

## CULTURE AND LITERATURE STUDIES

### NOSTALGIA AND ITS MANIFOLD (BE)LONGINGS

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**Abstract:** In his seminal essay on the historical semantics of nostalgia “The Idea of Nostalgia,” Jean Starobinsky (1966) foregrounds the complexity of the concept of nostalgia and contends that nostalgia is an unstable and shifty term. He implies that nostalgia – quite paradoxically – has both a fixing and spreading power. Starobinsky indicates that on the one hand, the concept of nostalgia immobilises that which it tries to represent, but on the other hand, that it inaugurates its own relentless motions to various, sometimes unlikely, discursive places. During such travels, nostalgia becomes attached to ideas or problems which initially had little bearing on its shape and resonance, but which later come to modify the character of the concept itself. Though Starobinsky focuses on nostalgia's mobility in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and has particular shifts or new attachments in mind, his fix-and-spread model of nostalgia seems well-fitted for a description of post-Romantic and postmodern fate of nostalgia. Nostalgia has been on the move, jumping disciplinary ships and traversing fields of study, which shows in the ever-expanding scope of contemporary nostalgia criticism. Thus, today “the study of nostalgia does not belong to any specific discipline: it frustrates psychologists, sociologists, literary theorists and philosophers, even computer scientists who thought they had gotten away from it – until they took refuge in their home pages and cyber-pastoral vocabulary of the global village.” (Boym 2001: xvii) This paper focuses on contemporary nostalgia criticism and argues that the unstable and multifaceted character of the concept of nostalgia can be usefully theorised with the help of what Mieke Bal (2002) defined as “travelling concepts”. Pervasive yet defying definition and classification, nostalgia travels between disciplines, individual scholars, historical periods, geographically dispersed academic communities. As a “travelling concept”, nostalgia does not properly belong to one discipline or period, nor is it controlled by one discourse; rather, it frustrates attempts at attaching it to one type of study and – so to say - keeps delaying its disciplinary homecoming. This paper will offer a sketch of historical and interdisciplinary travels of nostalgia, outlining the ways nostalgia is (1) displaced from its initial dwelling (medical science) to Romantic aesthetics or, more generally, to discourses of modernity, (2) employed in such diversified fields as travel/tourism studies, ethics, historiography. Drawing on Mieke Bal's thesis, the paper will argue that the incessant travels of the concept of nostalgia and its cross-disciplinary appeal are energised by the concept's heterogeneous character. The flexibility of the concept of nostalgia as well as its displacement in relation to itself is an asset rather than impediment, thanks to which one can rethink and modify the taken for granted cultural narratives.

**Key words:** nostalgia, travelling concepts, interdisciplinarity.

### ROOT TRANSDISCIPLINARITY: THE CASE OF CULTURAL STUDIES PROGRAMS

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to present an American Studies BA program from the point of view of its transdisciplinarity as organizational principle and basic approach. The first part refers to cross-fertilization processes appearing in the last decades in language and literature programs, and makes some remarks about the necessity of abandoning disciplinary thinking and embarking on larger theoretical dialogues. With the growing complexities of the contemporary world and the transference, hybridization and homogenization processes accompanying globalization, it is ever more necessary to adopt Michel Foucault's archaeological approach which calls attention to formal analogies and semantic resemblances between disciplines, as well as to the artificial divisions resulting from principles of classification, normative or institutional rules.

*The second part focuses on the concrete example of a new program in the field of Cultural Studies, pointing out its novelty in comparison with more traditional ones. Cultural studies takes as its object the culture of everyday life, where the concept of culture is understood broadly in an anthropological sense and is related to issues of personal and group identity, to social relations of representation, social and symbolic practices. This wide and diverse scope is investigated from a multiplicity of perspectives and theories that developed in past decades, including semiotics and poststructuralism, feminism and gender studies or postcolonial studies. The basic theoretical framework of cultural studies is therefore by definition interdisciplinary, and the proper reinforcement of this principle in the actual manifestation of a university study program can only be beneficial.*

*The American Studies B.A. program at Transilvania University of Brasov attempts to keep in line not only with the theoretical frame created by the founders of the cultural studies, (Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall) or developed more recently by thinkers in the field of sociology, anthropology or political science among others, but also with the specific requirements of an applied field of study that is practically unlimited. The challenge operates at the level of the curriculum, the coordination of the various curricular subjects, the degree of expertise of the faculty considering the novelty of the field, the library resources that are always behind the global state-of-the-art materials in the field, the institutional limitations.*

*Nevertheless the challenges and difficulties are not insuperable today, and inter- or transdisciplinarity seems to be an advantage. The incredible spin-off effects of the continuous shift from history or geography to urban culture, from literary concepts to identity analyses, from popular culture phenomena to political thinking, provide an intrinsic motivation that is not quite common nowadays. Analytical and critical skills, flexibility in thinking and applied research are not only desired goals, but are an inseparable part of the students' activity during the six terms of study. The conclusion is that transdisciplinarity and its correlative –interdisciplinarity - is an ingrained feature, a starting point and a philosophy of such a program, and not an occasional outcome of a particular approach or discipline, and it can work even in the absence of a proper institutional organization that can only be found in more advanced educational systems. This feature may account for the popularity and topicality of Cultural Studies programs in Romania and elsewhere.*

**Key words:** *disciplinary boundaries, overlapping methodologies, theoretical framework, cross-fertilization.*

## **MODERNIST AND POSTMODERNIST DELINIATION OF CHARACTERS**

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**Abstract:** *For almost half a century, postmodernism has been a key term in the vocabulary of literary theory and practice. By the early 80's the term shifted from a description of a range of aesthetic practices involving irony, self-consciousness, fragmentation, parody, to a use which encompasses a general tendency in thought and which leads to a loss of faith in the discourses of modernity. Postmodernism is, in this respect, used to express the sense of a cultural epoch in which distributions between critical and functional knowledge break down, a sort of liberation from, or insight into, modernism and modernity. The term may be used in three broad senses: as a label used to designate the cultural epoch through which we are living, viewed in apocalyptic terms; as an aesthetic practice; as a development in thought which represents a critique of the assumptions of the Enlightenment or the discourses of modernity. The aestheticism of postmodernism includes a variety of forms; all of them express the sense that our inherited forms of knowledge are undergoing significant changes, certain strategies, stylistic and structural techniques and procedures.*

*According to Docherty, "Postmodern figures are always differing, not just from other characters but also from their putative selves. Following in the wake of an existentialist philosophical tradition, many postmodern characterizations seem to argue that there is always a discrepancy between the character who acts and the character who watches himself/herself acting" (Docherty 1991:183). Characters in postmodernism fall into incoherence, namely character traits are not repeated but contradicted; proper names are used inconsistently. There is never a final point at which the character can be reduced to the status of an accessible quality or list of qualities; the notion of "representation" is being undermined in the process.*

*Characters in the postmodernist novel partake in this way in the process of unmaking, disturbers of the ontological hierarchy of levels through their awareness of the structures they find themselves in. By means of parody, postmodernist writers create the mirror image of their main characters, questioning the reality of their fictional world or drawing attention to the fictionality of the world of fiction; the convention of characters defined in social and psychological terms is undermined.*

*Consistent with its tendency for undermining narrative conventions, postmodernist fiction launches an attack on the notion of representation, in so far as it represents a dominant of character. Critics have argued that we can no longer speak about characters in postmodernist fiction, there can only be a matter of incoherence and fragmentation, of multiplicity and intertextuality where traditional fiction offered consistency and well-defined identity. Postmodernist characters function as signifiers of absent "signifieds", existing only at the surface level, where surface has the positive connotations of liberty, instability and multiplicity. This is the opinion of Thomas Docherty, in his study on postmodern character, where he argues that surface, to the exclusion of anything else, does not necessarily make characters any less interesting to the readers. In postmodernist fiction: "Characters are the locus of abstract voices, which float into and out of the very loosely sketched unity which is supposed to denote a character structure." (Docherty 1983: 254)*

*Starting from this assumption, the critic pleads for the superiority of the postmodernist text over the realist one, stating that the realist text is hierarchical, with the author at the top of the hierarchy: "In realism, the characters within the fiction seem to return us to the most important self in the novel, that is that of the author." (Docherty 1983: 255)*

**Key words:** *delineation, multiplicity, intertextuality, innovation, modernist, characters, identity, realist.*

## ***A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF LEARNING ENGLISH IN ROMANIA***

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**Abstract:** *Learning English in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become indispensable not only to youngsters, but also to grown-up people in any modern culture. On account of its becoming the lingua franca of this age, English is certain to be the key to professional and social success almost all over the world.*

*The demand and motivation for the study of English in Romania has increased considerably in recent years and it keeps being encouraged and steadily promoted at political, educational and social levels. Under the circumstances of globalization mastering a foreign language has become an essential feature of the modern world. It is extremely helpful both for the individual and the society at large because it is the best way of getting to know and understand otherness and implicitly your own self better. Moreover, as it was often stated "knowing the other is not really a matter of aesthetic appreciation or ethical self reflection but serves mostly instrumental purposes. The world is there to be conquered (so to speak) and one cannot do so without understanding the way the world works, and perhaps without mastering the nuances of other countries and ways of life. This usually requires some degree of language acquisition, cultural immersion and multicultural literacy" (Crawford 2002: 273).*

*Learning to facilitate and accept different attitudes and values, get real respect of other cultures takes great pains and of course a lot of time, not to mention the requirement of constant teaching and long-term practice. Such an objective cannot be achieved without language, the best medium of communication, intercultural mediation and mutual understanding.*

*In order to get a more reliable self-image, each culture needs to look at itself from the outside. Thus its own perception will become more objective and more adequate. Romanian culture has always shown availability and honest interest to get deeper knowledge of "the other" looking at the civilized world with eager wide open eyes in an attempt to understand it better and make headway in its turn. It goes without saying that such an attitude meant besides knowledge of the world increased awareness of our own strengths and weaknesses. It has*

constantly helped us re-evaluate our positions and standards avoiding isolation and ultimately promoting our own cultural synchronization with the world

A radical change has also occurred in the perception and attitude to the study of foreign languages in general, as symbols of education and basic means of direct communication and information. At present foreign languages are being studied by a diversity of people belonging to all walks of life and to all fields of activity. The number of languages studied nowadays is larger than ever and the methods of teaching are continually modernizing and diversifying.

At school level pupils may attend a greater number of English classes and get involved in a wider range of activities meant to stimulate and develop their interest in language learning. Under such circumstances the young people are the first to get aware of the immediate benefits of learning English being supported by educational policies that develop and encourage this orientation. But things were not always like that

In our paper we will try to reveal the most significant moments in the development of English studies in Romania focusing mainly on the huge contribution of great Romanian professors and men of culture to promote English studies in our country and get the upper-hand in present day competition with other widely circulated languages.

**Key words:** pioneers, foreign language study, expertise, dedication, recent statistics.

## **COMMUNICATING THE CULTURAL SELF ACROSS DISCIPLINES: ZORA NEALE HURSTON'S LITERARY ANTHROPOLOGY**

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**Abstract:** *The essay examines the writing strategy of the African American writer/anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston on the basis of the two most renowned novels of hers, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Jonah's Gourd Vine*. Often considered a rebel in her life time, she appears to negate the social space of the white status quo or that of the Harlem intelligentsia both in deed and in her novels. However, from a closer look, her approach to culture and fiction represents the reassertion of an encultured subject as well as that of the professional anthropologist. In fact, her writing strategy embodies conscious blending of anthropology and literature.*

*While Hurston scholarship places predominant emphasis on her use of language as, undoubtedly, the African American vernacular represents one significant element of her cultural space; Hurston's (creative use of) language depicts African American cultural artifacts, texts, and, in general, of African American cultural space. Hurston becomes the participant observer of her own cultural space, which influences her writing strategy. The use of the "spy-glass of Anthropology" in her ethnographic *Mules and Men*, crystallizes as a literary approach in her fictional works. The anthropological spy-glass enables her to gain insight into a community by becoming a member, while, simultaneously, maintaining the critical distance necessary for research. Hurston claims thus to possess the insider's view in the African American community: she professes authenticity for her research, and the reader can anticipate inside information s/he cannot get otherwise. In this way, her most successful novel *Their Eyes* can be regarded as a storytelling event, in which the reader becomes a participant through the spyglass of the narrator; and *Jonah's*, from another point of view, is but a cultural journey across the South.*

*Doris Bachmann-Medick's account of the anthropological turn in literature ("anthropologische Wende"), diverts attention away from language-oriented inquiry toward cultural investigations and urges the conceptualization of literary texts as cultural media. As such, the cultural approach to literature emphasizes the multiplicity of reading, denying an objective interpretation. Hurston represents a case in point: as a writer/anthropologist she practices both literature and anthropology at the same time; and she does so as a subjective insider.*

*The Hurstonian strategy bears special relevance regarding African American cultural politics: while Hurston's fiction models cultural rituals and processes in African American communities, and, thus, it can be*

*seen as a series of anthropological treatises; from a cultural point of view, her cultural politics of insiderness in her fiction serves purposes of authentication.*

*Writing from within is a key position Hurston takes, both as a student of African American culture and as an African American subject; and she, then, goes further than writing simply fiction: by insisting on the spyglass of anthropology Hurston, the artist, offers ethnographic texts.*

**Key words:** *Zora Neale Hurston, African American culture, anthropological turn, cultural space, literary anthropology.*

## **PATRIARCHY, SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S GUT SYMMETRIES**

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**Abstract:** *The contemporary English novelist Jeanette Winterson holds a feminist mirror to the predominant patterns of life resulting from grand narratives in her novels that combine a variety of disciplines within their narrative structure. Gut Symmetries (1997) in particular, “interweaves the various discourses of alchemy, Einsteinian physics, Superstring Theory, the Tarot, and Jewish Kabbala”. The main character Alice, a successful young physicist, admits a loss of identity in return for her intellectual success. She attains access to, and success in physics, which she chooses to achieve a “certain” understanding of the universe, at the cost of her femininity. As the only way to prove her intelligence Alice rejects her mother as a role model, and identifies herself, paradoxically, with her father since her childhood. Alice realizes her identity problems only when she gets involved into a love triangle after she falls in love with Jove, another physicist with whom she worked on a project, and Jove’s wife, Stella, whom she met in America. With their opposing characters, Jove and Stella represent not only the clash between men and women’s ontological beings, but the clash of science with spirituality also. With a simple word play upon the “Gut” of the title, standing both for Grand Unified Theory and the human emotions, Winterson brings in several themes that she discusses within the discourse of a variety of disciplines. She refers to Jove’s ambitious devotion to “Superstring Theory”, as opposed to “Standard Model”, as a successful scientist, to reveal his desire for only one “true” theory underlying cosmos. Through its claim at objectivity, scientific method reduces reality into one truth only, as a means of male desire for power. Stella, whose subjectivity and relativity are defined as “pathological” by Jove, represents subjective reality that is associated with femininity.*

*This paper aims, in this context, to discuss Jeanette Winterson’s Gut Symmetries as a novel interconnecting the scientific discourse of physics with its narrative structure to reveal the materiality of the oppressive masculine power as opposed to the relativist feminine spirituality. Her conscious choice of two physicists, one masculine and the other feminine, provides her with a background for the discussion of the ground breaking twentieth century theories of relativity and quantum physics as opposed to traditional grand narratives. Alice’s gradual realisation of her identity crisis resulting from the denial of her femininity in favour of social approval in the foreground, leads her from Jove’s masculine realm of scientific methodology into Stella’s feminine realm of spirituality. Alice gets over her identity crisis only by balancing the physical with the metaphysical, the material with the spiritual. She attains personal integrity only by realising the unifying nature of relativist truth, the mystic understanding of the universe that considers the part as the “halved [whole], and seeks again its wholeness.” In conclusion, by transcending the boundaries of separate disciplines in Gut Symmetries, Jeanette Winterson attains a holistic discourse in dissolving the boundaries separating science and spirituality, physics and metaphysics, and culminating in the mystic belief that the part stands for the whole and whole stands for the part as opposed to the discriminating patriarchal discourse.*

**Key words:** *Jeanette Winterson’s Gut Symmetries, feminism, quantum physics, relativity, mysticism.*

## **REFLECTING ON THE SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY SPHERES IN THE GENIUS AND THE GODDESS**

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**Abstract:** *The paper advances a debate upon some of Aldous Huxley's thoughts regarding the relation between science and literature, as they appear in the novel *The Genius and the Goddess*. The discussion evolves around the judgments elicited by the characters' perspective on human existence and its goals. Coming from different backgrounds (scientific, literary) the characters establish particular relations, contributing, in this way, to the shaping of an insightful human experience that highlights the vicinity between the scientific and literary domains. John Rivers is an old physicist who builds up a dialogue with his friend, a writer whose name is not mentioned in the novel, having as a starting point one significant experience in Rivers's youth. In the beginning of the narrative the readers are acquainted with two characters (Rivers, the writer) belonging to two apparently unrelated fields of knowledge: science and literature. Rivers is the pragmatic protagonist of a manifold life experience, whereas the writer is the individual who attempts to go beyond the physicist's narration through the constant challenges he poses during Rivers's recollection of the past events.*

*Huxley's concern appears to be with the relations established between two approaches to human existence: one coming from a scientist, the other coming from a man of letters. Their approaches unfold in relation to one another and they also enrich the other's perspective. Huxley succeeds in making his readers acknowledge the salience of combining the realistic view and the humanistic vision to which the religious prospects add some quite interesting and valuable insights. Huxley inclination towards the quest for a wider comprehension of human existence comes from his educational and family background. He was surrounded by scientists and men of letters, both groups raising questions regarding our existence according to the views shaped by their specific credo, scientific or literary.*

*However, Huxley's novel, *The Genius and the Goddess*, starts a journey to the past in an attempt to reveal the meanings of the precedent experience. On a Christmas Eve (the moment is not chosen by accident) the writer pays a visit to his friend, John Rivers, who decides to tell him the story of the youth experience, which he could not forget even in old age. Actually the entire novel is a mixture of scientific and literary perspectives through the means of the characters' opinions regarding certain choices and certain attitudes related to the events debated upon. This paper is interested in highlighting the manner in which the two fields shaped the characters' approaches to life and the way in which the readers relate to the combination of the two spheres as a means of obtaining a better understanding of the surroundings.*

**Key words:** *science, literature, vicinity, judgment, self.*

## **AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO GEORGE ORWELL'S NOVELS: EXPLORING TOTALITARIAN MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES IN NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR THROUGH HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY**

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**Abstract:** *My paper statement is that the main political message that George Orwell was deliberately trying to put forth into his main novel attacking totalitarianism, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, was a warning meant to draw attention to the hidden mechanisms by which totalitarian systems come into power and maintain themselves into force, emphasizing manipulation as basic method of maintaining total control over the population, and violence only as a backup technique employed only where the former fails.*

*Therefore the paper approaches George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* from an interdisciplinary point of view with a focus on political psychology in an attempt to make a pragmatic analysis of the inner psychological mechanisms that enabled totalitarian systems to manipulate masses in their quest for the total*

*submission of the individual.*

*The paper illustrates the way in which such all-embracing political systems regulate and overwhelm each sector of people's life and it details the discussion by explaining the concealed purpose of political strategies such as keeping the population at a very low living standard, the maintenance of a perpetual state of war and the invasion of privacy.*

*The line of research proposed in the present paper centres around one of the most important schools of thought in Psychology, i.e. Humanistic Psychology. Emerging as a reaction to Freud's psychoanalysis and Pavlov's behaviourism, and therefore being referred to as the "third force in Psychology", Humanistic Psychology moved towards a more optimistic approach of human behaviour by minimizing the importance of the effects of the unconscious mind and by emphasizing both the role of personal choice and the influence of the environment in the development of an individual's personality. What is more, the paper will particularly deal with the theory on how the human mind functions according to the level of fulfilment of one's needs, as it was advanced by the 'father' of the humanistic psychology - Abraham Maslow - in his Theory of Human Motivation.*

*Hence the paper starts with a brief insight into his theory, in which he proposed a hierarchy of five levels of needs or drives whose level of fulfilment can control thought, behaviour and emotions, and in which he developed the idea according to which unfulfilled needs may represent a threat to personality as they can make people more vulnerable to manipulation. Moreover, it appears that the lower their level within the hierarchy, the stronger they are in influencing personality. My research reveals the fact that totalitarian systems conceived and enforced an ample system of manipulation that can be explained in part with the help of Maslow's theory.*

*All in all, the paper aims at providing an in-depth analysis on the techniques of manipulation – exploring humanistic psychological resources - employed by totalitarian systems in order to consolidate and safeguard the state's power, with concrete examples in Orwell's dystopian novel Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

**Key words:** *totalitarianism, manipulation, psychology, humanistic, Orwell.*

## **LANGUAGE STUDIES**

### **THE PROTOTYPE THEORY AND SEMANTIC RELATIONS IN EARLY CHILD ROMANIAN**

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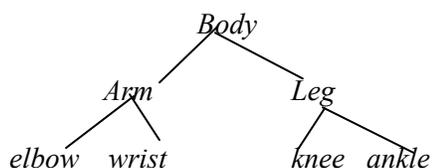
**Abstract:** *A child's increasing cognitive ability is reflected, among other things, in the relationships of words expressed. The child's pre-linguistic and one-word utterances carry communicative intentions. As multiword combinations are formed, more complex semantic relations are expressed. The present paper aims at revealing the emergence and development of the semantic relations in child Romanian and at showing the manner in which these may be affected by the concept of 'prototype'. The sources for the data are: (1) a long term collection of random observations of Romanian children's spontaneous speech and (2) a corpus of narratives gathered for a more extensive research.*

*Since the field of child language acquisition lends itself to interdisciplinary investigation, my aim is to find out the extent to which the concept of prototype aids children in using a variety of semantic relations and in combining them to produce longer utterances. The prototype theory was launched in the 1970s by Eleanor Rosch, a psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley. Later on, the theory moved in 2 directions: on the one hand E. Rosch's findings were taken up by formal psycho-lexicology which tries to devise formal models for human conceptual memory and its operation; on the other hand the theory enjoyed growing success in linguistics where various people (Lakoff 1987, Taylor, 1989, Ungerer&Schmid 1996), attempted to demonstrate the existence of prototype effects at all language levels (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics).*

*The prototype, defined briefly as the central member of a category, can help us explain how we (adults) should deal with the flexible and dynamic nature of word meanings, and implicitly with untypical examples of semantic relations employed by pre-school children.*

One such semantic relation that can be explained in terms of the prototype theory is hyponymy (meaning inclusion). Early nouns tend to be exemplars of what have been called basic level categories (Ungerer & Schmid, 1999, Aitchinson, 1999). The basic level is the level on which the largest bundles of naturally correlated attributes are available for categorization (prototype). Thus, the children I investigated produced in most of the cases the superordinate term *pasare* (to refer to an owl that appeared in a picture-book). Some others (especially the older children, aged 5) attempted to produce the appropriate hyponym (i.e. owl), but they produced a synonymic series: *vultur* ('eagle'), *pupaza* ('hoopoe'). A possible explanation for the latter hyponym relied again on the prototype concept: the child must have been familiar with Ion Creanga's famous *Amintiri din copilărie* (*Memories of My Childhood*). Thus, for this particular child, *pupaza* is the prototypical bird because he encountered it in this restricted context.

Another semantic relation employed by children and that can be explained in terms of prototypes is meronymy which is illustrated by pairs such as: *body – leg*, *arm – elbow*. Meronymy differs from hyponymy in that the one-way entailment characteristic of hyponymy (i.e. 'X is a daisy' entails 'X is a flower') does not obtain for these pairs. The relationship between, say, *arm* and *elbow* is one whereby the objects to which they refer are in a part-whole relation, this relationship being known as **meronymy**.



How can the prototype theory help us interpret the following sentence produced by a 3-year-old girl called Iulia: *M-am lovit la **genunchiul de la mina*** [I've injured the knee of my arm.]. Interestingly, Iulia has an incipient knowledge of such associations only that not knowing the meronyms for arm, she used one of the meronyms of leg. This association could be accounted for in terms of similarity in position/location (half-way down the limb) and function (bending of the limb) between the elbow and knee. Most probably previous similar experience on the playground taught her the word *genunchi* ('knee').

A further semantic relation we shall try to explain is antonymy; how come that children produce such sentences as the following: *Intoarce-mi bluza pe **fata**, ca-i pe **spate***. [Turn my blouse inside out, because it is backwards]. This and many other such examples could be accounted for in terms of the prototype theory.

In lieu of conclusion, we may state that semantic network-building occurs slowly. Words that are related take time to get linked in the child's mind. This fits with the evidence from underextension (an overly restricted meaning): the fact that children learn a word in a particular context and only gradually extend it to a wider situation.

**Key words:** *prototype, semantic relations, language acquisition, developmental path.*

## **AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO CORPUS-BASED RESEARCH: THE CASE OF TRANSLATION STUDIES**

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**Abstract:** *Interdisciplinarity has become a virtue of both modern research and applied disciplines, opening up multitudes of perspectives. The case of corpus-based studies is among the most stimulating one, exploiting and/or depending on joint domains, and unfolding ever-new potential to a variety of disciplines taken separately or in sundry of combinations. The particular situation that this paper intends to discuss is related to corpus-based translation studies, a fairly young discipline within the well-established translational field. It should be pertinent to assert that the Romanian research community is taking baby-steps in this respect if we were to acquire an overall image of the international endeavours, which offer evidence of the fact that corpus-based translational*

investigation takes the upperhand, being superior to traditional research. That is why, the introduction of this field of study in the Romanian research environment is crucial in order to add up new theories to the existing ones and to improve the translation performance of Romanian translators and thus enhance intercultural communication. The paper aims at presenting the status of on-line available corpora, along with considerations as regards the text genres, types, reliability, consistency, userfriendliness, authorship and purposes. We also have in view an overall account of the disciplines (both within humanistic and exact sciences) using corpora for investigation and the issue of interdisciplinary involved and needed in such approaches, focussing on the linguistic component of corpus-based studies. The conclusions draw on the participation of Romanian linguistic research teams in such encounters, as well as on the presence of the Romanian language as a language pair in contrastive corpus-based investigation. Such an undertaking should be of interest not only to the research environment, but also to the academic and professional contexts, since it can offer new perspectives in the training of future professionals within several fields, thus preparing the grounds for better professional performance. With particular reference to corpora in the translational field, we can assert that the contributions to the research, academic, and professional domains converge to a common finality: increased effectiveness in intercultural communication, an issue of utmost importance due to Romanian's extending contacts abroad.

**Key words:** corpus-based research, interdisciplinarity, translation studies, intercultural communication, contrastive analysis.

## ***A POSSIBLE CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS GRID FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SLANG APPLIED TO "O, BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU"***

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**Abstract:** *My paper deals with the way slang is used in movies, with a particular focus on "O, Brother, Where Art Thou?" from the perspective of issues related to the literature that focuses on Pragmatics, mainly on Conversational Analysis elements.*

*My work is structured according to the following landmarks: Summary of the movie, Context of the slang expression that is to be analyzed, The slang expression(s) – divided into the original quote with slang and the meaning, The Slang usage and Conversational Analysis & Power & Politeness Strategies.*

*It is natural that my analysis should start from a general presentation of the movie. This is due to the fact that one may find it utterly difficult to understand the general context of the movie unless one has a frame where he/she may place the body of language that is to be analyzed and focused on. Moreover, apart from the summary, one also needs to be given the context of the slang expression in order to understand it.*

*A very important issue in my analysis is represented by the original quote with slang and its meaning. Further on, I have tried to explain why the conversational interactants used slang in the particular situation, what made them resort to slang and not to informal, formal or standard language. Thus, I have started from the premise that people use slang either to induce friendliness or intimacy. They might be also determined to use slang in order to show that they belong to the same group. Slang also serves social functions, setting and proclaiming social boundaries. It also permits speakers to assert membership of identity. It also rejects the power dimensions associated with formal language. More than that, sometimes the very situation requires the usage of slang as the conversationalists purposely diminish the formality of the conversation. The use of slang renders a formal conversation informal.*

*The part dealing with the Conversational Analysis & Power & Politeness Strategies has been devised taking into account the following linguistic features: The Conversational Analysis perspective, The type of power involved and the Pragmatic perspective and the Politeness strategies.*

*Viewers all over the world have the impression that slang and the way slang is used in movies, in our case a prison movie is the same with the real slang used in a prison environment. This was my starting research point. Consequently, I have tried to see whether slang and movie slang are identical. The conclusion has been obvious: slang in movies is different from the slang used in prisons. And the explanation is quite simple. I have*

showed that context, the socio-cultural context plays a very important part in shaping the way people communicate. Thus, without having a very deep knowledge of the environment of the prison, it will be impossible to decode the message when the people use slang.

My possible analysis grid aimed at showing that movie viewers would not be able to understand anything that goes on on the screen, they would not be able to feel the thrill of the movie, of the action when the characters would choose to use real slang. Accordingly, the slang language that directors choose to use in their movies is slang that is to be found in everyday conversation, and not real slang, slang used by real inmates in real prisons.

**Key words:** conversational analysis, slang, politeness strategies, context, power relation.

## **CODING AND BEHAVIOURAL PROPERTIES WITHIN GRAMMATICAL RELATIONS**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to discuss grammatical relations in a sentence within a relational framework, and to make a comparison, wherever possible, between English and Romanian language. The notion 'grammatical relation' is well established (Blake, 1994: 48–93, Palmer 1994, Givón 2001: 173–232), being a theory of descriptive grammar in which syntactic relationships define better grammatical processes than syntactic structures. The central idea of relational grammar is that there is a limited number of grammatical relations (Subject [SU], Direct Object [DO], and Indirect Object [IO]), such that one term can bear more than one such relation at different levels or 'strata' of the structure underlying the clause. In other words, relational grammar conceives of a clause as a network of grammatical relations. We concentrate especially on syntactic aspects because many important syntactic phenomena involve grammatical relations and, as a result these concepts would be important for the description and for the explanation of these phenomena.

Grammatical relations have two different properties: coding and behavioural. Our discussion starts from the assumption that behavioral properties are acquired historically prior to subject coding properties. Coding properties are, to a large extent, morphological while behavioural properties are syntactic, taking into account the involvement of a particular relation in grammatical constructions. In this paper we will analyse only constructions in which the Subject is an actor in transitive predications, the Direct Object is an undergoer in a transitive predication, and the Indirect Object is a recipient or a goal in ditransitive predications.

(i) Coding properties. The most important coding properties are verb agreement, case marking and the functions an argument can perform in a sentence according to its place in the sentence. The first two coding properties are morphological while the third one is syntactic. We also demonstrate that no coding properties that can identify any grammatical relation.

(ii) Behavioural properties refer to the types of constructions they can appear in. If a construction refers to a specific term in a language, then involvement in that construction is a property of the particular grammatical relation in that language. The analysis of the relational syntactic construction tries to identify the restrictions that make that construction particular. The most important syntactic parts that can be discussed in terms of behavioural properties are Subject, Direct and Indirect Objects, but in this paper we will concentrate on the Subject which is targeted by the largest number of syntactic phenomena. The behavioural properties of the Subject discussed are: reflexivization, equi-deletion, subject raising, initial position. We will analyse the behavioural properties in simple sentences as well as in complex sentences, in imperative and reflexive constructions. Complex sentences provide some of the most important subject tests: relative clause formation, raising construction (matrix-coding construction), equi-NP-deletion, conjunction reduction.

**Key words:** grammatical relations, semantic roles, coding properties, behavioural properties.

## **RECENT ENGLISH BORROWINGS IN ROMANIAN - A QUANTITATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

**Assistant Professor Ph. D. ARINA GREAVU**  
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**Abstract:** *This article studies the phenomenon of English borrowing in Romanian in several of its aspects. Thus, the main purpose of the article is to analyze the distribution of borrowed elements across the various word classes of Romanian, and to give a general descriptive overview of each of these classes. As such, the study will be corpus-based and the analysis conducted will be mainly a quantitative one. Starting from the statistics resulting from this analysis, we put forth a hierarchy of borrowing for English/ Romanian contact, and compare it with a similar hierarchy abstracted from Romanian native material.*

*The theoretical perspective adopted for the definition of borrowing is a synchronic one. Thus, in this study we consider the formal criterion to be of paramount importance in separating borrowed from native material, a borrowing being taken to refer to any English lexical element in the corpus of Capital 2005 that is formally related to English. This acceptance of the term conforms to its definition in several influential works on the topic: linguistic borrowing is the deliberate reproduction or incorporation of elements found in one language in another one, as the result of specific socio-economic conditions surrounding the contact situation (Haugen 1950, Poplack 1988, Thomason and Kaufman 1988, Myers-Scotton 1992, 1993 among others). This view is also in line with those theories stating that, despite the earlier history of a word, only the last stage of the borrowing process is decisive in determining the donor language (Hristea 1984, Campbell 1998). The employment of the formal criterion in the definition of borrowing restricts the term to linguistically unadapted English-origin words, and excludes other language contact categories, most notably loanshifts or semantic loans, from the scope of the study. Furthermore, the distinction between cultural borrowings or necessary loans and core or intimate borrowings, also known as unnecessary or luxury loans will not be observed in this paper.*

*The analysis of the distribution of borrowed words across different grammar classes in the studied corpus of Capital 2005 reveals a striking preference for nouns, followed by adjectives and a very low number of verbs. On the other hand, other parts of speech are only peripherally represented in the studied corpus, English function words (determiners, pronouns, prepositions, numerals and conjunctions) being particularly tied to inter- and intra-sentential code-switching. This situation offers support to some hierarchies of borrowing put forth in the literature (Muysken 1981, Singh 1981, Ciobanu 2004), while partly contradicting others (Haugen 1950), but it once again confirms the almost universally accepted idea that nouns have the highest propensity to borrowing of all speech parts.*

**Key words:** *borrowing constraint, borrowing hierarchy, word type, word token, word class.*

## **HOW TSAR/CZAR, ЦАР/CAR AND RELATED WORDS ARE USED IN ENGLISH AND SERBIAN**

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**Abstract:** *This paper aims to explain the use of the words **czar/tsar** in English and **цар/car** in Serbian in their various contexts. Words related to these according to historic, phonological, morphological and semantic criteria are studied and their mutual relationships established. An attempt is made to solve some controversies about the origin, spelling, meaning and associative links of the investigated words in English and Serbian. Various encyclopedias, specialized books on the topic and relevant dictionaries, together with the Internet were used and the examples of usage discussed. The paper is practically oriented, the author having primarily pedagogical aims in mind. The final goal of the paper is to establish a sort of associative networking around **tsar/czar** and **цар/car**, and to interlink the vocabulary in the two languages in order to make teaching in the realm of “verbally-oriented subjects” of the new Bologna-reformed curriculum easier for architecture students. The idea is that sketching or mapping relevant lexicons in the form of a web of associations would be more useful in teaching than the traditional method of “sequential” exposition of vocabulary. As architecture students*

are presupposed to remember and comprehend more visually than verbally, such a visual representation is believed to represent a valuable pedagogical instrument in the process of teaching. Researchers with educational backgrounds in history, archaeology, anthropology, etc. that is, other than a purely linguistic one (such as the one of the author of the article) are welcome to contribute to what is expressed here since the width of the topic covered is necessarily limited by the research within the individual knowledge and perspective. It is assumed by the author, therefore, that some of her observations and conclusions should be treated by others as merely unresolved questions.

**Key words:** associative networks, architecture language, tsar, czar, car.

## ON THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF VERBS

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to identify expressive uses of verb tenses, as we believe that this category seems to offer many possibilities of interpreting and modulating the action. The expressive connotations of verbs can be easier identified in literary texts and less easy in standard language which is meant to convey ideas and information. To enforce this idea we will show that the semantic classes of verbs combined with the category of tense can play an important role in the organization of the text: in case of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and *L'éducation sentimentale* – the use of *verba dicendi* in the perfect *simplu* can entail gradual degrees of expressiveness (*murmurer*; *balbutier*; *bégayer*). It can thus reinforce expressive uses of verbs and refine the existing ones. In literary texts each tense bestows the text different expressive overloading: the perfect *simplu* and present objectify the action, the *mai mult ca perfect* is the tense of anteriority and causality, the perfect *simplu* imprints a quick development, the imperfect is the tense of duration. Besides the stylistic connotations implied by the semantic classes of verbs, we can also notice that the context, the determinatives, the figurative meanings as well as the temporal oppositions established in long fictional units highlight the expressive potential of language.

The use of verbs in literary texts renders the action more dynamic, it makes events unfold quickly and it leaves the reader with the impression that the rhythm of events gets quicker as they read. By resorting to different tenses and expressive uses of verbs every writer creates his own temporal coordinates by using exclusively certain tenses, by combining them in order to create temporal oppositions. The choice of tenses is in close connection with the temporal perspective of the action, for example the quick unfolding of events in the novel *La peste* is rendered by the tenses *parfait simple* – *imparfait*, while in the novel *L'étranger* the tenses *parfait* compose and the *imparfait* give the impression that the action moves very slowly. Other alternative would be the use of a tense which covers most part of the fictional unit and the intermittent use of another tense, as it is the case of *Moll Flanders*, where the action is narrated in the past and from time to time verbs are used in the present. The shift from one tense to another within the same context can also have stylistic implications. In the novel *Moll Flanders* the shift from present to past is joined by the one from the narrator's comments and points of view to the story and it involves a turn from the heroine's present to previous events in her life.

**Key words:** expressiveness, tense, temporality, opposites.

## **PEDAGOGY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY STUDIES**

### ***HAPPY ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL TEACHING/LEARNING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY***

**Associate Professor Ph.D. LUMINIȚA ANDREI COCĂRȚĂ**  
**Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania**

**Abstract:** Nowadays students in Business and Administration have a lot of e-learning products and services they can use. Our paper focuses on an online linguistic platform that proved to be a happy alternative to traditional teaching/learning, offering a personalized, flexible, self-organized and collaborative method.

There are certainly a lot of differences between traditional education or training and this ICT-based type of learning. Using a community of learners, trainers, facilitators and experts, e-learning has a great cultural and social impact on our globalised world.

The platform is the result of a Transfer of Innovation type of project, whose products and services aim to develop the foreign languages and intercultural communication skills of business students and professionals.

Using this platform with our students proved to be a useful and interesting experience. It helped us teach foreign languages online, by approaching a new and even funny way of developing practical language skills for business settings, by making students aware of the different cultural backgrounds of business actors, by encouraging them to effectively communicate in a foreign language in real business situations. We found out that the platform may help students as well as teachers in the process of teaching/learning, especially when it comes to individual study, encouraging the shy students to participate and thus making them improve their linguistic and business skills.

Therefore, we consider that nowadays it is a necessity to have access to alternative materials in the area of using foreign languages for special purposes, and this platform is a possible answer.

**Key words:** linguistic platform, intercultural skills, business skills, language skills, alternative method of teaching/learning.

### **SYLLABUS DESIGN**

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**Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania**

**Abstract:** Since the 1960s, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become a vital and innovative activity within the teaching of English as a foreign or second language movement. ESP is regarded as an “approach” not as a “product” and the learner-centeredness of ESP underlines both the concept of approach and of communication. Based on this point of view, ESP instructors characteristically use problem-solving methods and techniques to promote the appropriate communicative development of individuals in particular contexts of implementation and design syllabi considering the specific and differing role of the ESP teacher. Commonly, ESP teachers and practitioners have many roles from a course designer, a material provider, to a facilitator, a consultant, a coordinator, an evaluator, and even a project researcher. These roles change the approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning.

Designing a course syllabus represents a complex, time-consuming and difficult process, especially when the undergraduates and graduates aimed at present various levels of language command. In making practical decisions about syllabus design, one must take into consideration all the possible factors that might affect whether or not a particular syllabus can be taught. Teachability of a particular syllabus seems to be one of the most often met concerns of a teacher. That is why designing syllabi with a student centred approach normally starts with an examination of each syllabus type, tailoring the choice and integration of the different types

according to local needs so as to find a practical solution to the problem of appropriateness and effectiveness in syllabus design. It is clear that no single type of content is appropriate for all teaching settings, and the needs and conditions of each setting are so different and varied that specific recommendations cannot be followed without considering constraints. Clearly, there is a vast amount of material to discuss, use and disseminate when considering syllabus design. All the numerous approaches offer valuable insights into creating a language program. The synthetic approaches of structuralism, situational and functional-notional, all have objectives to be attained, a content to be processed and learnt. The foundations of the product syllabuses remain fundamentally similar; whereas the underlying assumptions about language and language learning from the analytic approaches differ greatly: process type syllabuses assert that learning a language is transient and cannot be itemized; pedagogical procedure takes precedence over content. In the context of ESP syllabi, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity have a great contribution to the research oriented to practical achievements.

The paper has a double fold purpose. One of the purposes of this paper consists in describing how syllabi are designed for Bachelor level undergraduates in Cluj Technical Universities and in evaluating their types, constraints and efficiency. The other relates to the steps taken to design a syllabus for the students attending their English language course at Master of Science level. With M.Sc. students, more than in other circumstances, the integration of content and linguistic matter was paid a special attention. A comparison between the two types of syllabus shall be made and practical solutions shall be drawn. The paper highlights the effect of interdisciplinarity interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on language education, particularly at the two levels of ESP training programmes.

**Key words:** syllabus design approaches, undergraduates, graduates, Master courses.

## **TEACHING CONVERSATION ANALYSIS TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS**

**Associate Professor Ph.D. EMILIA PLĂCINTAR**  
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**Abstract.** This paper is an attempt to make a case for an introductory theoretical Conversation Analysis (CA) and pragmatic component in a course on advanced oral communication for our MA students in international communication in business. For this purpose, first, we briefly describe conversation as a prototypical speech genre; then, we outline the fields of study of CA and pragmatics and provide a selection of course and seminar activities, namely the introduction of sequential relationships within conversation, the description of business talk as a variation of ordinary conversation, and an application that focuses on the notion of cognitive planning in work-related verbal interaction. In conclusion, we assert that by familiarising the students with the inner workings of ordinary conversation as the baseline template of the speech exchange system, they will be able to understand the idiosyncracies of the various sub-genres of oral business discourse and, ultimately, to handle the linguistic and conversational resources in order to perform effectively in the workplace.

**Key words:** conversation, Conversation Analysis, pragmatics, business discourse, cognitive planning.

## **THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND COLLOCATIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

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**Abstract:** The present paper aims to show how culture and language converge in the acquisition of a foreign language, and how becoming aware of the efficiency of this approach one can achieve significant progress in the learning process and, eventually, get to proficiency.

Culture is usually seen emerging directly out of the language and seems to be derived from it, and the

other way round, “a language is regarded chiefly as a means for encoding a particular culture or world view represented by the things that people say (or write) to achieve particular social and communicative purposes.” (Pawley, 2007:35). It appears as a corrective to habits of speech guiding the use of forms in actual conversation. Therefore, students learning a foreign language have to permanently adjust and reorient their sense of reference to the existence of different linguistic patterns that are culturally specific. This is learning a social usage in tandem with language forms, a usage that is not encapsulated in the forms.

The language instructor will thus provide the cultural input contained in appropriate methodological constructs, without which a foreign language cannot be assimilated. At the linguistic level, this input will assist students in discerning between culturally-adequate collocations/lexical structures incorporated in specifically designed teaching-learning materials.

In a joint endeavour to teach the right language as the right communication tool that would open doors to a culturally specific environment, our targeted students are enrolled at the Faculty of Economics. Hence both the linguistic/discursive and cultural components intertwine in the generous context of business.

**Key words:** culture, collocations, habits of speech, social usage, communication, methodology, teaching materials, proficiency.

## **TRANSDISCIPLINARITY – AN INTRINSIC FEATURE OF TEACHING ESP**

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**Abstract:** *Is transdisciplinarity a fashionable trend of the decade or is it an acute necessity of modern times? Can we speak of transdisciplinarity in relation to teaching English for specific purposes? These are the interrogations that led us to perform a research study on English for future engineers.*

Now more than ever science and technology do not belong to a single ethnic or national community. The scientific discoveries and technological progress are everywhere, saving lives and improving the quality of life. Science and technology no longer communicate solely through their specific universal language – Mathematics – like they did in the past, as science and technology no longer belong to the intellectual elite of humanity. Science and technology have become an integrated part of our daily lives.

In the outpost of these scientific discoveries and technological progress we find the engineers, those contemporary people who, now more than ever, dedicate their professional lives to making this world a bit cleaner, less polluted, with technologies that treat and improve nature, the human body, the environment. Communicating these new discoveries to the world is done through the same means that gives birth to literature and that creates cultural bridges between nations and continents.

In this new communicational environment, engineers do not communicate solely with their counterparts or peers using the specific language of science and technology, rather they must communicate with the entire community, since the entire community is the beneficiary of their work. This new context forces the engineers to become not only very good professionals, but also very good communicators (Weichert 2001).

As the name suggests, English taught and learnt for specific purposes should meet the demands of a certain profession or group of professions and should focus on the communicational needs of the learners. Thus, English taught to future engineers should meet the communicational needs of the professional environment in which engineers work.

In order to identify the communicational needs of engineers in the industrial and commercial professional environment, we have created a questionnaire which was administered to a sample of engineers working for various companies in the commercial and industrial area of Cluj Napoca.

Apart from the identification elements, the questions were aimed at finding several aspects in connection to the communication in English at the workplace:

- The importance of the English language in the professional activity (scale from 1 to 5);
- Reading English documents (specify which);
- Writing in English (specify);

- Oral interaction in English (listening and speaking).

The results of this questionnaire are presented in this paper and they show that communications in English play an important part in the professional life of the engineers and that the communicational events found in their professional environment require the English teacher to adapt the English teaching methodology so that technical students become better trained for the future career.

This involves an adaptation process of the syllabus to meet the communicational demands of the future career, but it requires the teacher of English for this specific purpose to open the university discipline called "English" to technical and non-technical disciplines that can provide the vocabulary and linguistic structures that are part of the documents found in the answers of the engineers.

Thus, transdisciplinarity becomes an intrinsic feature of teaching ESP, providing vital guidelines not just for the teaching methodology but for the assessment objectives as well.

**Key words:** ESP, teaching ESP, assessing ESP, engineers' professional environment, transdisciplinary syllabus.

## **EMPLOYING COOPERATIVE STRATEGIES IN LEARNING PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

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**Abstract:** This paper aims at investigating means of increasing the efficiency of a university course in professional English, so as to enhance its usefulness for the students and, consequently, its relevance to their future careers. In doing so, the paper draws on the author's own experience in teaching professional English at Bachelor level for students of Applied Electronics. Taking into account the specificity of the students' field of study, such a course seeks to make use of their experience in two ways. On the one hand, it attempts to employ learning methods and techniques which are already familiar to the students, such as, for example, project work and team work. On the other, it attempts to address topics specific to their area of study, i.e. computer applications. Basically, it employs CLIL methodology (Content and Language Integrated Learning), which, although relatively recently coined as such, has been common practice in the Humanities for a (very) long time, i.e. learning language through studying literature, various texts, etc. An important aspect of this methodology is the use of authentic materials in learning language, which in this particular case is provided, on the one hand, by the Internet, which functions as a key source of information about and instructions on computer applications, and, on the other, by various technical manuals.

Besides improving the students' language competence, this course has as its main objective to improve the students' communicative skills in areas which will benefit their future professional careers both as regards their interactions with professionals as well as non-professionals. An important feature in this respect, i.e. in developing students' presentation skills, is learning how to take the audience into account, that is, how to adjust their communication to the knowledge and expectations of the audience. What all this boils down to, in fact, is understanding the frames with which the audience is familiar, i.e. the ways that different people conceptualize the world, and without which communication is doomed to fail. Moreover, it is often forgotten that learning itself – to a great extent – presupposes the understanding of such frames, and in particular the assumptions associated with them. Therefore, an additional aim of a course in professional language/ communication would be to attempt to sensitize students to these differences.

To that end, this investigation uses insights from two theoretical frameworks. The first one is the distinction between intuitive and reflective beliefs made by the French cognitive-anthropologist Dan Sperber. While intuitive beliefs are basically to be thought of as referring to material things in the world that one can perceive directly, and consequently, are shared by people belonging to different cultures; reflective beliefs are to be thought of as the result of internalizing abstract notions and they typically are found to differ a great deal across cultural boundaries. It is the second category which is of greatest importance to this investigation. The second theoretical insight employed by this study is Vladimir Žegarac's notion of 'culture' based on his notion of 'cultural representation', which allows for a flexible definition of culture that also accommodates smaller

communities such as, for example, professional groups.

**Key words:** joint learning, communication skills, professional group, intuitive beliefs, reflective beliefs

## **TEACHING ENGLISH FOR MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES**

**Assistant Professor Ph.D. TEODORA POPESCU**  
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**Abstract:** *The aim of this article is to provide some basic insights into the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) and to give practical suggestions as to how it can be applied to the English language classroom. We will start with a review of the main tenets of Harvard professor Howard Gardner's influential theory and will continue with possible applications to ELT. Teachers may find useful information on the relevance of this theory in the lesson plans outlined herein.*

*Gardner developed his theory of MI in the early 1980s (Gardner 1983). He reached the conclusion that traditional concepts about intelligence employed in educational and psychological circles for almost a hundred years were in need for dramatic change. Gardner advocated the idea that the theory according to which a "pure" intelligence that can be measured by a single IQ score is utterly untenable. Gardner further argues that intelligence is a multi-faceted phenomenon, consisting of a multitude of capacities.*

*Corroborating his own findings with evidence from other fields, such as anthropology, developmental psychology, animal physiology, brain research, cognitive science, and biographies of exceptional personalities, Gardner postulated that there are at least seven identifiable intelligences that people seem to possess and which are more or less developed in each individual. Later on he added an eighth intelligence to the list (Gardner 1993). These intelligences are: linguistic intelligence (the ability to understand the phonology, syntax, and semantics of language, and its pragmatic uses to convince others of a course of action, help one to remember information, explain or communicate knowledge, or reflect upon language itself), bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (characterised by the ability to control one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skilfully), spatial intelligence (the ability to perceive the visual world accurately, to perform transformations upon one's initial perceptions, and to be able to re-create aspects of one's visual experience - even in the absence of the relevant physical stimuli), musical intelligence (the ability to understand and express components of music, including melodic and rhythmic patterns), logical-mathematical intelligence (the capacity to understand and use logical structures, including patterns and relationships, statements and propositions, through experimentation, quantification, conceptualization, and classification), intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to keep in control one's own emotional life through awareness of inner moods, intentions, motivations, potentials, temperaments, and desires, and the capacity to symbolize these inner experiences, and to apply these understandings to help one live one's life), interpersonal intelligence (the ability to discern and make distinctions among other individuals in view of their moods, temperaments, motivations, intentions, and to use this information in pragmatic ways, such as to persuade, influence, manipulate, mediate, or counsel individuals or groups of individuals toward some purpose), naturalist intelligence (the capacity to recognize and classify the diverse species of flora and fauna in one's environment - as well as natural phenomena such as rivers and storms, and the capacity to care for, tame, or interact adeptly with living creatures, or with the whole ecosystem.*

**Key words:** English Language Teaching, Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory.

## MISCELLANEA

### *Tests of Business English*

by Teodora Popescu and Crina Herțeg

Alba Iulia: Editura Aeternitas, 2010

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The volume *Tests of Business English*, published at Aeternitas publishing house, Alba Iulia in 2010 constitutes a very useful tool for preparation for the exams of linguistic competence in English for graduate students at the economic/business profile.

The structure of the academic curriculum includes practical courses of foreign language for students of all areas of specialization, other than philology, during four semesters, in the first two years of studies. Also, the access to the graduating exam, as well as to MA and PhD programs is conditioned by a certificate which proves linguistic competences in a foreign language equivalent to the levels B1/B2 (Level 2 Threshold User/ Level 3 Independent User) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching, elaborated by the European Council.

The test book *Tests of Business English* offers the students a useful tool for the preparation of the exams of linguistic competence by means of autonomous or assisted study, as well as to check their knowledge using tests which are elaborated especially to align the level of preparation and self-evaluation at European Standards.

The test book is all the more necessary, as it permits the integration of the foreign language skills (speaking, reading comprehension, listening, writing formal documents relating to a certain specialization/profession) and of the level of competence of each student to a level which is internationally certified, which gives students an increased level of confidence in their linguistic abilities. Also the test book is very suitable for the preparation of the Cambridge Business English Certificate.

The volume contains twelve standard tests in five parts with items similar to the Cambridge test Business English Certificate. Exercises of listening, reading comprehension, lexical exercises, writing and speaking exercises are followed by the transcripts for the listening items, as well as the key for the exercises. There are an additional eight tests with items for all linguistic skills with much more stress on lexical and vocabulary exercises, also followed by the key for the exercises meant for self-evaluation purposes.

At the end of the test book there is a very relevant and useful addenda, containing link-words useful for oral and written communication in various specific business contexts, as well as a glossary of essential business terms with their equivalent in Romanian.

The listening exercises have relevant and exciting subjects which capture easily the attention of the students, a prerequisite for efficient exercises which rely almost exclusively on the students' ability to envisage a situation departing from a spoken fragment.

The reading comprehension exercises are based on texts selected from online publications of the relevant profile. The authors, again, manage to provide texts which have the quality of generating a genuine interest, an empathetic understanding, alternating informative, specialized texts with less formal but relevant texts involving a humorous, more relaxed approach such as: how to deal with an angry customer, what to put and what not to put in a CV, etc.

One strong point of the lexical exercises is their diversity: matching exercises, gapped texts of various approaches, word-formation exercises, vocabulary exercises regarding synonyms and antonyms. This diversity is a valuable aspect from the point of view of the ESP/FLSP teaching method, allowing the students to understand the importance of linguistic creativity, to better understand the multiple mechanisms of a language.

Although this is a test book, it is an instrument for self-evaluation as well as a carefully conceived material for a rigorous preparation involving autonomous or assisted learning.