on common errors in English as L<sub>2</sub> at the advanced level (see e.g. Moore, 2005, p. 20–1).

### The corpora of English used in self-administered exercises

The English language corpora demonstrated in this study are accessible at <http://courses.washington.edu/englhtml/engl560/corplingresources.htm>. Although free of

<sup>1</sup> This symbol \* indicates an incorrect linguistic construction.

charge, registration for accessing the specific databases of the corpora listed below is required. The link and the corpora were created by Mark Davies of Brigham Young University. This author cites links to corpora with other details and uses of selected examples accessed in the next sub-part.

A citation of "THE CORPORA AT BYU" by Mark Davies at <a href="http://corpora.byu.edu/">http://corpora.byu.edu/</a>				
The corpora of the English language used in this study				
English		# words	language/dialect	time period
1.	Global Web-Based English (GloWbE)	1.9 billion	20 countries	2012-2013
2.	Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)	450 million	American	1990-2012
3.	Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)	400 million	American	1810-2009
4.	TIME Magazine Corpus	100 million	American	1923-2006
5.	Corpus of American Soap Operas	100 million	American	2001-2012
6.	British National Corpus (BYU-BNC)	100 million	British	1980s-1993
7.	Strathy Corpus (Canada)	50 million	Canadian	1970s-2000s

Table 1 Adaptation of "THE CORPORA AT BYU" by Mark Davies at <http://corpora.byu.edu/>

Moreover, a direct link to the *British National Corpus* (BNC) is added to the list above in point 8 (see <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>). The BYU-BNC is also accessible through the BNC site. "The BNC was originally created by Oxford University Press in the 1980s – early 1990s, and now exists in various versions on the web" (see <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>). According to the developers, the corpora from 1 to 8 can be characterised briefly as follows:

1. Global Web-Based English (GloWbE) at <http://corpus2.byu.edu/glowbe/> "was released in 2013".
2. Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/> "... is equally divided among spoken, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, and academic texts".
3. Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/> "... is the largest structured corpus of historical English ...".
4. TIME Magazine Corpus [TMC]<sup>2</sup> at <http://corpus.byu.edu/time/> gives you access to texts with words which were published "in TIME magazine".

COHA and TMC, respectively, allow users to "see how words, phrases and grammatical constructions have increased or decreased in frequency, how words have changed meaning over time". Moreover, COHA demonstrates "how stylistic changes have taken place in the language".

5. Corpus of American Soap Operas [CASO] at <http://corpus2.byu.edu/soap/> "contains ... transcripts of ten American soap operas ...".

<sup>2</sup> While the original abbreviations have regular braces, the abbreviations introduced in the text by this author have square braces.

6. British National Corpus (BYU-BNC) at <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/> “... allows you to quickly and easily search the 100 million word British National Corpus ...”.
7. Strathy Corpus (Canada) [CCE] at <http://corpus2.byu.edu/can/> “... contains 50 million words from more than 1,100 spoken, fiction, magazines, newspapers, and academic texts”.
8. The British National Corpus (BNC) at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/> is “monolingual” since it contains only “modern British English”, “synchronic”, only with “British English of the late twentieth century ...”, “general” by including “many different styles and varieties, and is not limited to any particular subject field, genre or register. In particular, it contains examples of both spoken and written language”.

Moreover, what characterises the corpora can be selected, among others, from these features: authentic pieces of English speech are used over a span of decades, they contain diversified styles, the example utterances are interesting, funny, surprising, intriguing, informative, ridiculous, shocking, etc. The present paper expressly expounds *The British National Corpus* listed in point 8, most readily accessible since no registration is required. The features enumerated above, detectable in samples of context presented by the named corpora, attract the attention of a reader and motivate him or her to search for examples of particular linguistic constructions.

### Selected constructions in self-administered corpora-based exercises

First, the constructions signalled in 3.1 are demonstrated in specific instances of usage cited from the corpora listed above. Subsequently, general example corpora-based exercises are suggested. Finally, a concluding remark is expressed.

The corpora can be helpful in a mental experience of “immersion” in context by selecting a specific construction, such as a single word, like the verb *run* or the indefinite article *a*, or an expression, for example, *a Monday*, *depends on* or *above the house* and *over the house*, etc. A single word or expression entered in the search box of the selected corpus is the core of the search. How can searching adequate examples of usage of particular constructions be implemented?

In the case of the S-V-O order of elements in typical English clauses, Marjolijn Verspoor and Kim Sauter (2000, p. 23–30) propose “typical sentence patterns” with verbs occurring most frequently in these constructions. Thus, the scholars distinguish: a. the *running* pattern (for intransitive verbs), b. the *being* pattern (for copular verbs, see idem, p. 25), c. the *doing/seeing* pattern (for monotransitive verbs), d. the *giving/buying* pattern (for ditransitive verbs), e. the *making/considering* pattern (for complex-transitive verbs). A single verb, however, can be used in more patterns than one, for example, *make*, *do*, *get*, *see*, *consider*, etc. Therefore, alternate verbs are given in c, d, and e in 3.3.1. The studied examples from the language corpora should be analysed in terms of the complementation types of verbs, based on patterns a through e.

Moreover, the *S* plus *VOL* construction (see Goldberg 2006, p. 106–10) is also taken into consideration in the present paper in point f in 3.3.1. The acronym *VOL* stands for *V* with *ObjObl*path/loc, i.e. the Object is realised by a directional prepositional phrase, called the *Oblique* (see e.g. Goldberg 1995:152, 160–4; Croft 2001:248). The word “path” next to *Obl* denotes the trajectory of movement expressed by the preposition which is the head of the phrase, the abbreviation “loc” symbolises the location of the moving entity or the destination of the communicated motion. Adele Goldberg (2006, p. 107) argues that “Agreement for classifying VOL utterances as entailing literal caused motion, metaphorical caused motion, caused location, or not was 97 per cent. Disagreements were resolved through discussion”. Among others (see Goldberg 2006, p. 109; 1995, p. 107), verbs such as *get* (e.g. *get some more in it*, see example 2a, idem), *bring* (e.g. *bring ‘em back over here*, see 2b, idem), *stuff* (e.g. *stuff that all in your mouth*, see 2c, idem), *put* (e.g. *put ‘em in the box*, see 2d, idem), *keep* (e.g. *keeping these people*

*in the garage*, see 3a, *idem*), and *leave* (e.g. *leave it right here*, see 3b, *idem*) occur in the *VOL* pattern (see also Langacker 1987, p. 308).

Phrases have words functioning as heads. Examples of these should be recognised and searched in the language corpora. Moreover, noun phrases have articles, verb phrases, apart from auxiliary verbs; have adverbial particles, e.g. phrasal verbs, and prepositional phrases, e.g. prepositional verbs. Prepositional phrases are headed by prepositions; phrasal verbs are made of root verbs, i.e. lexical verbs or full verbs, and directional or locational particles. Hence, apart from the head words, also the co-occurring words, such as articles, or nouns functioning as nominal complements or oblique objects in prepositional phrases should be entered together with the searched head word in the search box of the chosen language corpus.

The exercises employing language corpora have encyclopaedic character. Consequently, studying extracts of context through language corpora is basic in designing and performing lexical and grammatical, i.e. constructional, exercises. They start from single words, key to the studied expressions, continue through accessing various examples and lead to establishing schematic patterns. The language instructor should propose the “key” words or expressions which should be written in the search box of the selected corpus. If a given extract of text accessed through the chosen corpus is not informative enough, then, the site with *expanded context* is accessed through the given corpus and more text is added in *italics* in the examples cited below. Also the full title of the source of the cited fragment is copied in braces next to the specific example. The searched words and expressions are underlined and written in bold print in the cited utterances and they open the information on the citation written in brackets next to each example. The information contains the page where the citation can be found in the specific corpus, whose name is signalled through its acronym in front of the cited extract. The number of the example “ex.” follows the page number after a slash. Moreover, the title of the printed source of the cited utterance is written when more text is accessed through the given language corpus, e.g. (**walk** p. 3/ex. 289; News, Denver). The first example in the following sub-part, addresses the “rigid” S-V-O order of elements in canonical English clauses.

### The rigid S-V-O order of elements in English clauses v Polish clauses

While English has “frozen” S-V-O order of elements in canonical clauses, with “O” standing for both objects, IO (the Indirect Object) and DO (the Direct Object), Polish allows more “freedom” of elements within the S-V-O order of elements in its clauses, e.g., Direct Object (DO), Subject (S), Verb (V), Adverbial (Adv.), as observed on TV news one day: *Najwięcej nietrzeźwych kierowców (DO) policjanci (S) zatrzymali (V) wczoraj (Adv.)*. A literal English version of that sentence is: *\*Most of intoxicated drivers the police stopped yesterday*. That information should be expressed by a passive English sentence, which is a non-canonical construction (see e.g. Verspoor and Sauter, op. cit., pp. 172–3), typically used when the DO is fronted in English. Hence, transference from Polish is likely to affect L<sub>2</sub> expressions created by Polish advanced learners who are accustomed to the “freedom” in Polish sentences. The examples of verb patterns below illustrate the rigid order of elements within English typical clauses (see *idem*, pp. 21–8) including the *VOL* construction (see e.g. Goldberg, 1995, pp. 152, 160–4; Croft, 2001, p. 248). The list from 1 to 6 presents search samples for types of complementation for verbs.

1. intransitive verbs, taking no Complement (C), e.g. motion verbs, like *walk*, etc.:

COCA: “«You buy a new car, you have payments, but you don’t have to **walk**. You buy an education, you have payments, but you get a much *better future*».” (**walk** p. 3/ex. 289; News, Denver)

2. copular verbs, taking the Subject Attribute (SA), e.g. *make* and *become*, etc.:

a. *BYU-BNC*: “«Tryton Inn Yorkshire Puddings seen around all the best joints» ..., Tryton Inn Yorkshire Puddings **make** a delicious accompaniment to all your meat dishes. In fact they are regularly seen around all the best joints.” (**make**, p. 9/ex. 819; *Adverts from Clothes Show*, 1991)

b. *TMC*: “«At last we are a part of the diplomatic game of Europe. We **become** entangled in this struggle of secret purposes»...” (**become**, p. 2/ex. 116)

3. monotransitive verbs, accommodating the DO, e.g. *make* and *do*, etc.:

a. *BYU-BNC*: “There are 100 telephone lines open between 9 am and 10 pm all week. When you call, Butlin’s will **make** a provisional booking and ask you to send in a booking form, available n ...” (**make**, p. 1/ex. 100; *The Daily Mirror*. London, 1992)

b. *CASO*: “... Phil: Oh, anybody can **do** the daily grind. But you’re an artist. JR: Right. Phil: *It’s true. Your music comes from your soul.*” (**do**, p. 1/ex. 44; *All My Children*, 2001)

4. ditransitive verbs, followed by the IO and DO, e.g. *make*, *tell*, etc.:

a. *BYU-BNC*: “... «We **make** cookers for cooks». The Valor Classic 2 range has been designed and built by Stoves Ltd with a single priority.” (**make**, p. 8/ex. 775; *Leaflets advertising goods and products*)

b. *BYU-BNC*: “...We want you to **tell** us in what part of Great Britain each of the famous shows are set.” (**tell**, p. 1/ex.93)

5. complex-transitive verbs, requiring the DO and OA, e.g. *make* and *consider*, etc.:

a. *BYU-BNC*: “After taking out a bank loan, the 21-year-old DJ came close to quitting his pop quest when he was rejected by TEN record companies. He says: «I gave up my day job to **make** the band a success.» Despite riding high at No 14 with *House of Love*, the star is still battling to pay off the loan.” (**make**, p. 1/ex. 94; *The Daily Mirror*. London, 1992)

b. *BNC*<sup>3</sup>: “Many drivers are satisfied with their own ability at roundabouts, but **consider** most other drivers do it all wrong!” (**consider**, EE7 4; *Official leaflets from Northern Ireland*)

6. verbs occurring in the VOL construction, e.g. *put*:

*CCE*: “Once the creative process is done, however, there comes the awful reckoning in the light of day. The author must face what she has created, must **put** the imagination’s progeny through the crucible of reason, try on the slippery fabric of the narrative to see whether or not it still fits.” (**put**, p. 2/ex. 155; *Essays on Creative Writing*, Toronto, 2002)

### The English noun phrase – articles, uncountable nouns, and collective nouns

The Polish language has no elements equivalent to the English articles. Therefore, Polish students are susceptible to omitting or overusing the articles required in English utterances with noun phrases. Moreover, there are countable and uncountable nouns in English which differ from their Polish equivalents, which raises possibilities of errors, such as *\*advices are*, *\*one advice is*, etc. Additionally, English collective nouns occur with verbs in line with the notional concord, e.g. with the noun *team* both expressions are correct *team is* and *team are*, respectively. The Polish equivalent of those expressions does not involve the notional distinction between the whole team and its individual members. Thus, errors are likely to occur in English expressions with collective nouns. This sub-part has examples of authentic text with the English articles *a* and *the*, respectively, the uncountable noun *advice*, and the collective noun *team*.

1. the indefinite article *a/an*:

a. *GloWbE*, genre: General: “... you have a faulty tablet the text suggests that it has to be returned for **a** repair.” (**a**, GB, p. 1/ex. 6)

<sup>3</sup> BNC at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/> does not display the words underlined and printed in bold.

b. *GloWbE*, General: “why wouldn’t you want **a** Professor to give you **a** test on **a Monday**? That’s the best day of the week to have one IMHO.” (**a Monday**, US, p. 1, ex. 67)

2. the definite article *the*:

a. *BYU-BNC*: “We came on a, I think it was on a Friday or Saturday morning and I had to go back Sunday night, cos I was on duty on **the Monday** back in Plymouth, and I did a month in Plymouth....” (**the Monday**, p. 1/ex. 1; Harlow Study Centre: *interview* (Leisure))

b. *BNC*: “This is because of the continuous cycle of separation and togetherness, when **the** relationship is constantly being renewed.” (**the**, ACL 1289; *Through the devil’s gateway*. Archer, L J; Joseph, A; et al; Byrne, L; Gomblich, S G. London: SPCK, 1990)

3. uncountable nouns, such as *advice*, etc.:

a. *TMC*: “Both Republicans and Democrats know well that there is small chance of Congress taking their **advice** ...” (**advice**, p. 1/ex. 42)

b. *TMC*: “Attorney-General William DeWitt was «the personification of the lawyer, rarely offering **much advice** when it was not asked for, but offering it freely when it was asked for».” (**much advice**, p. 1/ex. 2; year 1933)

4. collective nouns, such as: *team*, etc.:

a. *CASO*: “the way it is. Parker: I’m going to the hockey finals. My **team is** in the division championship. Carly: You are? Why didn’t I know ...” (**team is**, p. 1/ex. 16)

b. *CASO*: “*Harley*: First of all, when a huge department store has a sale, there’s not a sale section. Everything is on sale. Gus: The Olympic swim **team are** getting ready for the 100 meter freestyle... ” (**team are**, p. 1/ex. 11; *Guiding Light*, 2006)

### Selected constructions with English verb phrases in language corpora

This sub-part presents examples of authentic text with the prepositional verb *depend on*, which has two equivalent expressions in Polish: *zależeć od*, Eng. lit. *\*depend from*, and *polegać na*, Eng. *depend on*. The former sense is conveyed by *depends on* in example 1. Example 2 has the phrasal verb *come over*. The Polish language expresses the information conveyed by root verbs with particles in English via verbs with prefixes (see Talmy, 1985, 2000b), and other linguistic constructions (see Chłopek, 2008a, b; 2010; 2014). Example 3 has the verb *propose* used in a construction triggering the Mandative Subjunctive Mood. Polish equivalents of the verbs used in that mood occur in different linguistic constructions, which are often literally expressed in English, e.g. *propose to do something*, *propose doing something*. Hence, the constructions used in the three following examples give rise to errors in utterances created by Polish users.

1. prepositional verbs, such as *depend on somebody or something (sb or sth)*:

*BYU-BNC*: “... I’m not sure how I’m going to structure the department, it **depends on** the people I get in all honesty ...” (**depends on**, p. 1/ex. 26; Air UK sales meeting (Busn). Rec. on 14 Jan 1994)

2. phrasal verbs, such as *come over*, etc.:

*GloWbE*, General: “I continued, «But you don’t have to wait until you’re Prime Minister to do that. You can **come over** to my house, mow the lawn, pull weeds, sweep my drive and I’ll pay you 25. Then I’ll take you over to the supermarket where the homeless guy hangs out. You can give him the 25 to use toward food.» # He thought that over for a few seconds, then looked me straight in the eye and asked, «Why doesn’t the homeless guy **come over** and do the work and you can just pay him the 25?» #” (**come over**, GB, p. 1/ex. 58; *What Are the Tories Going To Do for the Middle Classes? – Guy*)

### 3. verbs introducing the Mandative Subjunctive Mood, such as *propose*, etc.:

BYU-BNC: "Item five erm I'm also pleased to say that er Chris (-----) was the only person nominated to be Honorary Treasurer and it would give me great pleasure er to **propose that he** be elected Honorary Treasurer and may I have a seconder for that proposal *please*." (**propose that he**, p. 1/ex. 1; Royal Yachting Association annual general meeting (Busn). Rec. on 17 Mar 1993)

As far as extracts incorporating the Mandative Subjunctive Mood are concerned, a language instructor presents the students with constructions expressing that mood, such as "propose that he" or "recommend that she" and asks the students to observe the patterns for verbs which form such constructions. The same technique applies to the other constructions exposed in this paper; a language instructor formulates the search expressions and encourages his or her students to compose a list of example extracts of text illustrating different usage patterns for the specific constructions.

### English prepositional phrases in language corpora

Prepositions have extended networks of senses: related to the central sense, explained by the first definition in dictionary entries and concluded from context, and distinct senses, which have to be learnt (see e.g. Tyler and Evans, 2003). The English preposition *over*, analysed widely in cognitive literature (see e.g. Lakoff, 1987; Brugman, 1988; Brugman and Lakoff, 1988; Tyler and Evans, 2003) has 14 main senses, with further sub-senses, in *thefreedictionary.com* used as reference for the senses of *over* in (1a) through (1d) below. Moreover, for example, the prepositional phrase *at the restaurant* and the prepositional phrase *in the restaurant*, respectively, have a single Polish equivalent prepositional phrase *w restauracji*. With no straightforward equivalent of *at*, Polish users often mislead *at* with *in*. Example 2 has two sentences, with *at* and *in*, respectively.

#### 1. the preposition *over* in different senses

- a. BNC: "The Magdalene Bridge **over the River** Cam is a cast-iron structure of 1823." (prep. *over* in sense No. 2a "Above and across from one end or side to the other"<sup>4</sup>; **over the river**, BOA 516)
- b. BNC: "He stayed **over the river**, the Clyde, in a ground-floor house in a slum equal to Anton's." (prep. *over* in sense No. 3 "On the other side of" (idem); **over the river**, BNC 79)
- c. BNC: "Whitlock clambered **over the fence** and landed nimbly on his feet." (prep. *over* in sense No. 2c "Across the edge of and down" (idem); **over the fence**, EF1 1303)
- d. BNC: "He was drifting along, looking half asleep, hands still **over** his ears." (prep. *over* in sense No. 4a "Upon the surface of" (idem); **over**, BMS 1587)

#### 2. the preposition *at* v the preposition *in*

- a. BNC: "Dine **at the restaurant**, traipse **through** the shops — laugh **at the exhibits**." (**at the restaurant**, CD6 1788)
- b. BNC: "He spent half an hour **in the restaurant**, drinking coffee." (**in the restaurant**, ARK 1859)

The extended networks of senses of English prepositions differ, even in the central senses, e.g. *at* v *in*, *over* v *above*, from Polish translational equivalents. Hence, acquainted with the senses of the studied English prepositions, the students should read a number of extracts of text received after entering this word in the search box of the selected language corpus to understand and remember the sense. They need to categorise, for example, *over*, as a preposition, an adverb, or an adjective, and work out its sense in the studied context.

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/over>

### Final remarks

Students must develop learning habits by working on examples of usage and analysing a series of search results for the particular constructions. But firstly the repetitive administering of tasks supported by providing key words or expressions is required. Students at their computers, search for key words in relation to specific constructions chosen by the instructor and systematically study the results. They have to select and sift through adequate examples of usage offered by the specific corpus and omit those which do not suit the studied constructions and those which contain mistakes made by native speakers of English. The teacher designs the exercises and limits the number of examples that the students are required to select from the chosen corpora. Subsequently, a review process should take place, either in a classroom adapted technologically, i.e. with a laptop, an overhead projector and with an internet connection, or on sheets of paper with the material prepared beforehand by the teacher, also peer check is recommended after self-studying at home. The teacher's creativity is a motor to administering different types of exercises and executing the task technically: in the class-room or at home, individually or in pairs, directly or via e-mail, etc. The list is open for contributions of solutions to this topic. Students are invited to contribute their ideas as well.

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## Teaching Listening Using Multimedia

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**Abstract:** Listening skills development is an irreplaceable element of foreign language education, and the use of multimedia could enhance the process of teaching listening. The main aim of this theoretical study is to present the beneficial effects of multimedia-supported listening training. According to the reviewed literary resources, we created a summary of positive impacts of using multimedia sources in teaching listening skills. Among others, they include assistance in recognition of pronunciation features, assistance in developing listening comprehension, or allowance of multi-modal processing. In conclusion, we may say that adopting multimedia for the purpose of teaching listening suppresses some of the unnatural features of traditional EFL classroom ear training and brings a number of potential benefits.

**Key words:** TEFL, teaching listening skills, multimedia,

### Introduction

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, listening is one of the skills that form the basis of one's communicative competence. It means that besides producing a foreign language, a person also needs to perceive and cognitively decode the aural input in order to be successful in the oral communication process. The traditional textbook-related materials for practising listening present the target language in a didactically modified manner, lacking real context and authenticity of natural speech.

However, modern EFL teachers do not have to rely on such rigid listening materials only, since nowadays in the age of microprocessors and high-speed Internet, they can choose also from a plethora of other offline or online sources, including video clips, reports, TV and radio shows, movies, documentaries, songs, speeches, podcasts, audio books, video games and other specialised software, etc. Moreover, as multimedia allows multi modal processing, they are far more objective in simulating the complexity of real life listening in spoken interaction than the traditional audio recordings.

### What is meant by listening?

In real life face-to-face communication, listening denotes highly complex interpretative processes which in interaction determine what meanings are generated as the outcome of conversation, while in the TEFL environment, listening entails a complex activity that is a pillar of target language acquisition, and a skill that is a fundamental part of foreign language communicative competence (Meskill, 1996). Dunkel (1986) writes that in both cases, perception, interpretation, and response creation are affected by a whole myriad of variables, and therefore it is difficult to capture the nature of listening in a single theoretical construct. According to Meskill (1996), however, all of the theoretical models of listening are based on the assumption that it can't be simplified to a receptive act, since simultaneous engagement of multiple physiological and cognitive functions is involved here.

### Real-life listening vs. EFL classroom listening

In contrast with daily face-to-face conversation outside the language class where listening is a process requiring activity from the participants and interaction of both listening and speaking, an EFL learner acts often more like a passive receiver or even over-receiver of aural input, so there is an imbalance in action and interaction (Gough, 1993). The view of everyday life listening as an active and interactive process implies a possibility for the listener to

give feedback, but in EFL classroom conditions the feedback possibilities are limited. Meskill (1996) explains further that success of this interpretive activity is usually measured by learners' correct answers to a series of WH- questions, which is usually not a natural way of giving feedback.

As far as other differences are considered, Gough (1993) describes real world listening as having specific purpose on the side of listener, unpredictable context shared among communicators, no strictly defined and evaluated task, no kept record, and as being unique, since only one hearing is available, whereas classroom listening as having specific purpose determined by a teacher provided/evaluated task, predictable made up context, transcript, and as being repeatable, since multiple hearings are available.

The last noteworthy distinction is related to modes of perception. Meskill (1996) mentions that in a natural conversation, meaning is deduced as a result of interaction of various elements (including e.g. the etcetera principle, one's subjective experiences, combined retrospective and prospective meanings, visual cues such as facial expressions, eye shape, gestures, etc.); thus, real world communicative situations enable mixed ways of information delivery, and a listener can employ various receptive channels at a time to infer the meaning. On the other hand, an EFL learner exposed to a traditional audio recording (which enables only the sound print) is limited in reception, as he/she has to rely on just one perceptual modality, as Gough (1993) notes.

### **Listening in the context of EFL instruction**

Although a lot of listening work in the TEFL reality seems to involve "passive" listening, Rost (1993) proposes a change in the view of this skill. Language learners should not be relegated to the role of "passive absorbers" of the aural code, and listening, as in real life, needs to be treated here as an active and interactive process (ibid.). A successful participation in such process is dependent on adequate level of one's listening competence in a foreign language. Richards (1985) describes listening competency as being composed of a set of sub-skills which listeners use to decode the audibly transmitted message. This author recognises the following "microskills" employed in the listening process:

- a. *Short-term memory information retention.* An effective listener is able to "keep" new information in short-term memory, recall it, and link it with the already interiorised knowledge.
- b. *Recognition of the target language sounds.* It is a listener's ability to distinguish the sounds, phonetic groupings, and word boundaries in the foreign language.
- c. *Recognition of stress / rhythm / intonation patterns and how they affect overall meaning and intention of an utterance.* This skill stands for a listener's ability to recognise suprasegmentals and their contribution to information and intent.
- d. *Understanding of reduced speech.* In casual connected speech, sounds are modified by such processes as omission or assimilation, leading to numerous reductions in the spoken form of a language. An effective listener is therefore able to decode these contracted linguistic forms.
- e. *Recognition of core lexis and word / sentence structures.* This is a listener's ability to identify central vocabulary and the rules and patterns of structures used to communicate.
- f. *Understanding of communicative functions of utterances in accordance with context.* It represents a listener's ability to determine the meaning and original intention of an utterance according to defined context.
- g. *Processing of different speech errors, styles, and rates.* An effective listener is able to break the code of aural input presented in a broad range of voices, rates, and styles.

- h. *Recognition of the possibility to express meanings using different grammatical forms.* An effective listener is also able to recognise that meaning and intent can be expressed in a wide variety of ways, using different words, phrases, or sentences with the same or similar meaning.
- i. *Deduction and prediction of meaning using personal knowledge of the world.* Inferred meanings also depend on a listener's personal knowledge, experiences, and strategies.

### **Listening in the context of multimedia-supported EFL instruction**

For recent pedagogical instruction of listening, multi-media materials surely present a significant resource of input. One of the reasons why EFL teachers shouldn't avoid them in listening activities lies in their ability to suppress some of the unnatural elements of traditional ear training. Shapran et al. (2011) and Meskill (1996) agree that multimedia, similarly to real life communication and opposing to old-fashioned listening practice, allows multisensory processing of new information, so learners can pick up knowledge via different modes of perception.

For example, it seems that subtitled videos (media composed of visual, audial, and textual elements) employed in listening enrich comprehension (Neuman et al., 1990), enhance recall of information (Svensson and Borgarskola, 1985), and stimulate more learner output (Garza, 1991). Shapran et al. (2011) conclude that multimedia-supported listening makes it possible for learners to combine sounds and images in a way similar to the one they would use in a communicative situation outside the EFL class.

Multimedia, at least those designed without educational purpose, allows also different modes of giving feedback. As opposed to listening training supported by didactic auditory materials in which there is little to no space for speculations about the meaning, since it is clearly determined by the task; in a listening activity based on authentic multimedia resources, learners can actively and mutually negotiate the meaning, activating thus "[...] the cognitive and socio-cognitive processes necessary for language acquisition to occur" (Meskill, 1996, p. 181).

Authentic multimedia resources represent also a huge improvement in the field of simulating real life events. Didactically constructed aural input is set into a made up setting that often lacks a connection to everyday reality of language learners, but on the other hand through carefully selected authentic multimedia, the target language might be presented in contexts that seem more familiar to them.

Another important topic connected with teaching listening through multimedia is the choice of teaching materials. Wong (1987) suggests using authentic speech wherever it is possible, but of course, language educators cannot rely on just non-didactic media, as it would require an enormous amount of preparation work on their side to design such listening lessons.

However, authentic multimedia resources should have a firm position in the EFL classroom listening, because they are excellent for noticing highlighted language items in their natural form. The teacher, however, has to carefully evaluate the multimedia material prior to the instruction process and make sure that learners always know what to pay attention to during its course, since only via focused listening, i.e. "noticing", a conscious intake and a consistent use of a particular linguistic element is possible (Wong, 1987; Brawn, 2010). The above mentioned evaluation process (that should precede the classroom listening itself) then requires a qualitatively-oriented approach to the selected multimedia content. The following framework for evaluating the appropriateness of multimedia sources for listening practice is adopted from Chapelle (2001) and enriched with our model "help" questions.

- a) *Language learning potential through "noticing".* To what extent can be the multimedia resource treated as an opportunity for focused listening activity rather than a chance for learners to be simply exposed to the target language?

- b) *Learner fit*. To what extent does the multimedia listening material respect linguistic characteristics (e.g. proficiency) and extra-linguistic characteristics (e.g. age, motivation) of individuals in a language class?
- c) *Authenticity*. To what degree does the multimedia listening material correspond to what learners are likely to be exposed in the real world? Does the discourse in the multimedia source aimed at ear training go beyond the sentence level and contain sentences that are connected to create a whole? Does the selected listening material include discourse among a wide range of speakers?
- d) *Impact*. What opportunities does the chosen multimedia resource present in terms of increasing learners' motivation, interest, willingness, and engagement?

### Potential benefits of multimedia in listening activities

Multimedia-supported listening activities, if properly executed, evolve the concept of traditional EFL classroom ear practice and bring a number of potential benefits for development of one's listening (and overall) competence in the target language. Positive implications of such perception training are summarized below. In our summary, items *i – ix* deal with the potential of multimedia in the development of Richards' (1985) listening "microskills", and the rest is based on Meskill's (1996) conclusions and previously mentioned knowledge. Meskill's comments are marked by the index <sup>(1)</sup> throughout the following list.

- i. *Assistance in linking new information to old*. Contemporary audiovisual listening sources can assist in the process of remembering and recall of information, since they enable at least some control over the rate of language input on the side of students (they can play, pause, or move back to review chunks of speech for better understanding). <sup>(1)</sup>
- ii. *Assistance in discrimination of phonetic groupings and boundaries*. Addition of verbatim into aural input (audio books with transcripts) or audiovisuals (subtitled videos) facilitates distinguishing individual sounds, consonant clusters, or word boundaries, and allows learners to study sound-letter correspondences. <sup>(1)</sup>
- iii. *Assistance in recognition of suprasegmentals and how they influence information and intent*. A video clip can carry information that can be helpful in noticing suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, and intonation) and study of communicative functions of prosody. <sup>(1)</sup>
- iv. *Assistance in understanding of contracted forms*. The synchronized deliverance of aural text and its written version makes it possible for learners to access both forms at the same time, so a learner can hear a reduced language item and read its non-contracted form simultaneously. <sup>(1)</sup>
- v. *Assistance in problem-solving at word and sentence level*. Multimedia resources contain visual and contextual clues which can assist learners in decoding central vocabulary and sentence structures of the audibly transmitted message. <sup>(1)</sup>
- vi. *Assistance in comprehension of communicative implications of utterances according to context*. A multimedia format like video allows learners to study the foreign language communication in a richly developed visual environment; therefore listeners can come to understand the tight relation between utterances and their functions within a visual context. <sup>(1)</sup>
- vii. *Assistance in processing of different speech errors, styles, and rates*. There exist numerous multimedia materials expressing different rates or styles of audio; e.g., sitcoms usually use slow and deliberate speech to help the listener in comprehension of the joke, while in talk shows, interlocutors tend to use fast-paced speech that is difficult for a non-native listener to process. <sup>(1)</sup>

- viii. *Assistance in recognition of redundancy.* In videos, it is quite common that speakers repeat already mentioned information in different ways, using different phrases and sentences with similar meaning; thus, via multimedia-supported focused listening, learners can be guided in recognition of redundancy. <sup>(1)</sup>
- ix. *Assistance in deduction and prediction of meaning using personal knowledge of the world.* A multimedia format can cue and guide listeners in inferring meaning, making predictions, and calling up knowledge prior to the topic. <sup>(1)</sup>
- x. *Allowance of multi modal processing.* Coordinated use of text, audio, and video enabled by multimedia materials allows listeners to pick up new information via multiple perceptual modalities at once.
- xi. *Visuals as "hooks" upon which to hang meaning.* The visual element in multimedia helps listeners to make sense of the aural text. <sup>(1)</sup>
- xii. *Motivational aspect of video as an advantage.* Video-supported aural stream, compared to simple aural input, provides a better "hook" for catching listeners' interest and attention.
- xiii. *Enrichment of target language acquisition.* Multimedia makes aural input "more direct and salient for the language acquisition process" (Meskill, 1996, p. 197).

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## Helping Teachers of English Use Real Life Language in their Classrooms

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**Abstract:** Thanks to the rapid development of modern information and communication technologies (ICT), which have already penetrated all the spheres of education, including foreign language teaching (FLT), teachers of foreign languages have many more possibilities of how to increase their students' communicative competences. In particular, they can apply different approaches to their teaching of foreign languages. Perhaps, one of the most progressive approaches at the moment, based on the exploitation of ICT, is a corpus-based approach. The purpose of this article is therefore to discuss this approach with respect to the conditions at Czech schools, emphasize its benefits for English language teaching and demonstrate some of its exploitation for FLT.

**Key words:** corpus-based approach, foreign language teaching, advantages, constraints, Sketch Engine

### Introduction

Nowadays, there exist many approaches to language education. Since 1990s one of the most progressive approaches has seemed to be a corpus-based approach (cf. McEnery and Xiao, 2010). This approach enables both teachers and learners to study real life language by means of naturally occurring language samples, which are stored in corpora (or corpuses). Corpora are computerized databases created for linguistic research. Flowerdew (2012, as cited in Connor, 2013) provides the most recent characteristics of a corpus:

- authentic, naturally occurring data;
- assembled according to explicit design criteria;
- representative of a particular language or genre; and
- designed for a specific linguistic or socio-pragmatic purpose.

There are various types of corpora. Among the best known and influential types are the following (cf. Frydrychová Klímová, 2013):

*General corpora*, such as the *British National Corpus* (BNC) or the *Bank of English* (BoE), contain a large variety of both written and spoken language, as well as different text types, by speakers of different ages, from different regions and from different social classes of the UK.

*Synchronic corpora*, such as *F-LOB* and *Frown*, record language data collected at one specific point in time, e.g. written British and American English of the early 1990s.

*Historical corpora*, such as *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (ARCHER) and the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*, consist of corpus texts from earlier periods of time. They usually span several decades or centuries, thus providing diachronic coverage of earlier stages of language use.

*Learner corpora*, such as the *International Corpus of Learner English* (ICLE) and the *Cambridge Learner Corpus* (CLC), are collections of data produced by foreign language learners and include texts types such as essays or written exams.

Corpora for the study of varieties, such as the *International Corpus of English* (ICE) and the *Freiburg English Dialect Corpus*, represent different regional varieties of a language.

There is also a large variety of specialized corpora, e.g. *Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* (MICASE).

The corpus-linguistic approach can be used to describe language features and to test hypotheses formulated in various linguistic frameworks. To name but a few examples, corpora recording different stages of learner language (beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners) can provide information for foreign language acquisition research; by means of historical corpora it is possible to track the development of specific features in the history of English like the emergence of the modal verbs *gonna* and *wanna* (cf. Hyland, 2006).

### Current exploitation of the corpus-based approach at Czech schools

Although teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Czech Republic are exposed to corpus-based dictionaries (e.g. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*) and grammar books (e.g. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*), they do not exploit corpora in their classes. McEnery and Xiau (2010) provide the following reasons for that:

- low level and experience of learners;
- time constraints;
- curricular requirements;
- knowledge and skills for corpus analysis and pedagogical mediation;
- the access to computers; and
- relevant software tools and corpora.

However, EFL teachers can enormously benefit from the application of the corpus-based approach in three main areas in their teaching (cf. Barlow, 2002):

- *syllabus design* (to meet students' needs; teachers use a corpus to try to determine what language items should be incorporated into the course syllabus) ;
- *materials development* (with the help of a corpus teachers can create exercises based on real examples which provide students with an opportunity to discover features of actual language use); and
- *classroom activities* (students themselves can discover during their language classes how a concordancing programme works and draw their own conclusions about language use; this in turn will promote learner autonomy).

It is also worth mentioning here that English textbooks in most cases still ignore the use of corpora to reveal real life language usage. This in fact supports Ellis's (1999, as cited in Hyland, 2006) statement that non-authentic/contrived materials better serve pedagogical purposes. On the contrary, Mindt (1996) claims that English textbooks still teach *school English* which does not seem to exist outside the foreign language classroom and hence learners of English have difficulties to communicate with native speakers successfully. A classic example of this is the teaching and learning of the usage of non-assertive pronoun *any* at Czech schools at which English textbooks for EFL learners designed by the English publishing houses (e.g. *Headway* or *English Works*) are predominantly used. Students are taught the rule that the non-assertive pronoun *any* is mainly used in negative and interrogative sentences and in this sense students practise its usage. However, the corpus analysis conducted by Mindt (1997) states that 50% of *any* usage takes place in affirmative statements, 40% in negative statements, and only 10% in interrogatives.

At present, there are a number of software programmes, which EFL teachers can use for analyses of different corpora. For example, the author of this article uses *Sketch Engine* (2003). As Thomas (2014) explains the *Sketch Engine* is highly specialized type of search engine that can search over 60 different corpora to provide data about words, phrases and grammatical constructions. It was developed by experts at the Faculty of Informatics of Masaryk University

in Brno, Czech Republic. One of the most exploited tools of the *Sketch Engine* is the *concordancer*, which gives a chance to see any word or phrase in context so that one can see what sort of company it keeps. See Fig. 1 below for an example. It presents the concordance of the collocation *electronic learning* in the British National Corpus (BNC) with its context to the left and right and also in the sentence when one clicks on the search word or phrase. The BNC was compiled in 1994. Obviously, at that time nobody knew anything about electronic education. Therefore there is just one occurrence in the BNC. In addition, the *concordance* page presents the genre on the left side in which the search word was used.

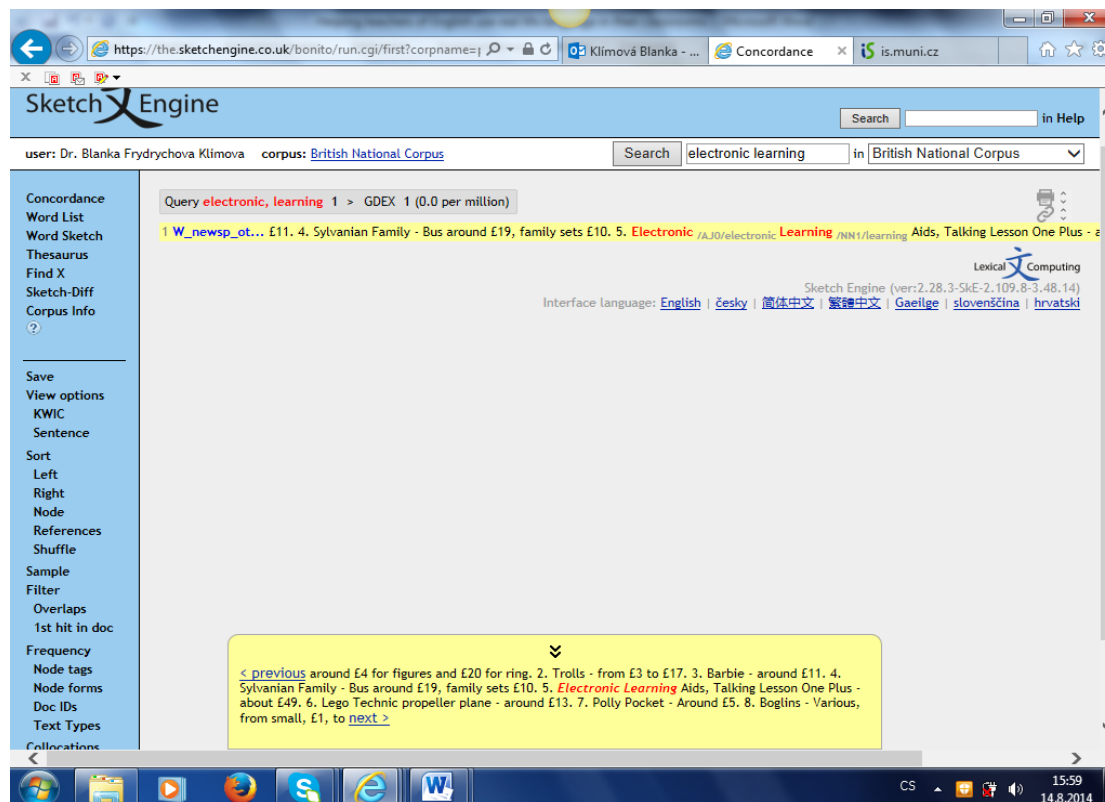


Figure 1 An example of the concordance of the collocation *electronic learning* in the BNC

In addition, there are a few software programmes, which can be downloaded free of charge. However, their functions are simpler in comparison with the *Sketch Engine*. Teachers can exploit, for example, the *TextSTAT* (2012), which was developed at Freie University in Berlin. It is a simple programme for the analysis of texts. It reads plain text files (in different encodings) and HTML files (directly from the Internet) and it produces word frequency lists and concordances from these files. It is very user-friendly, which means that even teachers who are relatively unskilled or inexperienced in computer use can operate it easily. Both teachers and students can create their own corpora and analyse them afterwards. Fig. 2 below demonstrates the analysis of a corpus of 60 English written conference abstracts on tourism. Students can look, for example, at the most frequent words and collocations and see them in their context (cf. Frydrychová Klímová, 2013).

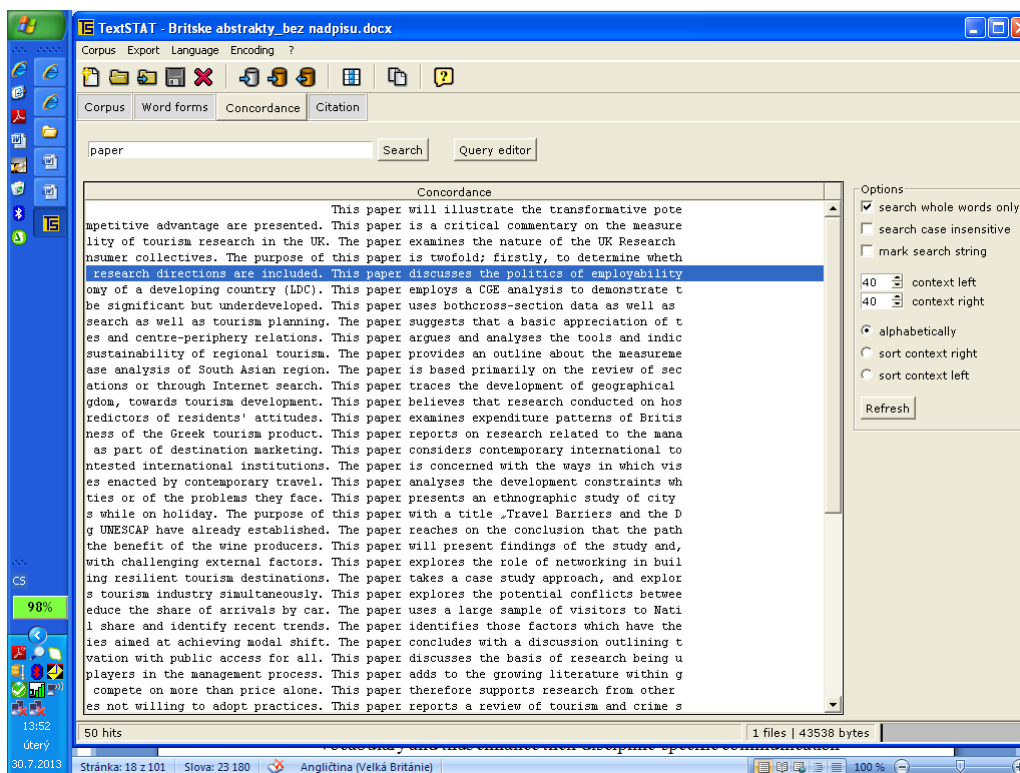


Figure 2 An example of the analysis of one's own corpus with the *TextSTAT*, showing right and left collocations of the word *paper*

## Conclusion

EFL teachers should expose their students to authentic, real life language usage. But they should always employ the corpus-based approach meaningfully in accordance with students' immediate language needs. In addition, they should teach their students how to use a corpus and thus diminish their language insufficiencies in the following ways:

- to *increase their linguistic proficiency* by looking at grammatical (e.g. examine word order) and lexical (e.g. compare similar words) aspects of language use;
- to *teach them how to use frequency wordlists* so that they can discover useful phrases and their collocations and thus enhance their communication skills; and
- to *teach them how to look at some sociolinguistic markers*, such as comparison of language use – written/spoken, to enhance their intercultural communication competences.

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## Music in English Classrooms

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**Abstract:** The paper deals with an effective implementation of musical elements in teaching and learning English. It provides useful guidance of how and when to use music in the classroom as well as the links for authentic materials ready to be used in English classes of different levels. It is up to a teacher to pick a song not only to provide students with English lexis, develop language skills and build up their competences, but also to expose students with a valuable piece of music with its historical and cultural background and last but not least, its message. The author provides several websites connected with the tips of how to use music in the English classrooms.

**Key words:** ELT, music, rhythm, jazz chants, authentic materials in teaching English

### Introduction

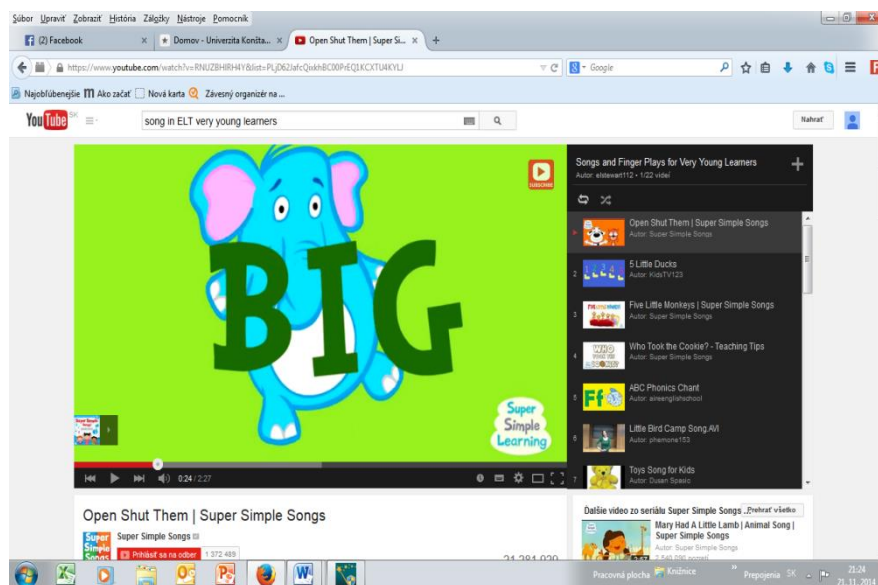
Within the last two decades the scientists and researchers have made big progress in the theories of language acquisition. The didactic connections of music and language have been historically approved within several approaches (e.g. Suggestopedia, described below). Music and languages have the common communication through sounds. The musical elements are undoubtedly melody (intonation, rhyme (words) and dance (body language). When a child learns to speak, firstly sounds and intonations are acquired. Later on, he/she learns the musicality of a language, exact phonemes, than words and phrases inevitable for communication. The music aspects of a language are tone, pauses, and accents as the base of phonemes, vowels and consonants. According to a Spanish musicologist Patxi Del Campa (1997), reasonable communication covers only 15 per cents of information connected with the verbal language whereby 70 per cent of the communication lies in the body language and the rest (15 percent) belongs to intonation and musical character of a language. All these common features of music and language can be used within the language teaching and learning. There are several web pages and support found on the Internet to the topic of songs used in English classes at various age and levels of language proficiency.

In the 1970s the Bulgarian psychotherapist Georgi Lozanov developed a method of teaching and learning a foreign language called *Suggestopedia*. One of the main activities was the reading with music. Teachers managed their classes in a way that students listen and relax with the background classical music of Mozart or Bach. Although this method has been pushed aside later on, it is an example of the approaches connecting musical and linguistic environment in which the music plays the role of mediator of acquiring the words and lexis. Music positively influences linguistic memory, mood and motivation. (Larsen-Freeman, Suggestopedia, 2013).

Krashen (1982) pointed at differences of learning and acquiring in which learning is conscious whereby acquiring subconscious process going on in the natural environment, e.g. in a country where the language is spoken. Thus the process of the language acquisition is very close to the process of acquisition of a mother tongue. Therefore, it is necessary to transfer as many parameters of natural acquisition as possible into the schooling institutions. It might be possible through bringing techniques and approaches enabling possibilities of subconscious language acquisitions and later its active practice and revision to the classroom.

Children are undoubtedly the best examples of not reflecting the differences between the natural and formal language acquisition therefore the best timing for learning foreign languages is at the age of two to puberty. However, an earlier start of learning languages does not guarantee the success. More important factors are the quality of language education, duration and intensity of learning. Use of songs at language classes provides besides the artistic emotional experience also subconscious and natural acquisition of language, grammar, phonetic

differences as well as fluency of speech. There are lots of songs available on the Internet and the choice of songs is up to a teacher, however, several aspects should be taken into consideration. Firstly, authenticity of the songs, properly pronounced, most preferably sung by native speakers. Secondly, melodies and a scope of tones should be appropriate for the age group of English learners. Songs should be of easy and catchy tunes and accompanied by TPR (total physical response) movements. When singing and moving the learners remember the words and the movements help them comprehend the text better. Last but not least, the songs might be accompanied by instruments which can be possibly used in the classroom and thus even intensify the music experience and adventure in the language class. As an example we have chosen the following set of songs from YouTube:



(Source Youtube, available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNUZBH1RH4Y&list=PLjD62JafCQixkhBC00PrEQ1KCXTU4KYLJ>)

These songs may be used in English classes of very young and young learners to present, revise or practise colours, numbers, movements, animals and other topics covered by almost all English textbooks for children. By their simplicity and authenticity they support the Krashen's theory of natural language acquisition.

Some of the below mentioned theories prove the positive experience in use of music in the language classes. Whittaker (1981) claims that songs help develop all the language skills, productive and receptive ones. In the higher age levels when introducing new songs a teacher plays a song and pupils silently follow the text. Then, the students repeat the words without singing. Altogether they discuss new vocabulary, idioms, and grammar structures and practice the necessary pronunciation. The teacher plays the song again and the pupils start singing when they feel ready and confident enough. Whittaker uses songs for grammar presentation or revision. A song can be used for drill or instead of drills. In case that the primary technique of teaching and learning is drill, the music provides the possibility of learning the required patterns through remembering the text which can be done subconsciously. Macarthur and Trojer (1985) claim that due to the fact that music and language share the basic qualities of rhythm, pitch, dynamics and melody, the methods for every of them should be the Orff-Schulwerk. Carl Orff (1895-1982) developed the method of teaching music in a way that he provided pupils with the space for improvisation with the use of songs, rhymes and simple instruments. Thus they create simple music forms easily learned by pupils. Orff Schulwerk focuses on music as a basic system and it is compared to the language because it believes that every child can learn a language without formal instructions, the same works with music. Macarthur and Trojer introduce music and linguistic system on the three language levels. At the beginners (A1 level

according to CEFRR) uses reciting phrases from the written text with the use of metronome. Then, the students use the rhythm to do the text in canonical form which increases the motivation in the classroom. At intermediate level the techniques question-answer, answer-question between teacher-student and student-teacher is used. Thus the imitation and remembering of the text are supported. Macarthur and Trojer recommend to the advanced students to recite the text with the help of clapping the hands, skipping the words from the text and perform them as well as remake of the rhythm into a dance which can be later performed. However, these techniques are more time-consuming and thus their use would be very limited in schooling institutions. However, some ideas are useful and ready to use in any classroom with any age level of students. These are Jazz Chants developed by Carolyn Graham (Teaching village, 2014). Carolyn Graham is a musician, English teacher and trainer who worked at the New York University as a teacher of English as the second language. She created very simple rhythmical chants “jazz chants” enabling students’ motivation and attention while modelling the correct pronunciation. When correctly used they can develop proper habits in words connection into sentences, supporting fluency in spoken expression and natural use of grammar structures and lexical collocations. They interconnect music and linguistic aspects accompanied by *Total Physical Response* approach.

In the following video available at <http://vimeo.com/8880773>, as an outcome of the ELT conference in Shizuoka Japan in 2009, Carolyn Graham introduces the process of How to make a Jazz Chant. It is a step by step approach on how every teacher of English can use the rhythm in his/her classes with the vocabulary provided by the course or textbooks. According to Carolyn Graham jazz chants bring rhythm into a classroom and it can help pupils remember the language better. Accompanying the rhythm with clapping, stamping and body movements jazz chants bring joy and motivation. These are again subconscious processes and thus also natural acquisition of language structures mentioned by Krashen.

Another page provides the collection of songs which can be widely used at English classrooms at all age-groups and language proficiency.



(Source AgendaWeb – available at <http://www.agendaweb.org/songs/songs-listening-exercises.html>)

These songs cover notoriously known music bands and songs by Abba, Beatles, Queen, etc. with the video versions available for use in English classes. The webpage provides also readymade exercises for practising lexis and grammar structures at appropriate level of language proficiency. The material is appropriate due to its non-live versions which might be confusing due to the sound quality and side sounds in the background. The choice of the songs is also very useful because of the bands which are known by almost every generation and apart from presenting various grammar and lexical structures, the songs might serve as an example of their

genre or different historical periods of time. This can be covered by another topic of interconnection of music history with English.

## Conclusion

Connection of music and language is natural mainly due to the fact that the both communicate through sounds. Musical aspects may be reasonably used in the language classes with the aim to subconsciously connect language structures, vocabulary with the added value of rhythmical connection, natural stress, pronunciation and emphasising the fluent spoken expression. Authentic songs with TPR approach, with easy and catchy tunes may be used at English classes with very young learners and young learners. At the primary and secondary level as well as with adult learners English teachers may use the songs of the known and historically approved groups with the lyrics in which apart from linguistic and grammar structures also cultural background, various dialects bound with social, authentic environment, and historical aspects may be discussed in the classes. Rhythmical chants, known as Jazz Chants by Carolyn Graham may be used with every age group and language proficiency. The paper provides the website of the guide on how to make a jazz chant. In connection with music and language teachers should bear in mind very precise choice of music material in order to fulfil their expectations and aims to present, practice and acquire the language aspects of a target language.

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## Developing Reading Skills Using Multimedia and Technology

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**Abstract:** The present paper deals with the multimedia and technology supported development of reading skills. The first part summarises basic information about developing reading skills in general. The next part provides suggestions for effective use of multimedia and technology in all of the stages of developing reading skills. The final part analyses potentials of using multimedia in reading activities.

**Keywords:** multimedia, technology, reading skills, developing reading skills

### Introduction

There are many reasons why it is important to get students read English texts. Students want to be able to read the texts in English language for study purposes, for their careers or simply for pleasure. Reading is extremely useful for language acquisition; it has positive effects on students' vocabulary knowledge, on their writing and spelling. In the classroom, teachers can encourage students to focus on vocabulary, punctuation or grammar; teachers can use reading material to demonstrate the ways how sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are constructed. Therefore, students can use such reading materials as a model for their writing. Good reading materials can introduce interesting topics and stimulate discussions (Harmer, 2007a).

Even if this paper deals with technology and multimedia-aided reading, we cannot forget the fact that it is necessary to develop all the skills (productive-speaking, writing; receptive-reading, listening) and systems (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation) by integrating them when teaching and learning a foreign (English) language. There are plenty of ways how to develop systems and skills of students' language; technology and multimedia-aided instruction is one of them.

### Developing reading skills

A very important fact connected with developing reading skills is that when reading a text, various reading micro-skills are employed. Brown (2001 p. 307) provides a list of micro-skills to be used by learners at reading tasks that help learners of EFL to become efficient readers:

- a. *Discriminate among the distinctive graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.*
- b. *Retain chunks of language of different lengths in short-term memory.*
- c. *Process writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.*
- d. *Recognize a core of words, and interpret word order patterns and their significance.*
- e. *Recognize grammatical word classes (e.g., nouns and verbs), systems (e.g. tense, agreement, and pluralisation), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.*
- f. *Recognize cohesive devices in written discourse and their role in signalling the relationship between and among clauses.*
- g. *Recognize the rhetorical forms of written discourse and their significance for interpretation.*
- h. *Infer context that is not explicit by using world knowledge.*
- i. *Recognize the communicative function of written text, according to form and purpose.*
- j. *Distinguish between literal and implied meaning.*
- k. *Detect culturally specific references and interpret them in a context of the appropriate cultural schemata.*

- l. *Develop and use a battery of reading strategies such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from context and activating schemata for the interpretation of the text.*

When talking about developing reading skills, it is necessary to distinguish between *extensive* and *intensive* reading. To get maximum benefit of the students' reading, they must be involved in both of them (Harmer, 2007b). *Extensive reading* is usually done in everyday life (i.e. not in the classroom). It is fluent reading; we do it for pleasure, entertainment and general understanding. When reading extensively, we do not pay such careful attention to the details as we usually read longer texts. Students can read anything, e.g. novels, newspapers, web pages, magazines, e-books, emails etc. (Scrivener, 2005; Harmer, 2007a). It is very important to encourage students to read for pleasure and general language improvement. *Extensive reading* enables students to develop specific receptive skills such as reading for *gist* (or general understanding/called *skimming*), reading for *specific information* (often called *scanning*), reading for detailed comprehension, as well as reading for inference (what is 'behind' the words) and attitude (Harmer, 2007b).

*Intensive reading* is a kind of reading that is usually done in classrooms and it involves work with course-books, exercises and texts. In this kind of reading, texts are read carefully with the intention to understand as much detail as possible (Scrivener, 2005). The choice of text genres and topics is up to the teacher. The choice can be influenced by the specific purposes that students are studying for (business, nursing, finance, etc.) This kind of reading is commonly accompanied by various study activities (Harmer, 2007a). In general, the procedure of developing learners' reading skills consists of three stages in which various activities can be used: 1. *Pre-reading*; 2. *While-reading*; 3. *Post-reading*. Multimedia can be used in all of these stages. Multimedia-supported activities not only help develop reading skills, but also all other skills and language systems.

### **Authentic vs. adapted reading materials**

When reading either extensively or intensively, there is a question of authenticity of the reading material that must be taken into consideration. In Harmer's opinion "(...) *authentic material is a language where no concessions are made to foreign speakers. It is normal, natural language used by native or competent speakers of a language*" (Harmer, 2007b, p.273) Thus, carelessly chosen reading material can be highly demotivating for the students since they may not understand it. Therefore, teachers should let their students read the texts they are able to understand. It means roughly-tuned language and specially designed texts found in the materials written for beginners. On the other hand, Carter et al. (in *ibid.*) add that such specifically designed materials should be 'modelled on naturalistic samples'. However, authentic materials can be used with the students at low levels but it is necessary to use them with well-designed tasks in order to help students understand such texts. Brown (2001) advises to balance authenticity with readability in choosing the texts. He presents three criteria for choosing reading texts, offered by Nutall (1996, in *ibid.*): 1. *Suitability* of the content – teachers should choose the material that is appropriate for the goals (i.e. the material that students find enjoyable, interesting and challenging). 2. *Exploitability* – what should be chosen is a text that is to facilitate the achievement of certain language and content goals; (i.e. that is not only exploitable for instructional techniques and tasks but also integratable with other skills). 3. *Readability* – here a text with structural and lexical difficulty that is to challenge learners without overwhelming them is to be chosen). Later on, when the level of students' proficiency grows up, the teacher can choose more authentic texts (Harmer, 2007b). There are also lists of criteria of how to select suitable and appropriate authentic reading materials for different levels of language proficiency (for more information see Pokrivčáková, 2012, p. 103).

### Potentials of multimedia in reading activities

A teacher can use multimedia in any stage of reading procedures. The use of technology and multimedia materials for reading purposes not only engages and motivates students, but also offers a variety of flexible supports through which students can develop all their language skills and systems, including text-to speech, voice recognition, study tools (such as highlighters and annotation capabilities), animation, music, sound effects, embedded dictionaries, linked videos to boost background knowledge and vocabulary, and so on. (*Using multimedia to support reading instruction; Learning to Read with Multimedia Materials*, online). Han (2010) provides four most important advantages of multimedia-aided reading instruction that are connected with both, *extensive* and *intensive reading*. They can be summarized as follows:

1. *Arousing students' reading interest and enhancing their motivation* - Nowadays, students are 'digital natives'; in other words, they are growing up with technology and technology is part of their everyday life. Using technology in the classroom is a way how to bring their outside world into the classroom, which is an extremely motivating factor. Furthermore, "*Multimedia assists the teacher to integrate the pictures, music and video into the courseware and make the content more colourful. In the multimedia-aided reading classroom, the teacher transforms the static text into dynamic one.*" (Han, 2010, p.321)
2. *Effecting learner's autonomy* - Students usually consider the teachers to function as the main source of their knowledge, although they need to develop their autonomy and independence in learning. Multimedia provide self-study environment, through which passive students, while relying on their teachers, can change into active ones, realizing their mistakes (*ibid.*) Constantinescu (2007) adds that glossaries that are embedded in multimedia texts also help develop learners' autonomy.
3. *Promoting an advanced interactive model of reading* - Teacher-student and student-student interaction have been recognized as the two integral parts of language classroom teaching. However, in modern (educational) society, student-computer interaction is often a must; besides, interaction is one of the basic elements of multimedia (Han, 2010).
4. *Increasing students' awareness in culture differences and promoting trans-cultural communication* - The reading materials are usually about people and things in English-speaking countries, including background knowledge of history, culture, customs, politics, etc. When such reading materials are accompanied with multimedia-aided tasks connected with the topic, it may extremely help students acquire the cultural background. It is generally agreed that visual aids, such as videos or tapes, are of help in one's culture acquisition. Students can not only read about the culture, but also see and hear its various aspects at the same time (*ibid.*)

### Multimedia-supported pre-reading stage

This stage is crucial especially at lower levels of language proficiency. "*Its main purpose is to catch learners' attention, increase their motivation, and get them know the purpose of reading.*" (Pokrivčáková, 2012, p. 101) The author provides an overview of the tasks the learners can be asked to do during the pre-reading stage. *Table 1* discusses the use of the multimedia and technology in these tasks:

Pre-reading tasks	Pre-reading tasks with the use of multimedia and technology
figure out the purpose for reading	With the use of a video, presentation with recordings, pictures, clips, etc.
activate their background knowledge of the topic	
review vocabulary and grammatical structures	<p>With the use of various online dictionaries, visual thesauri and different programs for visualization of vocabulary e.g.  <a href="http://www.visuwords.com/">http://www.visuwords.com/</a>; <a href="http://www.visualthesaurus.com/">http://www.visualthesaurus.com/</a>; <a href="http://www.wordle.net/">http://www.wordle.net/</a>;  <a href="http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/">http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/</a></p> <p>With the use of various interactive activities focused on grammar, e.g.  <a href="https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises">https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises</a> ; <a href="http://a4esl.org/">http://a4esl.org/</a> ; etc</p>
create semantic webs of keywords	With the use of various mind map creators; e.g. <a href="https://bubbl.us/">https://bubbl.us/</a> ; <a href="https://www.text2mindmap.com/">https://www.text2mindmap.com/</a>
use the titles, subtitles and pictures to predict or anticipate content	With the use of the texts in electronic form
identify appropriate reading strategies <sup>5</sup>	
predict a discourse structure and a writing style	
read over the comprehension questions to focus attention on the parts of the text that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest	
find and summarize information about the author's background to anticipate his/her writing style and usual topics	With the use of searching engines, e.g. <a href="http://www.wikipedia.org">www.wikipedia.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a> ; <a href="http://www.bing.com">www.bing.com</a> ; <a href="http://www.youtube.com">www.youtube.com</a> , etc.

Table 1 Pre-reading activities

### Multimedia-supported while-reading stage

During the while-reading stage, "learners read the text to find new information, understand the message and the structure of the text, verify predictions, decide what is and what is not important to understand, etc. Learners should be allowed to reread the text if they ask to do so. The while-reading stage may be divided into several levels of reading with the focus on various reading strategies..." (Pokrivčáková, 2012, p. 102) Here, the author offers some selected teaching techniques to develop reading strategies in the foreign language. These techniques include the activities which are offered in Table 2. It is up to the teacher's creativity how he/she uses multimedia in these activities.

<sup>5</sup> Reading strategies include: reading to identify a specific aspect of the message, such as its form, genre and linguistic qualities; reading for orientation; reading to comprehend a main idea; reading to comprehend details of a written text; reading for latter reproduction; skimming and scanning; guessing from the context. (Pokrivčáková, 2012, pp. 99-100)

<b>Controlled reading activities</b>	Reading with visuals (reading to draw or complete a picture, reading to match a picture with description, etc.); reading for the gist; reading for the specific information; completing cloze exercises (reading to colour a picture, reading to fill in graphs, etc.); reading for instruction; reading to reorder a jumbled dialogue/text); distinguishing between formal and informal register; recognizing context.
<b>Guided reading activities</b>	Reading for (protagonists') opinions; reading to take notes; inferring relationship mentioned in the text; guessing from context; paraphrasing the main idea; retelling the story; summarizing the main idea or supporting ideas, etc.
<b>Free reading activities</b>	Reading to express personal opinion; finishing the story; creating alternative ends.

Table 2 While-reading activities

### Multimedia-supported Post-reading Stage

The post-reading stage helps both teacher and learners to check and evaluate development of reading skills. *"A good post-reading activity should reflect the real-life uses of reading strategies."* (Pokrivčáková, 2012, p. 103) The author also provides examples of post-reading activities (usually focused on speaking and writing) and points out that these activities often integrate reading with other communicative skills. Below we have chosen the activities that can be done with the use of multimedia and technology.

Post-reading tasks	Post-reading tasks with the use of multimedia and technology
After-reading listing	With the use of various text editors and mind map creators (e.g. <a href="https://bubbl.us/">https://bubbl.us/</a> ; <a href="https://www.text2mindmap.com/">https://www.text2mindmap.com/</a> );
After-reading creating mind-maps	
After-reading taking notes	
Writing a summary of the text	With the use of blogs; i.e. students (and also teachers) can contribute to a class blogs; they can vote for the best summary, ending, etc.  With the use of text editors, ppt presentation; i.e. students can create presentation full of pictures, music, clips, etc.  With the use of search engines, students can search for the pictures, and with the use of text editors or publishers they can create colourful covers of a book, advertisements, articles, etc. according to the text they have just read.
Writing a follow-up of the story	
Rewriting the story	
Finishing the story	
Reading to create a cover of the book/an advertisement to newspapers	

Table 3 Post-reading activities

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## Internet Pronunciation Activities as an Attractive Way of Teaching Pronunciation

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**Abstract:** Teaching pronunciation is often a neglected or ignored part of English language teaching. However, correct pronunciation is without doubt a necessary quality of successful communication. For this reason, teaching pronunciation should be included straight at the beginning of English language learning as the correct pronunciation habits should be acquired as soon as possible. The best way to develop pronunciation is via contact with authentic spoken language. The recommended techniques and activities are drilling, ear training, phonetic training, reading aloud, imitation, clapping, tapping, gestures, etc. Combination of techniques is effective in learning pronunciation. This paper introduces several online games, activities and quizzes for primary school pupils using drilling and ear training techniques.

**Key words:** pronunciation, ELT, online games, online quizzes, drilling, ear training

Teaching pronunciation has taken a secondary role in English language teaching (ELT) to work on grammar and vocabulary. However, it is not only a problem of Slovak English language education, but also a problem in many other countries which teach English as a foreign language. According to Griffiths (2011), many experienced teachers are reluctant to teach pronunciation in their classes, because there are not clear guidelines and rules in course books and that isolated exercises do not have the required effect. She claims that pronunciation needs to be taught regularly and integrated into daily classroom procedures. According to Gilbert (2008), teachers often claim that they do not have enough time in their classes to pay attention to English pronunciation. Haycraft (1978) believes that pronunciation is probably the most ignored part of ELT because the foreign teachers of English do not have enough confidence to teach it directly. Datko (2013) also claims that teachers have more confidence teaching grammar and vocabulary rather than teaching pronunciation. Teachers often complain that they receive very little training in the methodology of teaching pronunciation.

It is important to focus attention on pronunciation as early as possible and to integrate it with other areas of language learning. There is certainly a place for pronunciation exercises in the case of specific problems, but to rely on remedial strategies does not prepare learners to speak intelligibly and effectively (AMEP, 2002). Tench (1981) suggests that the most appropriate time to start teaching pronunciation is straight at the beginning of English language learning as the correct pronunciation habits should be acquired as soon as possible. Otherwise the later remedial work is a burdensome task which can be avoided if correct pronunciation is taught properly right from the beginning. Children before they reach puberty, during the so called critical period, have the best ability to learn a foreign language with the native-like fluency and with perfect pronunciation. After puberty learners and adult learners show lower capability to imitate a foreign language sound system. The mother tongue interferes in foreign language acquisition and learners have established their own speech habits, which are very hard to change (O'Connor, 1980). In Slovakia, Kráľová (2010, 2011) and Bodorík (2013) researched the area of common errors and interference of the Slovak language in the English language pronunciation. Their research findings can help Slovak teachers in making a decision on which specific aspects of pronunciation to concentrate on. It is recommended to expose learners to the authentic audio materials (Bodorík, 2013; Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 1992). According to Haycraft (1971) learners are more likely to speak correctly, when they are exposed to correct speech. Even though most English teachers are not native speakers, they remain as the role models for pronunciation. Teachers have a responsibility to provide learners with the best

practical opportunities for learning pronunciation. Combining authentic speech, practicality and correct pronunciation, the internet pronunciation activities and quizzes are the solution.

The Common European Framework for Languages (2001) recommends teaching pronunciation right from the beginning of foreign language learning. According to the CEFR, pronunciation should be developed via contact with authentic spoken language. The recommended techniques are repetition and drilling, ear training, phonetic training, reading aloud, imitation, etc. Also clapping, clicking, tapping, gestures, mirrors, etc. can be used for teaching pronunciation (AMEP, 2002). It is advised to combine different teaching techniques. Modern course books offer exercises practicing pronunciation. However, as it was already mentioned, the best way to learn correct pronunciation is to provide learners with authentic language examples. Internet provides many activities suitable for teaching pronunciation. In the following paragraphs I give examples how to use internet sources using some of the named techniques. The activities are chosen for the primary school pupils, who are beginners (A.1) in learning English.

*Drilling* went out of fashion with audio-lingual method, because it is associated with a mindless and repetitive approach. However, drills do not need to be mindless, as they offer an opportunity to learners to practice saying new words without the extra strain of trying to communicate. Drills can be choral and individual. They are suitable for segmental and suprasegmental levels of pronunciation. The following websites provide material suitable for beginners. The Oxford University Press (OUP) Learning Resources Bank (2014) provides various activities for segmental and also suprasegmental features. Some activities offer pictures, recordings, written forms of words and their phonemic transcription. Word stress games are also provided. Kiz Phonics (2012) is an attractive web site for children with many colourful pictures. Each game focuses on different sounds and their relationship with letters. In all activities learners can listen to and repeat individual words.

#### Diphthongs

Click on the picture, listen to the word and the sound, and repeat.



Figure 1 OUP Learning Resources Bank (2014)



Figure 2 OUP Learning Resources Bank (2014)

Practice the digraph 'ch' using these interactive phonics flipboards. Click on a card to hear the sound. Then repeat.

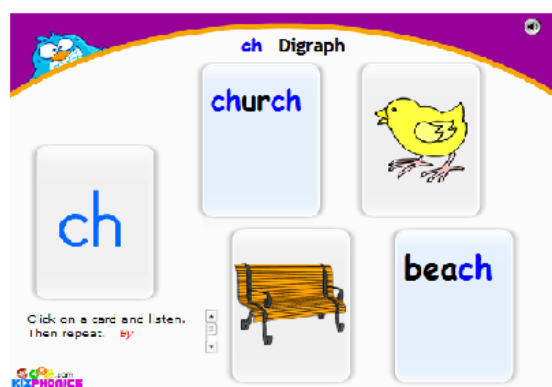


Figure 3 Kiz Phonics (2012)

Practice the long oo sound as in boot. Click on the audio cards to listen and then repeat.



Figure 4 Kiz Phonics (2012)

*Ear training* is an effective teaching technique, where learners' attention is focused on hearing. Ear training is also used in teaching music. In pronunciation there is a close relationship between speech production and speech perception. Traditionally, ear training was connected to identifying individual sounds, but it can be just as efficient in teaching suprasegmental features, such as word stress, rhythm or intonation (Morley, 1991). Recognition of sounds can be done using minimal pair tests. Dictation and listening for a specific task can be used for both segmental and suprasegmental features. The following websites provide activities ear training for sounds but also parts of sentences. BBC pronunciation tips (2009) offer activities for recognition of sounds. Recordings of words with the same sound are provided and learners choose a one sound out of three. Kiz Phonics (2012) provide a recording of a word and four written words to choose from. ESL Tower (2014) offer quizzes focusing on individual sounds. A word is played and the learner chooses the correct word out of the two. ESL Games plus (2014) offer various games for children. The provided activity plays a recording of various sentences. The first part of a sentence is provided and the second part must be chosen out of four possible answers. The learner has to listen and recognize the correct ending of the sentence.

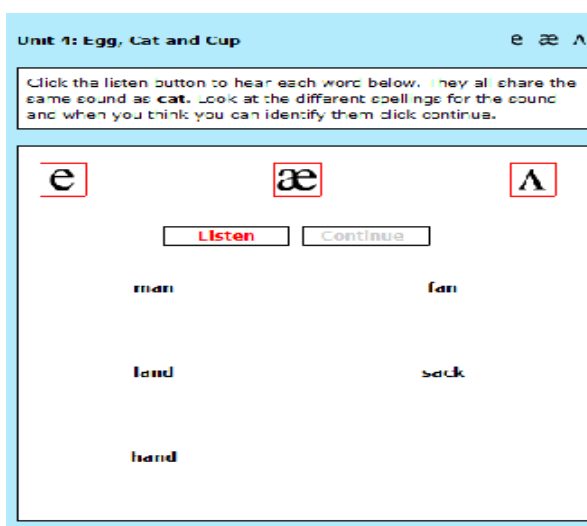


Figure 5 BBC Pronunciation tips (2009)



Figure 6 Kiz Phonics (2012)

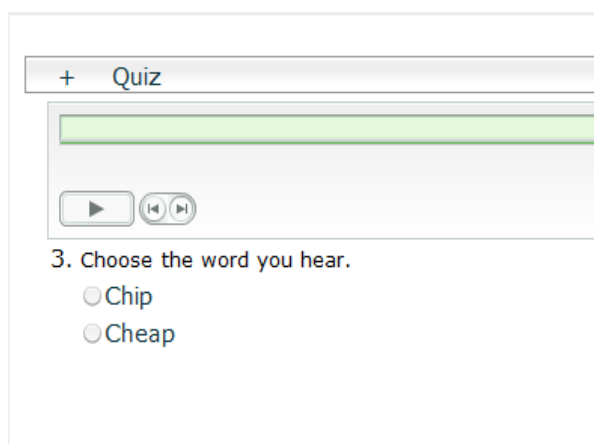


Figure 7 ESL Tower (2014)

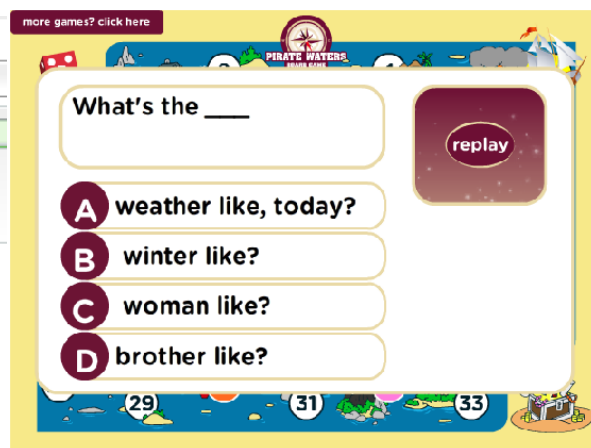


Figure 8 ESL Games plus (2014)

The available websites can make English language lessons more attractive as they offer authentic language; they are interactive, playful and funny. Such online pronunciation activities should be used to motivate learners and to enrich the traditional course book pronunciation learning. To conclude, pronunciation teaching should be an integral part of English language lesson and should not be perceived as fixing pronunciation problems, but it should teach learners how to speak properly. Early learning does not only help learners with correct sounds, stress patterns, rhythm and weak forms, but also makes them realise that English is not a phonetic language and this can help them with their writing too.

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## Using Internet Games and Quizzes for Enhancing Pupils' Competences

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**Abstract:** Foreign language learning is a difficult task, which can sometimes be frustrating. There is a constant effort from the side of the learners to understand, acquire and produce the target language. There is a common belief that all learning should be serious in nature, and that if learners are having fun, then it is not a real learning. This is of course a misconception. Especially with foreign language learning, it is possible to enjoy oneself at the same time as learning. One of the best ways of learning a foreign language with enjoyment is through games and quizzes. Games and quizzes are highly motivating for language learners, but should be at the same time challenging.

Well-chosen games and quizzes allow students to practise all language skills in meaningful and real contexts, promote communicative competences and generate fluency.

**Keywords:** online games, online quizzes, communicative competences, authentic language

### Introduction

Foreign language learning is a difficult task, which can sometimes be frustrating. There is a constant effort from the side of the learners to understand, acquire and produce the target language. There is a common belief that all learning should be serious in nature, and that if learners are having fun, then it is not a real learning. This is of course a misconception. Especially with foreign language learning, it is possible to enjoy oneself at the same time as learning.

One of the best ways of learning a foreign language with enjoyment is through games and quizzes. Games and quizzes are highly motivating for language learners, but should be at the same time challenging. Well chosen games and quizzes allow students to practise all language skills in meaningful and real contexts, promote communicative competences and generate fluency. Games are quite popular with teachers, but they are generally used as short warm-up activities, or when there is some time left at the end of a lesson. According to Uberman (1998), games should not be regarded as a marginal activity, but it should be an integral part of a lesson, providing a possibility of intensive practice. Quizzes are rarely used in foreign language teaching. Even though using games and quizzes is not always better and easier option for everyone, but an overwhelming majority of pupils find games and quizzes relaxing and motivating.

According to Pokrivčáková (2013), there is not a more attractive teaching technique than a game. Games bring positive emotions to the classroom. Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, all language skills and culture can be taught through games. Games can integrate various language structures and skills. Games serve as ice breakers in development of communicative competences of students. They can be used at any stage of a lesson, with all age groups and at any language proficiency. Games add variation to a lesson and increase motivation by providing incentive to use the target language. Especially for children they provide a stimulus to learn the foreign language. Games bring target language to life; provide opportunity for students to learn the foreign language the way children learn their mother tongue without being aware they are learning. Even shy students can participate positively in games (Mei, Yu-jing, 2000). Games must be carefully chosen, as they must be more than just fun. They should give a chance to students to learn, practice and review the target language. Games should involve all the students and keep their attention the whole time. Friendly competition is welcome, but should be

controlled by a teacher not to get out of hand resulting in arguments and upset students. Students should be encouraged to focus on the use of language rather than on the language itself.

Benefits of games cover cognitive and affective aspects of language learning, class dynamics and adaptability (Lengeling, Malarcher, 1997). Cognitive aspects developed by games are reinforcement, reviews and extends of the newly acquired language, and practicing grammar communicatively. Games benefit affective aspects by encouraging creative and spontaneous use of language, promoting communicative competence and motivating students. Class dynamics are enhanced as games are student centred, class cohesions are built, all students are encouraged to participate and healthy competition is promoted. Games have great adaptability, as they are easily adjusted for all age levels, language proficiency, and interests and utilise all four skills. There are some disadvantages of games too. Planning a game (teachers can get discouraged by difficulty to find an appropriate game) and instructing students (instructions can take a long time and a great part of a lesson) can be time consuming; organizing a lesson using a game can be difficult (timing, seating, movement of pupils). Pokrivčáková (2013) divides games in foreign language teaching to: verbal games, memory games, cumulative games, guessing games, creative games and board games.

According to Pokrivčáková (2013), a quiz is a dialogic teaching technique. It can be in a written form and it is similar to questionnaire, or a test, but should not be confused. Questions in a quiz do not ask about opinions and preferences, but they are related to factual knowledge. Quizzes focus on the critical lower-level thinking learning for students. Students can do quizzes during lessons but also online at home. Quizzes include four question types: multiple choice (one right answer), checkboxes (more than one possible answer), true/false and fill in the blanks. Each question can contain text, pictures, videos, hyperlinks and can also have time limit. Sometimes, feedback explanations for answers are added. Skills of reading (instructions and questions), writing (answers), speaking (presenting answers orally) and listening (recorded questions or parts of questions), grammar, vocabulary, culture and general knowledge can be practiced in making quizzes. Suitable quizzes can be used with all levels of language proficiency at all age levels. Students usually enjoy quizzes, especially if they are organised in a form of class competitions.

Computers and other technologies are an integral part of our lives. According to Veselá (2012), children grow up as “digital natives” being computer literated, as they often use computers from the pre-school age before they can read and write. Cimermanová (2014) describes digital natives as those, who consider using technologies all the time as “normal”, they can be seen listening to ipods, reading e-books, working on their smart phones. She claims that for those people using technologies is a natural thing to do at school too. Consequently, computers, internet and other technologies have become an inseparable part of foreign language education. Computers with different types of software, offline activities, ELT programmes for interactive boards and internet are commonly used in foreign language teaching. Many English language books include CD for an interactive board offering games, quizzes and other activities. Internet is a vast source of authentic materials as well as adapted materials for English language teaching. Internet is a place where materials made by professionals can be found and also a place where teachers share their own materials. Teachers' responsibility is to choose appropriate exercises, for the appropriate age and language proficiency, up to date, interesting and applicable for the needs of ELT. Computer assisted language learning is suitable for teaching vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, all language skills, literature and culture (Pokrivčáková, 2014).

In the previous paragraphs teaching technique of games and quizzes and computer assisted language learning were briefly discussed as very attractive techniques and means in foreign language teaching. The aim of this paper is to combine both – games and quizzes with computer assisted language learning. Integrating traditional techniques (games and quizzes) with online activities can be also called blended learning. More methods, approaches and materials combined together with the aim to achieve desirable outcomes is the basic perception of blended learning (Horváthová, 2011, Veselá, 2012, Klímová, 2014).

A game being traditional teaching technique is also a very common and popular on computers and internet. As was mentioned before, there are many textbooks nowadays which include a CD for an interactive board. These CDs include, among many other activities, interactive games. There are also many websites on the internet which provide interactive games for all ages, proficiency groups and various aspects of English. Students can do them in groups in a classroom on the interactive board, or individually in a computer classroom, or individually at home. They usually have a lot of fun, practice and improve their English by playing interactive games. These games usually have answers, so students do not have to rely on the teacher for the correct answer. CDs for the interactive board are easy to use, as they follow exact topics of the lessons. Internet is also full of great activities and games, just sometimes it is difficult and time consuming to find the appropriate activity. The teacher should bear in mind the needs and characteristics of the target group, topics, pragmatic phrases, grammar, vocabulary, etc. Here are mentioned only a few websites, where a great number of games are designed for either a classroom use or autonomous learning. Games suitable for all ages and proficiency levels can be found here and they also cover every aspect of the English language.

Probably the best website for English language teaching for children is ESLgames+ <<http://www.eslgamesplus.com/crocodile-games/>>, which provides a very rich source of games and various activities for young learners. Spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence games in a form of board games, puzzles, crosswords, memory games, etc. can be found on this website.

ESLgamesworld website <<http://www.eslgamesworld.com/ClassroomGames.html>> offers Spin off games from elementary to intermediate level of English and they are suitable for older children or even adults. These games can be played both – in a classroom and individually at home. Games are mainly focusing on vocabulary and general knowledge.



Figure 1 ESLgamesplus (2014)

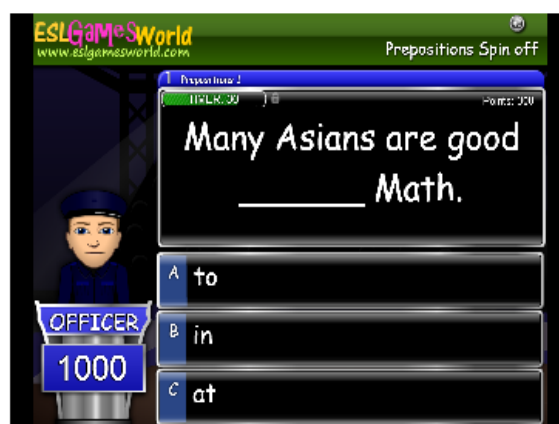


Figure 2 ESLgamesworld (2014)

Funbrain website <<http://www.funbrain.com/>> is an authentic webpage, which means that it is not designed for foreign language teaching. However, there are many games which can be also used in English language classes, e.g. vocabulary, spelling, rhyming words, maths, etc.

Shockwave website <<http://www.shockwave.com/online/all-games.jsp>> offers various games for all age groups. It is an authentic website, but certain games could be used in English language lessons, e.g. vocabulary games (word finders, crosswords, bingo, etc.).

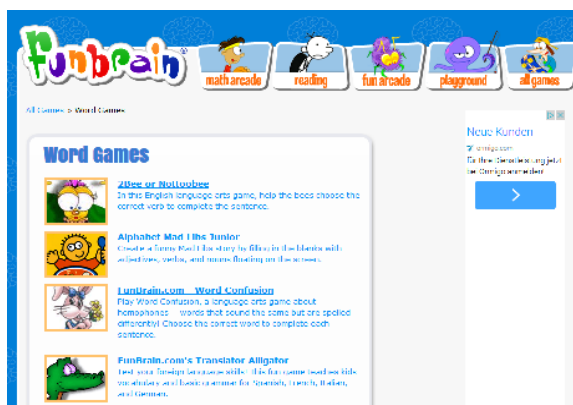


Figure 3 Funbrain (2014)

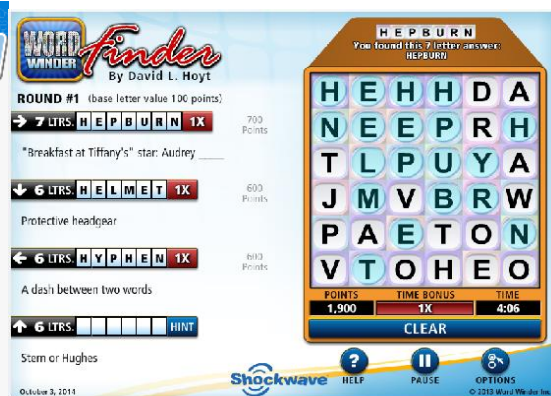


Figure 4 Shockwave (2014)

The combined use of computers and online grammar quizzes can be used as an alternative to printed classroom materials to provide language practice to EFL learners (Rajaretnam, 2004). Students can do quizzes divided in groups in a classroom, or individually each at a computer at school, or at home. There is always an answer to the question, so students know immediately if they were right or wrong.

BBC learning English <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/quizzes/quiznet/>> is an excellent source of materials for English language teachers. It also provides many quizzes focusing on grammar, vocabulary and various topic based quizzes.

UsingEnglish <<http://www.usingenglish.com/quizzes/>> website is probably the greatest source of online quizzes for English language teachers. It provides over 500 language quizzes covering grammar, vocabulary and usage for beginner, intermediate and advanced level of English learners. All quizzes are also available for teachers to print out.

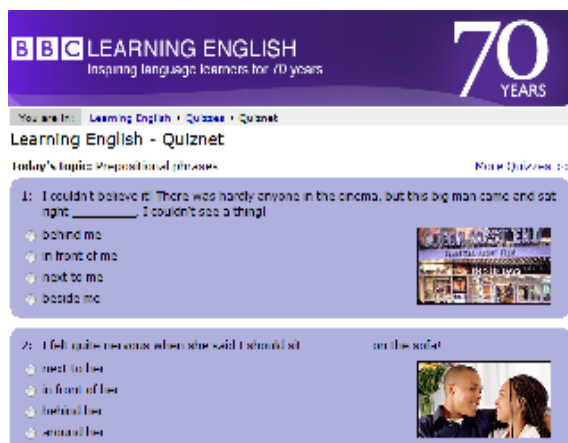


Figure 5 BBC learning English (2014)

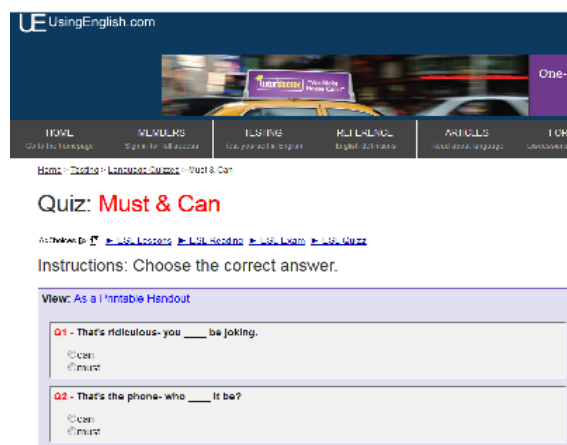


Figure 6 Using English (2014)

To conclude, computers and internet are a source of entertainment, information, communication and education. Learning can be more fun with using computers and internet. It needs to correspond with the aims of learning and it should reflect the needs and characteristics of learners. Another source of entertainment and learning are games and quizzes. Combining computer, internet with games and quizzes can be a very effective way of learning and practicing a foreign language.

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## Improving Students' Academic Knowledge in English via Internet: ESP e-Learning Courses at the College of Dunaújváros

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**Abstract:** Higher educational institutions face new requirements in the competition for students, which means that they should focus on developing e-learning course and offer ESP courses for their students. E-learning materials are prepared for distance learning. A well-designed e-learning material means much more than just a digitalized printed material, it should have the following attributes: finally worked-out and module-based structure, theoretical explanation, problem-oriented focus, built-in examinations, use of multimedia devices, specific supporting and assessing procedures of students. As far as ESP is concerned, English is overwhelmingly dominant in nearly all disciplines, and is regarded to be the lingua franca in most fields. ESP course should be designed focusing especially on the content-based and skill-based syllabus. When we teach ESP, English language is not the aim of the learning process, but just the medium to acquire specific new knowledge.

**Keywords:** ESP, e-learning

### Introduction

Higher educational institutions face new requirements in the competition for students. First, employees, especially professionals, should acquire new knowledge and train themselves to maintain up-to-date, to be able to meet new demands and challenges. On the other hand, people can spend less time (and sometimes less money) on studying: traditional classroom teaching does not often suit the needs of adult learners, including higher educational students.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, generation Y, who study in higher education and work as young employees, prefer using digital technology to acquire new information to browsing heavy books. It is essential to them to download materials on their smart phones or tablets and read, listen and learn during journeys. Although traditional learning and teaching forms are still play significant role in overall education, non-traditional or atypical forms are becoming well-known, wide-spread and appreciated especially in higher and adult education.

Second, speaking in English seems to be essential for employees in professional positions: employers expect employees to have and apply language knowledge and skills adequate to the particular job. To achieve suitable skills non-native English students should develop their knowledge of understanding and speaking English in specific context.<sup>7</sup> Focusing on these requirements, universities should offer e-learning courses to save time for their students and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses to improve their students' proficiency in specific disciplines so that they could be more successful in the labour market.

Many higher educational institutes have recognised the requirements of the labour market: it wants employees who can speak not only general English but they also know specific vocabulary. If ESP courses are offered even online, it matches the expectation of the new generations and fits the timetable of busy professionals. The College of Dunaújváros, Hungary has recognised these double needs and started to develop ESP e-learning courses in the Social

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<sup>6</sup> Nemes György – Csilléri Miklós: Kutatás az atipikus tanulási formák (távoktatás / e-learning) modelljeinek kifejlesztésére célcsoportonként, a modellek bevezetésére és alkalmazására. Budapest, Nemzeti Felnőttképzési Intézet. 2006.  
<[https://www.nive.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=43](https://www.nive.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43)> [Downloaded: 04. 02. 2013.]

<sup>7</sup> Alhamami, Munassir: Implementing ESP Lessons for Engineers: Research and Practices. In: English for Specific Purposes World. Issue 43, Vol. 15, 2014. [http://esp-world.info/Articles\\_43/Alhamami.pdf](http://esp-world.info/Articles_43/Alhamami.pdf) [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

Renewal Operative Program 4.1.1.C. This study intends to present e-learning materials developed by the College of Dunaújváros from two points of view: on the one hand, focusing on the structure and the elements of the e-learning course, on the other hand, as an ESP course, i.e. how it helps students to improve their language skills in specific fields.

### **Specialities of distance and e-learning**

#### *Characteristics of distance learning*

The two main forms of atypical learning are distance and e-learning. Distance learning is a 'formalized teaching and learning system specifically designed to be carried out remotely by using electronic communication'<sup>8</sup>. Distance learning is based on distance control of studying, including the acquisition of prescribed and well-built materials, thinking and acting operational processes. Since 1990s, distance learning has been equal with computer supported teaching: student reach learning material via internet or intranet from their personal computers.<sup>9</sup> E-learning is the other form of atypical learning form, closely connecting to distance learning. In present time, it has a remarkably increasing role in education.

E-learning materials are prepared for distance learning so they have to meet the criteria of distance learning materials. Distance learning differs from the traditional learning - teaching system in several points. The typical differentiating attributes of distance learning are the following:

1. Separation of the learning and the teaching process in space and time: learning could take place in anytime and anywhere regardless the timetable and the place of the educational institute.
2. Self-directed and self-controlled learning: it is not the teacher but the student who is responsible for the learning pace and the success of the learning process.
3. Basic requirement is an autonomous student: it is the student who plans, directs and controls the learning process; the educational institution has indirect control over it.
4. Specific connection between the student and the teacher: instead of the traditional face-to-face connection, students get in contact via internet: e-mails, forums, etc.
5. Specific connection between the student and the educational institute: they are digitally connected via internet, using various softwares.
6. Increasing significance of communicational devices: using computers, laptops, tablets, or smart phones is inevitable.<sup>10</sup> However, it must be stated that technology is not the main issue; the focus of web based learning must be on the learner.<sup>11</sup>
7. Special control and feedback: the learning material consists of built-in controls and feedbacks that regulate students' learning progress.
8. Special learning material: specifically planned and developed learning materials arranged in modules ending with evaluation and feedback.<sup>12</sup>
9. Special learning space: the aim of distance learning is to form a connection between the members of the teaching - learning process and to build a network to transfer knowledge.

<sup>8</sup> <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/distance-learning-e-learning> [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

<sup>9</sup> Nemes – Csilléri, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Nemes – Csilléri, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> McKimm, Judy - Jollie, Carol – Cantillon, Peter: Web based learning.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1125774/> [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

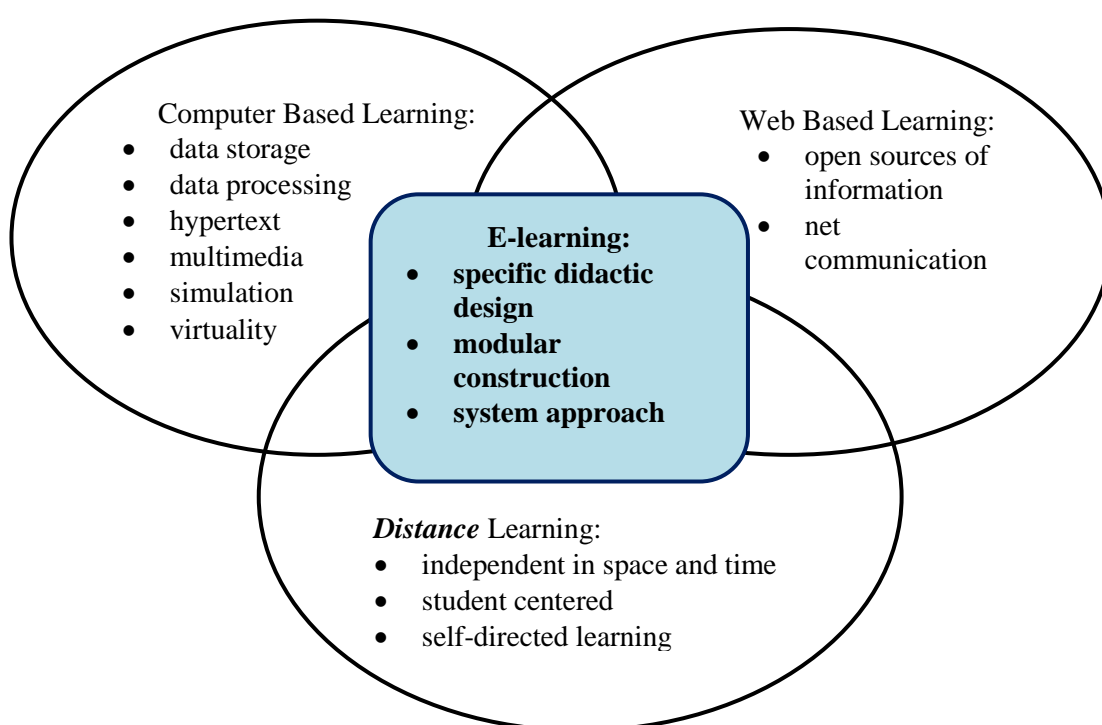
<sup>12</sup> Nemes – Csilléri, 2006.

10. Student-centred approach: strengthening role of student communities the members of which share information and content with one another, download and upload materials.
11. Changing role of teachers: instead of the traditional teacher role, there are tutors, who do not direct just monitor the learning process.<sup>13</sup> Responsibility for the success of the learning process is shifting from teachers and teaching to learners and learning.<sup>14</sup>

### *Definition of e-learning*

E-learning includes the complex system of programs, learning materials, the control and the support of studying, which is based on three sources by Komenczi (2006):

- Computer Based Learning,
- Web Based Learning,
- Distance Learning.<sup>15</sup>



*Illustration 1* Definition of e-learning. (Source: Komenczi<sup>16</sup>)

As the illustration shows, e-learning has three main characteristic features. Didactic design means to form the efficient system of learning material, learning programs and learning environments. Modularity or modular construction refers to the technological dimension

<sup>13</sup> Csoma – Lada: A távoktatás lehetőségei a felnőttoktatásban. <<http://www.ofi.hu/tudastar/problema-kerdesek/tavoktatas-lehetosegei>> [Downloaded: 02. 04. 2013.]

<sup>14</sup> Mungo, Julius: E-learning/e-teaching. An Implementation and Evaluation of a Finance Introductory Course. <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/master/mungo-julius-2004-05-17/PDF/mungo.pdf> [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

<sup>15</sup> Komenczi Bertalan: Az E-learning lehetséges szerepe a magyarországi felnőttképzésben. Budapest, Nemzeti Felnőttképzési Intézet. 2006. <[https://www.nive.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=43](https://www.nive.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43)> [Downloaded: 04. 02. 2013.]

<sup>16</sup> Komenczi, 2006.

of e-learning (e.i. ability to fit elements of learning materials into software system managing the learning process), as well as forming learning materials and programs. System approach implies fitting e-learning programs to learning environments, and placing them in the organizational and social networks of the learning process.<sup>17</sup> E-learning includes new ways to access, to learn and teach, and to prepare learning materials and to deliver learning content through the internet, intranet or extranet.<sup>18</sup>

E-learning takes place in virtual learning environment (VLE). A VLE typically combines functions such as discussion boards, chat rooms, online assessment, tracking of students' use of the web, and course administration. Like other learning environments, VLE distributes information to learners and – differently from traditional learning process – it enables them to cooperate on a project and share information.<sup>19</sup>

### *Characteristics of e-learning materials*

Although CD-based materials are considered to be e-learning materials, web-based materials are significantly more typical nowadays: students can reach learning materials on the internet or intranet from a central server. The main difference between the two forms is monitoring students' progress: up-to-date information on students' progress and their results is available from the server.<sup>20</sup> Since the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, web-based e-learning materials are widespread all over the world.

A well-designed e-learning material means much more than just a digitalized printed material: it should sometimes substitute even the teachers themselves, controlling and evaluating students' progress. Electronic materials should have the following attributes:

1. Finally worked-out structure: students must understand the structure and each phase of the whole material.
2. Well-built teaching phases: learning material provides basic information to students, makes them practice and tests their knowledge regularly.
3. Module-based structure: the learning material is divided into modules; each student should acquire the modules that are suitable for them during their studies.<sup>21</sup> Every module should be structured both by the content and didactics. Regarding content division, modules should be divided into chapters or lectures, and each chapter is connected to the previous and the following one. The didactical structure is the complement of the content structure; it divides the subject matter into parts that must be easily handled by students. The structure of a modularized e-learning document must be similar to children's building blocks, LEGO.<sup>22</sup>
4. Theoretical explanations: brief and clear explanations of theory supplemented by illustrations or charts if needed.
5. Problem-oriented focus: through examples, tasks and practices students face problems similar to real life situations.
6. Description of operations: presentation of operations that are based on theory, description of the series of steps supported by animations and simulation.

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<sup>17</sup> Komenczi, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Mungo: E-learning/e-teaching. An Implementation and Evaluation of a Finance Introductory Course. <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/master/mungo-julius-2004-05-17/PDF/mungo.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> McKimm - Jollie - Cantillon: Web based learning. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1125774/>

<sup>20</sup> Nemes – Csilléri, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Nemes – Csilléri, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Tavangarian, Djamshid, et al.: Is e-Learning the Solution for Individual Learning? Electronic Journal of e-Learning Volume 2 Issue 2 2004 (273-280).

7. Practices: by doing practices step by step, students use previously acquired knowledge to solve new problems and learn new concepts.
8. Pre-surveying student knowledge: at the beginning of each module, students' knowledge can be surveyed and assessed. On the basis of the results students must or do not have to do the module.
9. Built-in examinations: test-format theoretical and practical exams provide the assessment of the learning progress.
10. Use of multimedia devices: providing both visual and textual materials, they could support the learning process of students belonging to different learner types.<sup>23</sup> In the opposition to traditional learning, where teachers play the main role in the teaching – learning process, one of the main barriers to the effective use of e-learning materials is technology, such as poor access or slow downloading.<sup>24</sup> Regarding the use of multimedia devices, the human factor is remarkably important: both students and teachers must have technical competences and open attitude towards applying technical devices.<sup>25</sup>
11. E-learning content must be designed and developed in smaller manageable chunks, known as learning objects (LO).<sup>26</sup> LOs could be anything: a single picture, some graphics, a text, flash animation, a listening comprehension, a short tutorial text or a test.<sup>27</sup>
12. Storing and managing the content: LOs must be assigned a shelf life predetermined based on the LO's classification category. The LOs must be tagged with metadata that will later help the process of searching and locating a particular LO.
13. Supporting students: in the traditional classroom environment, students support can be addressed on a supply-and-demand basis. In e-learning setting, 'all possible types of problems students are likely to face have to be foreseen in advance in order to introduce features for performance support'<sup>28</sup>.
14. Assessing students: assessment is a critical phase in e-learning, as instructors studying their new role are likely to use types of automatically scored questions for assessment, such as multiple choice, true-and-false, matching or short answer; while essay questions or projects are generally omitted.<sup>29</sup>

### English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

In present world, English is overwhelmingly dominant in nearly all disciplines, and is regarded to be the lingua franca of international business, economy, science and technology <sup>30</sup> and in many other disciplines. Take this phenomenon as a fact, teachers and especially university professors should put the questions: What competences should today students, the future employees of Europe, have in order to easily adapt to their new work environment, especially if

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<sup>23</sup> Nemes – Csilléri, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> McKimm – Jollie – Cantillon: Web based learning.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1125774/>

<sup>25</sup> Selim, Hassan M.: Critical success factors for e-learning acceptance: Confirmatory factor models. *Computers & Education* 49 (2007) 396–413.

<sup>26</sup> Govindasamy, Thavamalar: Successful implementation of e-Learning Pedagogical considerations. *The Internet and Higher Education*. 2002./4 287–299: 294.

<sup>27</sup> Tavangarian, 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Govindasamy, 2002

<sup>29</sup> Govindasamy, 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Rao, V. Chandra Sekhar: English For Science And Technology: A Learner Centered Approach. In: *English for Specific Purposes World*, Issue 42, Vol. 15, 2014. [http://esp-world.info/Articles\\_42/Documents/Rao.pdf](http://esp-world.info/Articles_42/Documents/Rao.pdf) [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

they start their careers in a foreign country or at home at a multinational company working with colleagues with different cultural backgrounds? Can higher educational institutes prepare students to meet these requirements? Are universities and colleges prepared to integrate these needs into their curricula? <sup>31</sup>

Internationalization should function as a basis for higher education in several fields: participating in international projects and researches; designing international content for seminars and lectures; accepting international students; employing international staff; offering international programs and foreign language classes to both national and international students; participating in teacher and student mobility programs <sup>32</sup>, and offering English for Specific Purposes courses to national and international students.

#### *Characteristics of ESP courses*

ESP course, compared to General English courses, should be designed focusing especially on the content-based and skill-based syllabus. The goal of ESP materials is not to teach grammar; but the content of the course takes the priority.<sup>33</sup>

To make distinction between General English and ESP, the latter has some absolute and variable characteristics. The absolute characteristics are:

1. It is designed to meet the specific needs of the learners.
2. Regarding its content, it is related to a particular discipline, occupation or activity.<sup>34</sup>
3. It is 'centred on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.' <sup>35</sup>

The variable characteristics are:

1. It is related to or designed for specific disciplines.
2. It is used in specific teaching situations, and with a different methodology from that of General English.
3. It is typically designed for adult learners: for students at higher educational institutions and for professionals at work situations.
4. It is generally designed for intermediate or advanced learners (never for beginners).
5. It assumes some basic knowledge of the language system.<sup>36</sup>

When we teach General English, English language is the goal of the learning process; on the other hand, when teaching ESP, English language is the medium to acquire specific new knowledge. As a usual prerequisite of ESP is some basic knowledge of English, and it is designed to learn a specific discipline, developing ESP courses must be based on needs analysis. The aim of needs analysis is to specify as exactly as possible what learners want to acquire

<sup>31</sup> Wiwczarowski, Troy – Csapóné Riskó, Tünde: Teaching International Marketing in English to Hungarian students. In: English for Specific Purposes World, Issue 43, Vol. 15, 2014. [http://esp-world.info/Articles\\_43/WIW CZAROSKI.pdf](http://esp-world.info/Articles_43/WIW CZAROSKI.pdf). [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

<sup>32</sup> Wiwczarowski - Csapóné Riskó, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Alhamami, Munassir: Implementing ESP Lessons for Engineers: Research and Practices. In: English for Specific Purposes World, Issue 43, Vol. 15, 2014. [http://esp-world.info/Articles\\_43/Alhamami.pdf](http://esp-world.info/Articles_43/Alhamami.pdf). [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

<sup>34</sup> Al-Mutairy, M. Muna: A Suggested Online Business Course (How to eBay). In: English for Specific Purposes World, Issue 42, Vol. 15, 2014. [http://esp-world.info/Articles\\_42/Documents/Al-Mutairy.pdf](http://esp-world.info/Articles_42/Documents/Al-Mutairy.pdf) [Downloaded: 11. 10. 2014.]

<sup>35</sup> Dudley-Evans, Tony – St John, Maggie Jo: Developments in English for Specific Purposes. A multi-disciplinary approach. Cambridge University Press, 1998. p.5.

<sup>36</sup> Dudley-Evans - St John, 1998.

during the learning procedure – through English.<sup>37</sup> Effective language teaching and learning, especially when we talk about English for Specific Purposes, can only be achieved if teachers are aware of their learners' needs, capabilities, potentials, and preferences<sup>38</sup>, and they intend to meet these needs in forming the content of the courses and regulating the methodology.

Regarding ESP in higher education, needs analysis should focus not only on learners' needs but also on that of employers'. It is employers who exactly know what knowledge and skills they demand from their present future employees, and who can define what knowledge and skills their employees lack, what knowledge and skills higher educational students should improve to be able to meet the requirements of the labour market.

### **E-learning course developed by the College of Dunaújváros**

E-learning, or from the other point of view, e-teaching, had been introduced at the College of Dunaújváros some years ago. There are several courses for which e-learning materials were developed; first in Hungarian. These e-learning materials were used by teachers both in pure e-learning and in blended learning as well, especially with part-time students. Regarding part-time education, there are only few contact lectures compared with full-time education, so e-learning materials could function as supplement material for students.

Nowadays, college professors together with e-learning experts and technicians have been working on developing e-learning materials in English language. These materials have double function: first they provide professional material for a particular course; second they help students to learn a foreign language. Parallel with presenting all the suitable attributes of an e-learning material, they even improve nearly all language skills of learners: reading, writing and listening; as well as they improve students' vocabulary and grammatical knowledge.

ESP e-learning courses have been and are still being developed at the College on the basis of needs analysis. On the one hand, students were asked about their language level and about their strengths and weaknesses in English. On the other hand, employers working not far from the College were asked what skills they regard significant, what skills and knowledge young employees lack. Based on the information both from today students – future employees and from today employers, college professors worked out a set of subjects that should improve students' English skills and provide academic knowledge. After the basic courses in General English, students could study basic ESP courses suitable on the labour market, such as presentation and negotiation techniques. The third phase of improving students' specific English knowledge is learning university academic subjects in English. These courses have been designed and developed to improve different language skills and support students to be able to acquire professional knowledge in English.<sup>39</sup>

ESP courses have more and more significance among higher education students: they are aware of the importance of speaking a foreign language, especially English. While most students are absolutely conscious about the significance of English on the labour market, most of them do not satisfied with their language knowledge; however some have a language exam certificate. All this means that students from the College of Dunaújváros, like most other students in higher education, believe that ESP courses are important so that they could have better chances on the labour market.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Dudley-Evans - St John, 1998.

<sup>38</sup> Rao, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> András, István – Kiss, Natália: What makes (or not) a college student want to learn a foreign language? Revisiting the concept of motivation. <http://www.eduscience.hu> under publication.

<sup>40</sup> András – Kiss. under publication

*E-learning course: Social Science*

One of the subjects for which English language e-learning material has been developed is *Social Science*. As all e-learning courses, Social Science course is Internet based; the software background for the material is provided by Moodle framework system. The e-learning course could be available by learners after applying for the particular course in Neptun.

The e-learning course has a module-based structure: it is divided into 14 modules, each of which is divided into 4 chapters in general (minimum 2 and maximum 5). The detailed structure of the course can be seen after the accession to the course, on the left hand side of the web page. The structure of each chapter is built in the same way, containing the following parts. (As far as guidelines, learning material and control questions are concerned, a short example is given in this paper, written in *italics*.)

1. Guidelines for acquiring the material:

- Aim of the chapter.

*'To learn the changes in the family pattern, the functions and the characteristic features of Western-type family.'*

- Requirements: what learners should do to be able to learn the material.

*'You could acquire the material if you could name the stages of the family, you could list the changes contributing to the modern family, you could list the characteristic features of Western-type family, and you could list minimum 6 functions of family.'*

- Time needed to learn the chapter.

*'25 minutes'*

2. A short video presenting the most significant parts of the chapter.

- The teacher can be seen as he/she is giving a lecture explaining the Power Point presentation in details.

3. Presentation of the video file converted into pdf file.

4. Animation:

- Animations show specific processes that could help students to understand material more precisely, or special matching task that contain pictures, diagrams, figures, and textual information. It must be stated that not all chapters contain animation.

5. Learning material:

- Key words and key phrases of the chapter. They help learners to focus their attention on the most important concepts of the particular chapter.

*'nuclear family, emotional bonds, extended family, father's authoritarian power, marital and parental love, kin groups, arranged marriages, spouse, decision-making, children's rights, same-sex partnership, monogamous partnership, 'serial monogamy', patrilineal, neo-local, consumption, reproduction, socializing children, providing mental, emotional and physical care'*

- Learning material might be divided into two or more subchapters according to the complexity of the material. Learning material is a textual file composed with full sentences, sometimes providing the main ideas and concepts in bullet points. Each learning material starts with describing the suitable activity shortly.
  - Activity: includes the main activities students should do to acquire the chapter successfully.

Activity: 'Consider and take notes in your book about the key features of Western families and the functions of the family.'

'Although families are considerably diverse, there are some common and key features that characterize mainly Western families.'

*Monogamous partnership: According to Western legislation, a person can have only one wife or husband at one time. However, due to the high number of divorce, many sociologists call today monogamy 'serial monogamy': having a number of spouses in sequence. Many claim that Western monogamy is misleading as a high proportion of people engage in sexual intercourse with a person other than their spouse.'*

#### 1. Control questions

- There are 3 control questions at the end of each chapter. Learners can do control questions several times or they can go on studying the module without answering all control questions properly.

*'True and false*

1. *The same-sex partnership is accepted all over the world.* F
2. *Marital love was not the most important bond of marriages in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.* T
3. *Sex had much less importance in marriages in earlier times than today.* T'

Except for the learning elements a chapter consists of there are some elements that can be found not in each chapter, such as animation, and the ones that can be found only on the module level: test questions and complex task. Animations are suitable for all students to understand different processes, relationships or grouping better. They are especially perfect for learners whose visual memory is better, who can remember and understand processes, operations and relations much better if they see them.

Besides control questions at the end of each chapter, modules finish with 15 test questions. Both control and test questions are typically closed questions, such as true and false, multiple choice, matching, short answer. However, there are some differences between control and test questions. While the learner can go on studying without answering control questions properly, test questions are obligatory to do. Although students can try to answer test questions several times to be able to give the correct answers, the results of the last trial are accounted into the final result of the course. While control questions are generally easier, test questions are more difficult and complex; they want students to think in a complex way and see the module as a whole.

Besides test questions, each module contains a complex task that students must do on their own, based on all the material provided in the module. The task needs creativity and thinking independently, as well as persuades students to express their own ideas. Regarding the course of Social Science, the complex task is mostly essay writing. To be able to do the task properly, learners should acquire the key words and phrases, the main ideas of all chapters of the module, understand connection and relations between concepts and ideas, and express their own ideas and experience freely on a reasonably good level in English in writing. Students must upload their essays to the Moodle on a particular time.

*Elements of e-learning material: meeting the criteria*

Reviewing the parts of chapters, it contains various elements that improve several skills and provide materials for different types of students. The guideline helps learners what they should do at the end of the chapter and how they are able to learn the material. Videos work as visual aids and provide listening comprehension too; moreover, students can see the teacher, virtually, though. Videos are considered as a significant part of the e-learning material, as a lot of students, who have got used to traditional lessons with a real teacher, prefer seeing and listening

to a real person, who is the teacher of the course, indeed. Presentation files work as in traditional teaching-learning process in higher education: give the main points of the lecture, the key words and phrases, in writing supplemented with some pictures or diagrams.

The textual learning materials work as literature for the course, and it provides full written texts for students that they could be able to learn the material precisely. While presentation slides in pdf format, like video files, contain only the most important parts of the material, textual files, the so called college notes include the whole material in full sentences. Each chapter finishes with three control questions. Control questions work as feedback for learners: show them on what level they could acquire the chapter.

E-learning materials are often criticised for the fact that they check learners' acquired knowledge only with tests, which mainly contain closed question, and they did not check whether learners can express their own ideas in a complex way. Although writing and correcting essays is rather time-consuming for teachers and even for students as well, it gives a complex picture about learners' knowledge, and what is more, it improves students' writing skills.

Except for the content elements, the e-learning course contains different kinds of online supports for students. There is a built-in tutorial hour. It means that on a previously defined day and hour both the teacher and the students are on-line, the teacher is with a web-camera, and they can discuss questions, problems about the subject matter: the teacher can explain something or show charts or diagrams regarding the material. Tutorial hour looks like a face-to-face explanation, as students can see the teacher and can discuss problems with them – like in a contact lecture or seminar. Besides fixed time tutorial hours, students can enter forums, where they can ask and discuss question with both the teachers and with other students of the course. Except for forums, students can chat with one another and with the teacher in various chat rooms. All these forms help students to acquire the material as precisely as possible, as contacting with the teacher and the other students of the course provides opportunity for students to discuss all their questions and clear ambiguities.

Revising the typical features a good e-learning material should be characterized, we can state that e-learning material developed by the College of Dunaújváros meets nearly all the criteria. The structure of the whole course is precisely worked out, students can see it all the time when they access to the e-learning course. The course is divided into modules, the modules into chapters, each of which has the same structure. The written texts contain theoretical explanations of concepts supplemented by illustrations if needed. Animations help students to understand operations and processes. Control and test questions intend to check learners' knowledge, while complex tasks make students solve problems and real life situations. Using different multimedia devices and applying various forms of learning material, such as video, animation, presentation, text, and test, enables all kinds of students to acquire the material of the course. Students are assessed on the base of their tests, which have to be done after each module, and on the basis of the hand-in complex task. Regarding the specialities of the task, students can receive point, grades and/or textual feedback on their work.

The tutorial hour, the forum and chat provide a live connection between the teacher and the students, however far they are from one another; and provide good opportunity for students to understand material as much as possible.

The e-learning material does not meet only one criterion: pre-surveying students' knowledge at the beginning of the course. Although the program is not suitable for this purpose, it is not a deficiency of the e-learning material. The College has a precisely worked out validation system: on the basis of documents, students can be released from the obligation of doing the course at the very beginning of the semester. It means that all the students who apply for the course did not study this subject – or perhaps a very similar one – during their previous studies, so their knowledge cannot and should not be pre-surveyed.

### *Elements of ESP course: meeting the criteria*

The e-learning 'Social Science' course is designed for the specific needs of college students and the requirements of employers. The content of the course follows general topics of social science, such as employment, social stratification, gender problems, and deviation. The language of the course contains adequate vocabulary suitable to discuss social science topics; while the register of the textual written material is that of academic writing. It means the course provides specific vocabulary in English on academic level: students do not only learn appropriate vocabulary but they can acquire how to express themselves in academic style.

Students learn 'Social Science' course as the third phase of ESP, which means that they have accumulated enough English knowledge to be able to acquire minimum intermediate level vocabulary and lexis of the material. The course is developed for higher education students, part of them are full-time, while some of them are part-time students – but all of them adults. The ones who go to correspondent courses generally have work experience: they usually work parallel with their studies. Most of our full-time students have work experience as well, as they have part-time jobs while going to college courses. Both groups experience the requirements of employers and the labour market and so they can easily understand that having specific English vocabulary and speaking minimum intermediate English provide them better opportunities on the labour market.

### **Conclusions**

E-learning materials and ESP courses are considered to be trendy: many higher educational institutes develop e-learning and ESP courses. The e-learning material developed by the College of Dunaújváros meets all the criteria: it directs students' learning process with the guideline, provides not only the text of the course but short video films with the teacher explaining the material and the slides of the presentation, assess students' knowledge at the end of the chapters and the modules through control and test questions as well as the complex task, and provides feedback for students about their progress. The material is specific from linguistic point of view as it provides professional ESP college course, which helps students to learn their profession in English.

The structure of the e-learning material is absolutely clear; the elements contribute to students' progress and ensure them to finish the course successfully. Although full-time college students can use e-learning course material during their studies, e-learning material can support part-time students' progress much as it might supplement contact lectures material, providing the course subject matter in details. Control and test questions allow students to check their knowledge regularly and receive feedback, without the teacher's direct control.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, higher education students often apply to an institute or courses online – living far from the institute itself. The pace of life often does not allow spending hours on travelling to school (college or university) and on sitting in a classroom. That is why e-learning courses are getting more and more popular with higher education students. Moreover, young generations, generation Y and especially generation Z, are used to apply digital devices in all fields of life, including studying. This generation prefers downloading online material available on the internet and taking parts in a virtual lesson in a virtual classroom to studying from a real book in a real classroom. And that is the generation for whom speaking a foreign language is inevitable, but at least more natural than for generation X; and that is the generation who aspire to achieve a good position on the labour market, and they know it is impossible without speaking minimum one foreign language on intermediate level and know and use the job-specific vocabulary rather in an active way.

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## Developing Intercultural Communicative Competences through Internet Activities in an EFL Teacher's Book

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**Abstract:** The boom of information and communication technologies (ICT) of the last two decades has influenced the world of education and thus the area of foreign language teaching (FLT) in a way that challenges both teachers' and students' overall competences. Due to the wide range of traditional course-books and their complements as well as the great variety of other educational media, today's teachers are given the opportunity to make their lessons more enjoyable and motivating. In addition, thanks to the different means of communication and mass media they have the access to other learning resources, too, bringing thus the real language in the classroom. However, there are a lot of demands made upon the sources used in the FL classroom. Apart from many other requirements, in more recent times the stress has also been placed on the socio-cultural background of the communicative situation, i.e. on the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). It is based on the philosophy that language and culture are inseparable phenomena; in addition, it also includes the aspect of understanding and respecting the target culture, as well as the reinforcement of one's own cultural identity. The purpose of the present paper was to find out whether the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book contributed to the development of ICC. Carrying out a content analysis it also compared into what extent the different components of ICC were paid attention to.

**Key words:** Intercultural communicative competence, Internet activities, EFL course-book packages, content analysis

### Introduction

Due to the technological development, a number of ICT connected student's book complements have appeared in the last two decades. However, despite some mistaken predictions, they have neither replaced traditional course-book package components, nor decreased their importance. On the contrary, they actually contribute to the success of EFL lessons by enriching the content of the lessons through their entertaining character, by motivating students and fostering their overall competences, including computer or technical skills (Sándorová, 2013).

One of the most popular ICT based components a course-book package can offer is the use of DVDs (replacing videocassettes used in the past), with or without a student's activity book. Students can benefit mainly from their content full of entertaining elements and the rich input of the target culture.

Some student's books, such as "Solutions", also comprise a MultiROM which is a compact disc containing extra activities and further listening practice, as well as free access to interactive exam practice at a website given by the publisher (Falla – Davies, 2008).

Another type of technology-dependent accessories of course-book packages are so-called "iTools", a set of digital resources for Interactive Whiteboards which are large white display boards connected to a computer. There is a wide range of software programmes designed for use in the English language classrooms, many of which have feed-back feature built in, thus providing the chance for self-study and self-assessment (Gower et al., 1995).

Last but not least, some student's books or their components also offer activities which use the opportunities given by the Internet. As it is generally agreed, the Internet, as the most powerful resource, can serve for numerous purposes. Used either in the classroom, or at home, it provides a rich source of free language-learning materials, an infinite well of visual, audio-visual materials on various topics, a fund of dictionaries and encyclopaedias, as well as the channel for interacting with other people (Kárpáti, 2003, Muggleston, 2006). Internet activities in student's

books and their components, usually also including teaching notes and student worksheets, comprise searching and extracting information, as well as sharing and discussing what has been found during the online phase (Mugglestone, *ibid.*). When searching the Internet, sometimes students are asked to use a particular website or websites; in addition, with certain tasks they are instructed to choose from a list of websites given by the book or use search engines of their own choice to find the requested piece of information.

Apart from the aspects of educating, entertaining and motivating learners, there are also some other requirements the above mentioned teaching aids are expected to fulfil. One of the new roles they should gradually acquire is the role of mediator between the home and the target culture, i.e. the role of “presenting the country in a nut-shell” (Risager, 1991, p. 191).

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the cultural input in FL course-books. For example, the aim of the research conducted by Aliakbari (2005) was to find out whether current ELT textbooks in Iran provided sufficient support to develop learners’ ICC. Based upon these results, Aliakbari assumed that the analysed Iranian textbooks failed to develop ICC; therefore, a shift in the ideology of ELT and thus also in developing textbooks would be necessary.

Another example, carried out by Mineshima (2008), was an investigation about how genders were portrayed in a Japanese upper secondary-school English textbook. Based on the findings, Mineshima concluded that the examined textbook contributed to an egalitarian and broad-minded manifestation of both genders, strengthening their equal position in different fields of life.

One of the more recent studies was provided by Liu (2012) who investigated textbooks in order to identify which type and what kind of culture was present in Chinese EFL university textbooks. The results of the analysis revealed that the cultural content in more than half of the examined textbooks fell into the category of unidentifiable sources. In addition, identified cultural content was dominated by the target culture, while international target culture and home culture were present in a very small proportion.

A current study was conducted by two Spanish researchers, Oñate and Amador (2013) who examined what role the intercultural component had played in Business English textbooks since the 1960s. With regard to the results that showed a significant development in integrating culture to Business English language teaching, they drew up the conclusion that current Business English textbooks increase student’s cultural awareness and lead them to a respectful as well as sensitive attitude toward other cultures.

Apparently, the above mentioned studies had a different focus; yet, they had something in common, for they all applied the method of content analysis to investigate the cultural dimension in FL textbooks. This fact seems to be in correspondence with the recommendation provided by Cunningsworth (1995). According to him, in order to find out whether a particular material has the potential to foster learners’ ICC effectively, an in-depth analysis must be undertaken, in which we actively look for information in the material according to criteria we have decided on prior to it. Therefore, the following part of the paper is devoted to aspects that must be taken into consideration when investigating the cultural content of a course-book package.

### **Criteria for analysing the cultural content in FL course-books packages**

Comparing the checklists provided by different authors in the given area, we have come to the conclusion that it is the model provided by Hatoss (2004) which, using straightforward questions, takes into consideration all the aspects of ICC. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper we have decided to develop our own criteria based upon its main principles. In addition, similarly to Reid (2014), combining it with the components determined in the CEFR (2001), a set of categories and codes has been drawn up (See Tables 1- 4). The next part of the study

provides an overview of the criteria suggested by Hatoss (ibid.) and applied in the content analysis of the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book.

According to Hatoss (ibid.), when examining the textual and visual input in a particular FL course, first of all, it is important to consider whether the cultural content develops learners' sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Sociocultural knowledge has been included in the most of FL courses; however, there is a great difference into what extent and in what way it is treated in various materials. Last but not least, factors, such as paralinguistic and semiotic input also deserve attention, as they play an important role in mediating culture.

### **Sociolinguistic input**

"As it is impossible to separate language from culture, it is equally impossible to separate language from its social aspects" (Hatoss, ibid., p. 26); hence, sociolinguistic competences refer to the ability to use the language with regard to various sociocultural contexts. It involves "linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk-wisdom, register differences, dialect and accent" (CEFR, ibid., p. 118).

### **Developing pragmatic competence**

The second aspect that must be taken into consideration is, whether the input improves learners' pragmatic competences, which refers to the ability to use the language appropriately for particular purposes with regard to the sociocultural context. They can be further divided into discourse, functional competence and design competence (CEFR, ibid.).

Discourse and design competences relate to the ability to produce a coherent text, both written and spoken with regard to the principles of text design, flexibility, turn-taking, thematic development, coherence and cohesion.

Functional competence stands for the ability to use the language for different purposes, both in written and spoken form. It comprises categories for the functional use of single utterances which are referred to as "microfunctions", "macrofunctions", i.e. categories for the use of sentence sequences, as well as "interaction schemata" which stand for the sequence of activities realised by the communication partners (ibid.).

### **Sociocultural knowledge**

In connection to the sociocultural knowledge involved in a particular FL course, two questions arise. One of them is whether the FL provides only "surface culture" or it also mediates some invisible elements of cultural knowledge (Hatoss, ibid.). In other words, it is not enough for an FL course to teach aspects of everyday living, such as food and drink, meal times or table manners. Learners must also be acquainted with some unwritten rules of behaviour of the target culture, such as punctuality, presents, dress, etc. (ibid.). In addition, values and beliefs in relation to social class, occupational groups, regional cultures, humour, etc. that are hidden under the surface have a strong impact on the communication, as well. In connection with visible and invisible elements of the target culture, the aspects of intercultural awareness, such as stereotype formation and handling atypical or individual elements must be also taken into consideration (ibid.). Last but not least, interpersonal relations with respect to class or family structure, relations between generations, sexes, etc. and ritual behaviour in areas such as religious observances and rites, etc. differ from one culture to another, too (ibid.).

The second question connected with this issue is, whether the particular FL course caters for both "high" and "low" culture; the former referring to issues such as arts including music, visual arts or literature, whilst the latter standing for dimensions of everyday living.

Apart from the given distinctive features, the CEFR (ibid., p. 102) emphasises that "factual knowledge concerning the country or countries in which the language is spoken, such as its

major geographical, environmental, demographic, economic and political features is of considerable importance to the learner of a particular language". Therefore, even though this aspect is considered to be part of the knowledge of the world, and thus as one of the components of FL users' declarative knowledge, it is important to pay attention to this perspective, as well, when examining the sociocultural input in a given FL course-book.

### **Para-linguistic and para-textual input**

The intercultural dimension of communication considers the paralinguistic and para-textual aspect to be equally important, as it is a powerful tool both in conveying messages and influencing attitudes, and consequently may foster or setback the whole process of conversation (Hatoss, *ibid.*). According to the CEFR, the para-linguistic input includes practical actions that accompany language activities, body language, extra-linguistic speech sounds and prosodic qualities (See Table 1). In addition, the evaluation of elements with semantic reference, such as photos, drawings, maps, etc., should not be neglected either. On one hand, these para-textual features should correspond with the cultural content of the FL course; on the other hand, it is also important to evaluate how the semiotic input expresses what it has to express with regard to the impact on learners' attitude towards the target culture.

### **The factor of method**

Apart from the above listed aspects, Hatoss (*ibid.*) outlines that it is also important to consider whether and how the course-book and its components teach the cultural input, i.e. whether they do so explicitly or implicitly. Culture is taught explicitly when students are actively involved in developing their cultural competence, i.e. when they are "constantly confronted with different values, different perspectives, traditions, and the ways of interpreting the world" (*ibid.*, p. 29). The aim is that learners become "critical intercultural speakers". In these terms, it is also important to consider whether the learners are only exposed to the cultural input, or they are provided the opportunity to reflect on it. Another aspect of the confronting way of teaching cultural input is the role of the learners' first culture; as building learners' awareness of their own culture is an essential part of developing their intercultural competences.

Resulting from the above presented theoretical and empirical background, the present research aimed at finding out whether the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book had the potential to foster learners' ICC effectively. The methodology of the research is discussed in the following part of the study.

### **Research design**

The **main aim** of the study was to find out whether the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book contribute to the development of ICC.

**Further objectives** of the study included, as follows:

To identify into what extent the different components of ICC are paid attention to while carrying out a content analysis of the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book.

To find out whether the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book develop learners' ICC by using explicit methods of teaching.

### **Research questions**

With regard to the main aim, the following question was stated:

Do the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book foster the development of ICC?

### Further research questions

Into what extent do the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book contribute to the development of sociolinguistic competences?

Into what extent do the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book contribute to the development of pragmatic competences?

Into what extent do the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book contribute to the development of paralinguistic competences?

Into what extent do the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book contribute to the enrichment of sociocultural knowledge?

Do the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book develop learners' ICC consciously, i.e. explicitly?

### Research sample

Originally, it was intended to analyse the content of those links which were provided on pages 162 – 166 in the Internet activities part of the New Opportunities Intermediate teacher's book. However, during the analysis unforeseen obstacles occurred.

The first activity, titled "Get extreme!" instructed students to use either one of the six listed websites or to use search engines to find information on five different types of extreme sports. Checking the content of the given webpages, there was not found a single reference to the searched issues, though. Hence, using the search engine <http://www.google.com>, the content of the first ten results, i.e. links was analysed. It means that a number of fifty different webpages was examined from the given point of view.

In the second part which was titled "Finding your way", students were asked to find information by using the Heathrow Airport Guide website (<http://heathrow-airport-guide.co.uk>), as well as the official website of the J.F. Kennedy Airport (<http://www.panynj.gov/airports/jfk.html>). In correspondence with the given tasks, eight webpages were investigated in total.

The next group of activities was focused on looking for information in newspapers written in English. Using the link <http://www.onlinenewspaper.com>, the first task was to find out what the main news were in two different newspapers, published in two different countries of two different continents. However, the list of sources comprising hundreds of sources made it impossible to investigate the given perspective. Similarly, the analysis of two randomly chosen newspapers (as instructed) seemed useless and inadequate, as students might opt for other alternatives and that could bring completely different results. Therefore, the given task was skipped.

Continuing with the second task of the "Papers" activities, students were instructed to find two papers that came from the same city/region using <http://www.neseum.org/todaysfrontpages/>. The wide range of the offered papers, similarly to the previous link, made the analysis unrealisable, though. Hence, the content of the two example sources, i.e. *Chicago Sun Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, was examined. As students were asked to complete four headlines, in total four articles (two breaking news per each) were analysed. The reason, why full articles (and not only the headlines) were investigated, was that students were also asked to change the headlines which would be quite impossible without skimming the text of the news.

The last, fourth activity, titled "A place not to forget", was focused on different aspects of the ancient civilisation of Egyptians. Students were asked to collect data using <http://www.civilisation.ca/civil/egypt/egypte.html> and <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pyramids/pyramids.html>. However, in the case of the latter, the same problem occurred as with the first activity, i.e. that there was only one photo of the pyramids at Giza and students would not be able to choose two of them by simply

clicking on them, as instructed. As far as the former activity is concerned, the total number of analysed webpages was eight.

To sum up, the research sample comprised seventy links.

### **Instrumentation**

For the purpose of the study, a list of categories and codes (See part Results and discussions) was applied, which, based on the model of Reid (ibid.), also draws on the recommendations of Hatoss (ibid.), as well as the CEFR (ibid.).

### **Procedure and data analysis**

The first stage included the analysis of the Internet activities teaching notes and the four worksheets designed for the Internet student activities. According to the instructions, the content analysis of the suggested links was carried out applying the template of codes and categories and collecting data in tables. At a later stage, the frequency of the occurrence of each code was identified. It was followed by the interpretation of results, as well as providing conclusions based on the findings. Last but not least, some recommendations both for the teachers and the authors were also provided.

### **Results and discussion**

Below, the complete results are presented, being structured in five main parts reflecting the research questions and the categories of the applied research instrument.

### **Sociolinguistic competences**

The three most frequently occurring aspects of sociolinguistic competences were *expressions of folk wisdom* (code number 8), *dialect and accent* (code number 10), as well as *expletives and fillers* (code number 3). However, expressions of folk wisdom, which in this case included only examples of idioms, were almost exclusively connected to the activities focused on papers; while the group of dialect and accent, as well as expletives and fillers occurred mainly in spoken discourse, i.e. videos on extreme sports. Furthermore, when it comes to the issue of dialect and accent, both American and British English was treated equally; other geographical and regional varieties were not found, though. Apart from it, the attention to differences between British, American and Canadian English in lexicon was paid attention to six times.

Another frequently used aspect on the Heathrow Airport Guide website was code number 6, i.e. *appropriate use of please*. In addition, *register differences* (code number 9) could be traced in six cases, as the participants of the examined videos gave instructions using linguistic devices of informal speech, such as fillers, slang expressions, expletives, etc. The analysed examples of written discourse, with regard to register, can be characterised as neutral.

The least frequent aspects comprised linguistic markers of social relations, i.e. *greeting* (code number 1) and *addressing* (code number 2), as well as politeness conventions; whilst the former occurred only in the spoken samples, the latter was rather typical for written texts. The perspective of *positive politeness* (code number 4) consisted only of examples of wishing, found in three different contexts. Furthermore, the only datum of impoliteness was found and explained as an entry in an Internet dictionary. Finally, the aspect that did not occurred at all was *negative politeness* (code number 5).

Code N.	Codes	Occurrence	Example
1	Greetings	5	Hello. Good Morning Crazy Abseilers!
2	Addressing	1	Good Morning Crazy Abseilers! (informal)
3	Using expletives and fillers	13	You know. Perfect!
4	Positive politeness	3	Good luck! Enjoy!
5	Negative politeness	-	-
6	Appropriate use of	10	Please. Thank you.
7	Impoliteness	1	Potholing (To have sex with a cheap woman).
8	Expressions of folk wisdom	18	All of the sudden, She's in good spirits, pulling the plug on her job, etc.
9	Register differences	6	Informal – videos on giving instructions.
10	Dialect, accent	14	(Phonology: 1 American, 3 British, lexicon: rapping (AmE)/deepeling (CaE)/abbing (BrE)

Table 1 The occurrence of the aspects of sociolinguistic competences

In order to answer the first research question, it cannot be claimed that the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book do not cater for sociolinguistic competences. However, when the results are compared to the total number of the analysed sample, i.e. seventy links full of detailed instructions and information, it seems that the extent to which the examined material draws attention to the social background of communicative situations, is rather unsatisfactory. What is more, it is done implicitly (for the exception of linguistic markers of lexicon), i.e. in a way that does not involve students actively in the process of developing their sociolinguistic skills.

### Pragmatic competences

As it can be seen in Table 2, code number 14, i.e. suasion was the most frequently occurring issue of all the aspects of pragmatic competences, as it was found in different contexts 225 times. However, it must be mentioned that it mainly comprised examples of giving advice concerning extreme sports and instances of offers, provided by firms selling special equipment or the Heathrow Airport.

Furthermore, an almost equal occurrence could be traced in case of four issues, i.e. *discourse competence* (code number 11), *imparting and seeking factual information* (code number 12), *expressing and finding out attitudes* (code number 13) and *structuring discourse and communication repair* (code number 16). It is noteworthy to mention that the first two and the fourth, which were connected to activities focused on papers, were found when analysing the content of the Internet activities teaching notes and worksheets designed for the Internet student activities. On the other hand, the third one, which contained examples of expressing opinion, occurred mainly in videos on extreme sports. Last but not least, code number 15, i.e. *socialising* was the only aspect of pragmatic competences that could not be developed through the given links at all.

Code N.	Codes	Occurrence	Example
11	<b>Discourse competence</b>	5	Write a description of either of the airports. Choose one of the headlines and write the story for it. Try to write in a “tabloid” style. (thematic development, coherence and cohesion);
12	<b>Imparting and seeking factual information</b>	10	Find out what the main news is in the major newspapers there. (looking for information); Summarise the main news for your partner.(reporting);
13	<b>Expressing and finding out attitudes</b>	7	That’s pretty frightening! This is scary! I’m very-very scared.(expressing opinion and feelings);
14	<b>Suasion</b>	225	Bond and unwind in an awesome way, and out of any comfort zones! (offer);Your body should look like a turtle with a bend spine. (advice); Before you start riding a kneeboard it’s always advisable to warm up and stretch your body. (advice);
15	<b>Socialising</b>	-	-
16	<b>Structuring discourse and communication repair</b>	6	I gonna talk... (opening); ... And that’s how to abseil (closing);

Table 2 The occurrence of the aspects of pragmatic competences

To sum up, based on the findings, the answer to the second research question is a kind of controversial one, as there is a considerable difference in treating the particular components of pragmatic competences. Secondly, even though the list of advice-giving on extreme sports and commercial offers is very long, it does not necessarily mean that the aspect of suasion is developed adequately; as these are only two issues of the wide range of functions suasion comprises. Last but not least, the fact that students’ attention is not drawn consciously to these instances indicates that fostering learners’ pragmatic skills through the given activities might be considered as rather insufficient.

### Paralinguistic (non-verbal communication) competences and the para-textual input

Based on the data displayed in Table 3, there were only two codes the Internet activities catered for. Obviously, the most frequently occurring aspect of para-linguistic competences was *practical actions* (code number 17); thank to the videos provided by the examined websites. This can be seen as an advantage of the Internet activities in comparison with other parts of the course-book; where this aspect is rather neglected. Understandably, due to the text-dominant character of this teaching aid it is difficult, (even though it is not impossible), to include activities which would focus on the non-verbal (but also verbal) communication tools while pointing and demonstrating. In addition, analysing the given Internet pages there were also found examples of *body language* (code number 18); as they included seven instances of gestures, i.e. hand signals used when knee-boarding.

As far as the para-textual input is concerned, there were twenty-two different photos connected to the content of websites, the majority of which showed different places in English speaking

countries. Furthermore, the aspect of every-day living was also represented by the picture of an American footballer and his equipment.

Regarding the types of activities, it can be claimed that semiotic input reflecting the target culture was present only in the parts focused on extreme sports and newspapers. What is more, it can be assumed that the latter catered for the given aspect much more, as there was a photo corresponding with the content of every investigated article.

Code N.	Codes	Occurrence	Example
17	Practical actions	57	Abseiling on Tablemountain: demonstration, clearly observable actions ; Knee-boarding – pointing, clearly observable actions;etc.;
18	Body language	7	Knee-boarding: hand signals;
19	Extra linguistic speech	-	-
20	Prosodic qualities	-	-
21	Para-textual features	22	Photo – places in Canada, Obama, American football; Videos showing the landscape of Alaska and Australia, etc.;

Table 3 The occurrence of the aspects of paralinguistic competences and the para-textual input

To draw up conclusion, as the examples of hand movements have a rather international character and do not reflect the gestures of the target culture, the only aspect of paralinguistic competences that could be developed through the analysed Internet activities is practical actions including pointing, demonstration as well as clearly observable actions. However, for all the other components of non-verbal communication are missing, the answer to the second research question is that the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book do not contribute effectively to the development of paralinguistic competences. Especially, if we take into consideration the fact that websites usually provide a lot of opportunities to teach body language, extra linguistic speech or prosodic qualities through a large number of videos and photos. On the other hand, regarding the para-textual part of the examined issue, it must be noted that the semiotic input of the analysed activities has the potential to enrich the socio-cultural – factual knowledge of learners.

### Socio-cultural/ declarative knowledge

As it is shown in Table 4, scanning the content of the given websites fifty-nine examples of *factual knowledge* (code number 22) were found; including mostly places of different English speaking countries as well as some of their politicians. Furthermore, an almost equal occurrence of *Everyday living* (code number 23) and *Values, beliefs, attitudes* (code number 27) issues could be traced; the former containing information mainly on the way of spending free time, whilst the latter comprising some instances of events, institutions as well as references to the history of the countries where English is an official language.

Code N.	Codes	Occurrence	Example
22	Factual knowledge	59	Geographical facts, e.g. Yorkshire, Table Mountain National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, etc. and political, e.g. Queen Elizabeth II, president Obama, etc.;
23	Everyday living (p. 102) – low culture	14	Information connected mainly to hobbies, e.g. „Zorbing can also be done on a level surface in pubs and clubs around the UK“; Snow-kiting is getting popular in the U.S., etc.;
24	High culture	-	-
25	Living conditions (p. 102)	-	-
26	Interpersonal relations (p. 102)	-	-
27	Values, beliefs, attitudes, (p. 103)	15	Events, e.g. The International Kneeboard Championships; institutions: Air Canada, British Airways; White House, history: gold rush, Lincoln;
28	Social conventions (p. 103)	-	-
29	Ritual behaviour (p. 103)	-	-
30	Intercultural awareness, Intercultural skills and know-how	-	-

*Table 4* The occurrence of the aspects of sociocultural knowledge

To sum up, as only three out of nine aspects of sociocultural knowledge could be fostered through the given activities, it can be assumed that the attention paid to the given component of ICC by the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book is rather limited. However, it is also noteworthy to mention that the majority of the websites, especially those connected to activities which focused on extreme sports and newspapers, provided a rich source of geographical facts of English speaking countries.

### **The factor of method**

As far as the way of teaching culture is concerned, it can be stated that neither the Internet activities teaching notes, nor the worksheets designed for the Internet student activities drew learners' attention to any of the aspects of ICC. It means that the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book did not aimed at developing ICC intentionally, i.e. explicitly. Consequently, the aspects of ICC discussed in the previous part of this paper, were "taught" implicitly and their occurrence on the analysed websites was rather accidental.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

In the light of the answers to our further research questions, it cannot be claimed that learners' ICC could not be developed by the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book at all. As it was discussed, all its components, i.e. sociolinguistic, pragmatic, paralinguistic and para-textual as well as sociocultural competences were represented into a greater or lesser extent on the analysed websites. Yet, the fact that only certain aspects of these

components occurred on the total amount of seventy analysed websites proves that the attention paid to the issue of ICC is unsatisfactory. In addition, the implicit character of the cultural input makes us draw the conclusion that it was not an objective of the textbook writers to foster learner's ICC through the Internet activities in New Opportunities Intermediate Teacher's Book; respectively, it was rather unintentional. Hence, in the following part of the study a number of recommendations is provided, both for the writers of the book as well as the teachers using it; for the former to improve its content, while for the latter to exploit its potential to the maximum.

### **Recommendations for the authors/publishers of the book**

As it is commonly acknowledged culture should not be treated as extra skill, but integrated intentionally in the process of improving all the four communication skills (Reid, 2014). With regard to this principle, it can be claimed that out of the four groups of activities, only the one using the official websites of London Heathrow and JF Kennedy Airport, works with authentic sources of the target country. Yet, even these pages do not really contain a lot of instances of the target culture, nor they provide sufficient practice for developing ICC. Furthermore, even though two other activities dealing with extreme sports and newspapers offer some possibilities to foster ICC; it depends on students' choices as well as teachers' willingness to exploit the cultural content and their methods of teaching it. Last but not least, the activity focused on the ancient Egyptian civilisation does not cater for the culture of the English speaking countries at all, nor it contains any examples of the aspects of ICC. Therefore, it would be advisable to design activities which would consciously lead students to authentic sources of the target countries with a rich cultural input. Furthermore, it is equally important that the selected webpages cater for all the components of ICC. Last but not least, the activities should actively involve students in developing their ICC, e.g. by providing opportunities to reflect on what has been read or heard, by raising their awareness of their own culture, etc.

A second option would be to offer a new list of websites to the already existing activities. However, in both cases it is important to map the content of the pages thoroughly prior to instructing teachers and students to use them; the reasons that lay behind are not necessarily connected with the objective to incorporate cultural issues in the activities, though. Although the Introduction part of the Teacher's Book refers to the websites as stable and permanent, some of them fail to fulfil this requirement. As it is known, in three cases the instructions seemed to be incorrect, for the given websites either could not be found or did not contain the requested information or did not give any options to choose from. Similarly, the recommended New Opportunities website did not contain any updated information; hence, time to time it would be advisable to check the accessibility of the sources and to draw teachers' attention, using the given website, to any changes, as suggested.

### **Recommendations for teachers**

According to Gower et al. (1995, p. 78), "... the success of a course-book depends, to a large extent, on how well it is used by the teacher". In the case of the Internet activities offered by the New Opportunities Teacher's Book teachers can improve and exploit its content in several ways.

First of all, it is of particular importance to check the content and accessibility of the provided webpages in advance. Secondly, in case of the activities that have the potential to develop learners' ICC, i.e. the first three activities, it would be advisable to draw students' attention to cultural issues, make them aware of cultural similarities and differences; in other words, to teach the input explicitly. This can even lead to some changes in the content or methodology of the activities; however, it cannot be seen as something wrong as course-books and their accessories have "to be at the service of teachers and learners but not to be their masters" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 7) or "tyrants" (Williams, 1982, p. 254). To be concrete, in the activity

titled "Papers", instead of instructing students to choose two different countries of two different continents, (e.g. Mongolia and Brazil), it would be more advisable to make them opt for newspapers published by two different target countries (e.g. Canada and Australia).

Last but not least, if the input is considered to be inadequate with regard to the aim to foster learners' ICC, as in the fourth case, teachers are encouraged to supplement it by other activities or webpages. For example, the secrets of the ancient Egyptian civilisation could be also traced through the website of the British Museum, etc.

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## “Once Upon a Byte”: Interactive E-literature in Language Teaching

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**Abstract** The World Wide Web and Information Technologies (ITs) challenge the way we live, think but also the way we read and perceive literary texts. The paper discusses e-literature and digital narratives as relatively new constructs whose popularity has been on the rise among the net generation – a term widely used to denote children born at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the era of a so-called digital revolution. First, digital narratives as new, interactive forms of children’s literature are explored so as to inspect the ways in which various semiotic devices (such as flashbacks, cuts, hyperlinks, non-linear progressions, etc.) used in these e-texts challenge the role of the reader who is expected to actively interact with the story and/or progress it through adopting a virtual identity. The second part of the paper examines the question of employing e-literature in the process of language teaching.

**Key words:** E-literature, new literary forms, hypertext, digital narrative, language teaching

### Introduction: From “Once Upon a Time” to “Once Upon a Byte”

When in 1967 a French literary scholar Roland Barthes published an essay with a provoking title, *La mort de l’auteur* (*The Death of the Author*) arguing that the author should die so that the reader could live, he in fact tried to challenge “the Author’s empire” which, for Barthes, limited the interpretative democracy of the reader. Despite the fact that Barthes could not know what direction the 21<sup>st</sup> century literature would take, his prophesy of the final doom of an all-knowing author proved to be relevant at the onset of the new millennium that brought about the invention of e-literature, including its most interactive forms in which the reader is often expected to make a decision on what direction a virtual story residing in the cyberspace should take. “The post-typographic world” (Locke, Andrews, 2004, p. 124) has brought about a question if the death of an all-knowing writer would not be followed by “the death of the book” (ibid.), at least the book in its paper form. New forms of interactive e-literature ranging from electronically augmented and electronically re-contextualized literary texts to digitally originated literary works published solely in the online form are challenging the traditional understanding of the reader as an outside observer of the story. The paper book, as some writers suggest, is not doomed, though, but due to the constantly increasing “power” of the cyberspace, its position is significantly altered. As Unsworth (2006, p. 1) puts it, “Rather, what we see emerging are strongly synergistic complementarities, where the story worlds of books are extended and enhanced by various forms of digital multimedia, and correspondingly, some types of digital narratives frequently have companion publications in book form.” As far as digital media are concerned, e-literature found its place in DVD and CD talking books, virtual libraries in the cyberspace, even cell phones (demonstrated by a popular Japanese genre of *ketai shosetsu*, a sort of a novel written on the cell phone and sent to the reader as a text message). Furthermore, in the last decade, e-literature moved from the computer space to other digital media such as cell phones and GPS technologies exemplified by so-called locative narratives.

At this point of history, it is not possible to assume whether the e-narrative will take the place of the paper narrative of the previous centuries; or, in other words, whether “once upon a time” will gradually turn into a “once upon a byte.” However, due to its growing influence on the net generation, e-literature cannot be ignored; neither by literary scholarship nor by literature and language teachers. According to Mackey (1994, p. 17), “To talk about children’s literature, in the normal restricted sense of children’s novels, poems and picture-books, is to ignore the multi-media expertise of our children.” The following paper looks into e-literature from two distinct perspectives: the literary and the methodological perspective. The aim of the former is to examine new forms and semiotic devices of children’s literature emerging

in the era of the computer age. The latter explores the challenges of employing e-literature in language teaching.

### E-Children, Interactive E-Literature and E-Readers

The 21<sup>st</sup> century brought about a new generation of e-children who very often visit an Internet website before visiting an ordinary library. In April 2014, I asked a class of 11 and 12-year old children attending the Primary School of P. J. Šafárik in Tornaľa, Slovakia, to complete a “picture questionnaire” in which they were asked to draw four pictures portraying: an evening spent at home, their most favorite hobby, their favorite book and a fairy tale character. The questionnaire was a part of a different research so it is not going to be discussed in detail here; however, having inspected the first two pictures, one could but realize that the children who participated in the research were the children of the digital age. As can be seen in the following examples of the drawings, most children drew either a computer or a TV in the first picture and a computer in the second one. Only five out of 19 children did not include a TV or a PC in the first drawing while just three out of 19 children drew a paper book in the second picture:



First line: Evening at home; second line: My favorite free time activity

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ITs have become an integral part of our lives, including literary lives. Multiple researchers (Dresang, 1999; Unsworth, 2006; Hayles, 2008) argue that ITs are significantly affecting our ways of reading and approaching a literary text. Dresang (1999) refers to the current “electronic” development of children’s literature as a “radical change.” This radical change is characterized by books whose main features are interactivity, connectivity and access. New semiotic devices such as cuts, hyperlinks, flashbacks and non-linear progressions integrate language and image in new, innovative forms. The radical change can be observed from three distinct perspectives: the e-space is changing the forms and formats of traditional tales; it is also changing the perspectives and thus creates so-called polyphonic narratives and; last but not least, it changes the boundaries of literary texts since the reader can progress and direct the plot of the story. Unsworth (2006) differentiates three distinct types of e-literature according to the relationships with their paper book counterparts. The first two types, electronically augmented literary texts and electronically re-contextualized literary texts, co-exist with their non-electronic forms such as the Project Gutenberg, currently offering more than 46,000 e-book forms of well-known literary works. The third type, electronically originated literary texts, refers to “stories that have been published in digital format only – on the web

or CD-ROM" (ibid, p. 3). They can be further divided into e-stories for early readers, linear e-narratives, e-narratives and interactive story contexts, hypertext narratives, hypermedia narratives, electronic game narratives, e-poetry and e-comics. Unsworth's categorization should be complemented with another group of literary works – the ones which are created in the cyberspace but are later published in print – exemplified by Jodi Lynn Anderson's *Loser/Queen* which was fully completed and published in print only after the readers voted on the website of the book on how the story should proceed.

The outlined range of genre variability demonstrates that electronic literature is not a monolithic construct. While the e-literature of the first generation could be described as "hypertextual" (Hayles, 2008, p. 6), contemporary e-literary works have become much more interactive, "with stronger game elements" (ibid., p. 8). This game element changes the role of the reader who is expected to directly interfere with the text as its active participant interacting with a story through e-literary devices such as animations, graphics and visual displays. The present paper focuses on interactive e-literature, particularly on e-stories and e-poems with interactive elements that encourage the reader to actively interact with the text and thus, in case they are employed in classroom surroundings, they may become effective means of motivating students to learn a foreign language.

Before discussing the use of interactive literature in an EFL classroom, crucial features of interactive children's books need to be explored. As its name suggests, interactive literature is based on the interactive role of the reader who is not just a passive observer of a story but who becomes actively involved in it through different techniques. According to Baykowski, Vogel and Searson (1999, p. 89), interactive books encourage active manipulation of the text "by placing control in the hands of learners and allowing them to become decision makers." The textual element is accompanied with the audio and/or the graphic element. The reader is often encouraged to decide whether to use the audio or the textual element. The speakaboos beta site (<http://www.speakaboos.com/>) not only offers the child reader a wide range of stories and poems (ghost stories, animal stories, ABC stories, nursery rhymes, etc.), it also gives the reader three different options of how to interact with the story; children can read them on their own, read them together with an audio narrator or listen to the audio solely. In all three cases, the verbal element is accompanied with attractive graphics.

The range of interaction in e-literature varies from fully interactive books (such as the above mentioned *Loser/Queen*) to partially interactive books in which the reader does not direct the narrative but just chooses his or her own "path of reading." In other words, interactivity might either refer to "navigation" through the digital text" or to the "story construction" (Unsworth, Thomas, Simpson, Asha, 2005, p. 23). The former guides the reader's process of reading, the latter his/her interpretation or the process of decoding a text. In case of interactive e-narratives, the process of interpretation is guided by the verbal, visual/graphic and sometimes even audio elements.

To compare, for Unsworth (2006, p. 78), the interactive elements in an e-narrative may also refer to "additional story-specific information and related activities both online and offline, which extend readers' involvement with the particular story world." Apart from games, these may include links to the sites discussing the characters of the story, the author, story sequels, story discussion forums inviting readers to participate in a sort of a virtual book club, etc. E-books may offer various possibilities of approaching a text – either in the linear or non-linear order. The reader may even group certain words together to create meanings or by clicking on a so-called hot-spot, the reader learns additional information about the story. The element of interaction is not limited to prosaic genres; it can also be employed in e-poetry or e-drama. The Literative website (<http://www.literative.com/Home/index.asp>) offers a wide collection of poems from Anglophone culture. Besides nursery rhymes, it also contains poems written by well-known British and American writers, such as Edgar Allan Poe or William Wordsworth. All poems can be either read or listened to while watching an animation of a poem. Moreover, language games and quizzes encourage the reader to reread the text and practice new

vocabulary. The website is complemented with hyperlinks to authors' biographies and poem-related websites. Attractive formats and images serve as effective motivating factors encouraging the reader to later return to a particular text.

As we can see in all these examples, interactive e-literature usually includes an element of play. Still, e-stories or poems should not be confused with story-focused video or computer games. In this context, Hayles (2008) draws quite an accurate distinction between e-literature and computer games which frequently contain narrative components. As the author suggests “with games the user interprets in order to configure, whereas in works whose primary interest is narrative, the user configures in order to interpret” (p. 8). The definition accurately describes the process of effective reading whereby the reader first needs to read a text so as to comprehend a certain passage with the aim of achieving a specific purpose (interpretation) (Greenall, Swan, 1986). In other words, the reader needs to construct meanings from the text and only afterwards can he/she interpret it.

To conclude, the mushrooming of children's e-literature websites “reflects not only the popularity of children's books but also the integral part played by the Internet in children's experience of such books” (Unsworth, Thomas, Simpson, Asha, 2005, p. 1). “Once upon a byte” can be considered not only an effective means of enhancing children's literacy and reading skills in their mother language but also a motivating factor for learning a foreign language. This unique “capacity” of interactive e-literature for children is discussed in the following part of the paper.

### **Once Upon a Byte, an E-Reader Turned into an E-Learner...**

The benefits of employing literary texts in teaching a foreign language have been discussed by numerous authors. Duff and Maley (1990) assume that teaching a foreign language through literature has three essential justifications: the first being linguistic, the second methodological and the third motivational. From linguistic point of view, literary texts are a good source of authentic language materials embracing a wide range of varying registers, styles and text types. The methodological perspective looks at a literary text from the prospect of interpretation – since no two readers are the same, no two interpretations are the same. Last, since literary texts have a “genuine feel” (p. 6) and deal with everyday, outside the classroom problems, they serve as powerful motivators in the process of language learning. Furthermore, Laine (1997, p. 66) suggests that literary texts “present language in content” but they also “provide a ‘medium of delight’.” For Lazar (1993), literature provides a motivating material in the process of learning a foreign language; it provides access to a certain cultural background; encourages language acquisition; expands language awareness; develops interpretative abilities and, last but not least, educates the whole person.

To compare, besides all of the above mentioned benefits of using literary texts in language teaching, the crucial importance of interactive e-literature is linked to the element of interaction. It is generally known that learners learn and remember more efficiently if they are not just passive observers but if they are actively involved in the process of learning. The interactive e-literature offers a wide range of possibilities of how to interact (or how to be actively involved) in language learning. Children may opt whether to read the text, listen to the text or read and listen to it simultaneously (thus practicing both listening and reading skills). Some specialized e-literary texts offer various options as far as the reading process is concerned – the reader may either move through it chronologically or use certain hyperlinks or keywords that guide his or her reading. Stephanie Strickland's *The Ballad of Sand and Harry Soot* offers the reader three distinct ways of reading: random reading (the reader clicks on the zeros in the navigation bar in any order); complete reading (the reader is asked to click on *begin* and then on every subsequent image until he/she gets back to the beginning of the poem) and link-driven reading (the reader has to search for hidden links on the site so as to get to the next part of the poem). Once having gone through the text, the readers might play language games (quizzes, fill-in-the blanks, puzzles, flashcards, etc. to practice new vocabulary). The Literactive website offers a lot of resources for teachers and learners. The digitalized form

of Edward Lear's *The Owl and the Pussycat* invites its readers to complete a quiz and a word choice exercise once they have gone through the text. Through hyperlinks to the author's biographies and to other resources discussing their work, the reader may learn some extra information about a particular poem.

The Electronic Literature and Literacies in International Education Project (quoted in Unsworth, Thomas, Simpson, Asha, 2005, pp. 97 – 102) offers a set of activities that can be used with students for whom English is not a mother tongue:

- discussion on what kind of atmosphere a certain image/ soundtrack creates,
- selecting specific words from the text that could be used as hyperlinks,
- practicing verbal grammar through an excerpt from the text,
- responding to the text by participating in online discussion forums, book blogs or clubs,
- transforming one's reading experience into creating one's own e-literature (storyboard),
- presenting storyboards to peers or partner classrooms in other countries, etc.

In addition, interactive computer games based on previously published stories (either in the electronic or in the non-electronic form) should be mentioned. They may serve not only as a revision of vocabulary (or grammar structures) but they might also encourage the reader to reinterpret a certain story/poem. To participate in the game, the reader/player usually adopts a certain (character) role. Then he/she participates either as a player or as a character from the story by directly interacting with other characters and sometimes even changing the plot.

To illustrate some classroom practices which both enhance students' vocabulary and increase their literacy in a foreign language, we will discuss an interactive poem *Eldorado* written by an American Romantic writer, Edgar Allan Poe and published on the Literactive website. Poe (often referred to as an American writer with a European character) is one of the most popular American writers among Slovaks. The poem under discussion is quite simple and short, with a regular rhyme and rhythm. Still, some words, especially the ones used in the first two verses might be challenging for beginners:

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.  
  
But he grew old—  
This knight so bold—  
And o'er his heart a shadow—  
Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—  
‘Shadow,’ said he,  
‘Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?’  
  
‘Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,’  
The shade replied,—  
‘If you seek for Eldorado!’

As a pre-e-reading activity, the word *Eldorado* can be analyzed. In a computer lab, learners are encouraged to look for the meaning of the word online – written either as *Eldorado* or in its Spanish form, *El Dorado*. Once the students become familiar with the meaning of the title, they can then listen to and read the interactive form of the poem which is accompanied with colorful images.

The Literactive website offers various ways of how to deal with the text of the poem. Readers are given three options: they can both listen to and read the poem simultaneously while looking at the graphic images; also, they can listen to the text and watch the images without reading; or they can read and listen to the text without looking at the images at all. In case the learner opts for the first possibility he/she can set his/her own pace of reading. The learner can even have it repeated if necessary. After each stanza, the learners might stop and discuss the corresponding image which explains the vocabulary used in the poem or check the meaning of particular words in the glossary on the website. The first verse might be considered challenging as the word “bedight” is archaic. However, if the readers focus their eyes on the image, the meaning of the words becomes clear for the knight in the poem is smiling (is happy/gay) and nicely dressed (bedight). When moving to the second stanza, the readers might first focus on the difference between the image of the knight in the first and the second stanza. Once the students have finished reading, a discussion about the meaning of the word *Eldorado* may follow. Moreover, the website offers other possibilities of how to deal with the poem – to use the glossary, read E. A. Poe’s biography or other hyperlinks to his life and work. All the time, the element of interaction is present as it is the reader who chooses his or her own path in this literary cyberspace. Since there is a song adaptation of the poem, as a post-reading activity reviewing the discussed vocabulary, the learners can be given the text of the poem with some words left out and asked to fill in the blanks either before or while they listen to the song. Depending on the proficiency level of the group, the learners might be also asked to:

- send an e-mail to “E. A. Poe” asking him a question about the poem/his life,
- write an imaginary letter to “E. A. Poe” either accepting or refusing his poem for publication in a specific journal,
- suggest where to insert hyperlinks in the text and why,
- rewrite the poem into prose,
- create an additional ending of the poem and upload it on the discussion website,
- create an online discussion forum about the poem or its author, etc.

To conclude, the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is challenging the role of literature and its position in language teaching. The death of an omniscient, all-knowing author who tells the reader the one and the only way of approaching a story and the birth of interactive e-texts gave rise to a new reader-learner who proceeds through a story by clicking on a touchpad rather than by turning over the yellowish pages of a three-dimensional book. If used carefully and methodologically, interactive e-texts may serve as effective motivators to learn a foreign language. This is because in addition to other well-known benefits of using literary texts in language teaching (linguistic, methodological and motivational), through the medium of interaction, these texts directly encourage the learner to be involved with the text to varying degrees depending on the type of the text and, of course, the proficiency of the learner. Moreover, cyberspace encourages readers-learners to return to a text later on by involving them in various post-reading activities through hyperlinks or online discussion forums. In other words, once the bytes are read and played with, the readers may learn happily ever after in the literary e-Dorado...

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