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**Information Structure and Thematic Progression: A support for Teaching English in the New Millennium**

The Italian Education reform passed in 2003 introduced the compulsory teaching of English as a second language in primary schools. The question arose of what preparation should be given at university level to future teachers of English as L2 to very young learners. The poster describes an attempt to find a suitable approach to the issue. I illustrate the methodology used in my lectures to second-year primary school teacher trainee students who have, during their first year at university, consolidated their knowledge of English through a general language course, embracing the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The second-year course takes into consideration the information structure of utterances (Theme and Rheme, Functional Sentence Perspective, Communicative Dynamism) and Thematic Progression and shows how a correct use of grammatical structures is not in itself sufficient to produce a message that is coherent, efficient and communicative. Different types of Thematic Progression are examined and the various syntactical structures analysed that enable a speaker/writer of English to formulate his/her message in the best way possible, with specific reference to the genre short stories for children. The aim of the course is to provide future primary school teachers with instruments that will allow them to produce narrations in L2 that are functional from the communicative point of view and which are formulated in such a way as to assist their young pupils in learning English. It is proposed that such an approach could be of support in other areas of language teaching in the new millennium in consideration of the fact that information structure and Thematic Progression may be considered to be stable linguistic aspects identifiable in all varieties of English.

**References:**


The American Movie Corpus: a Database for Mediated Language Studies

The American Movie Corpus (henceforth AMC) is a sample parallel bilingual database under development for the study of movies, as a form of mediated language from both an intralingual and interlingual perspective. Movie language is mediated in the original version in that it is constructed to appear spontaneous and in the dubbed version through translation. The aim is to provide a representative corpus of the original American movies and their dubbed Italian versions. The reason for building a movie corpus stemmed from two main facts: first, in spite of the relatively large amount of available spoken American English corpora (cf. the Bank of English, MICASE, Santa Barbara Corpus, etc.), no corpus proved suitable for movie language analysis; second, also the (tran)scripts which are easily accessible and freely downloadable from the web turned out to be inappropriate for this kind of investigation, in that their transcriptions of speech differ considerably from what is actually said in the movies. The following four factors (now generally considered the main characteristics of a modern corpus) were taken into account in compiling the AMC: sampling and representativeness (and consequent balance), standard reference, finite size, and machine-readable format.

O.C.P. – An Oral Communications Project or Overcoming Communication Problems

Coming to “a fork in the road” is very often a daunting experience for many foreign language learners. Yet, it can also be an inspirational one. The goal of the Oral Communications Project (O.C.P.), as my colleague and I called it, has been to train 85 Upper Intermediate students, enrolled in the pre-sessional program of an English medium university, in how to decide on “the right turn” when it comes to coping with decisions regarding their oral communications skills in English. Our project was devised in line with our institutional oral skills objectives for this level of learners, the can-do statements of the European framework, and our learners’ individually set objectives. This framework was then applied over a 16-week-course through:
- a series of self-made materials which provided the basis of the input sessions.
- a series of weekly set independent study activities and tasks which had to be
electronically recorded either individually and/or in groups by students themselves were set on a weekly basis.
- regular group and individual feedback that was provided by us electronically and/or face to face.
- interviews conducted with a randomly selected group of learners every three weeks, with a view to obtain learners’ ideas and input regarding the process of the project.
The interview data proofed invaluable to us in that they provided us with both the learners’ changing perspective over the course of the project, and also with input that we at times made use of in making necessary adjustments to our project.
As globalization presents us with a diverse world of “Englishes” we need to look at diversity as a positive force for all and hence would like to share our experiences in the hope of providing a fresh perspective to the future of teaching English as a foreign language.

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Discursive Practices in Oral Exams: A Case from a Middle Eastern Setting

Various aspects of higher education have been investigated in recent years. Many of these studies have looked into teaching-learning issues (Caffarella 2000; Deem 2000; Durning & Jenkins 2005), and some have investigated issues relating to assessment of postgraduate students (Morley 2002; Hartley 2004). Nevertheless, very little has been done on the discursive practices in oral exam sessions.
This paper reports the preliminary findings of a larger project on the process of oral exams in a Middle Eastern country. It particularly focuses on discursive practices going on in oral exam sessions between MA/ MSc candidates, their supervisors, the examiners, and the audience present in the session. The results so far suggest lack of transparency in the process, which itself stems from inconsistencies regarding the nature and scope of MA/MSc theses, problems with writing, responsibilities and duties of supervisors and students.

References:
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**A Survey of Attitudes of Non-native Speaker Students and Faculty at One University into the Use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) on Academic Courses: How Can English Language Teachers Provide Support?**  

In line with the guidelines of the Bologna Agreement and as part of the increasing process of internationalisation, the University where I teach has introduced English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in some academic courses at the Masters and Doctoral level. Virtually all the lecturers and students involved in the courses are non-native speakers of English.  

As a teacher of English as a Foreign Language I have not been directly involved in the implementation of this policy but my interest was aroused by students in my language classes making wry comments about the level of English of their lecturers and by a number of lecturers approaching me to ask for advice regarding their students’ academic skills in English, which were lower than expected, and their own difficulties in teaching an academic subject in a language other than their L1.  

EMI is a relatively new and certainly fast-growing area in universities in Europe and one where EFL teachers can make an important contribution. This paper presents the results of a survey that I carried out at the university by means of questionnaires and selected interviews into the attitudes of the students, faculty and staff involved in the process, and considers the strengths, weaknesses and challenges that they perceive in EMI. It also attempts to identify ways that language teachers can perhaps help to make EMI for non-native speaker students and faculty a more successful and more enjoyable experience.

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**Multilingualism with English: A Detailed Look Inside**  

The phenomenon of ‘multilingualism with English’ first described by Hoffmann for the European context (Hoffmann, 2000) is now being recognized in other regions of the world. Along with that, the actual data on how exactly this phenomena works in particular sociolinguistic environment is scarce on the ground. More in-depth studies on other particular cases of multilingual arrangements involving English are needed.  

To fill in this void, this paper will attempt to look deeper into multilingualism with English in Israel. The study is based on the analysis of two sets of questionnaires filled in by immigrant multilingual speakers with the mastery of minimum of three and a maximum of eight languages, with English as a vital part of their language repertoire. The participants of the study differ (roughly) in their age and social standing: 360 young people studying in various educational establishments of Haifa and 37 working adults of various occupations from the North of Israel.
The paper will describe in detail and interpret the practical realization of multilingualism with English as it takes place for students and adults of different generations of immigrants in Israel. We will look into several dimensions indicating the role of English for the participants, including domains (home, work, entertainment, career), patterns of use, level of mastery, emotional aspect, and plans referring to improving the mastery of English.

References:

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An Overview of Translation for Embassy’s Websites
The present paper explores translation practices within embassies’ websites. The analysis is based on a corpus of websites compiled in the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Tanzania. All of these countries have English as their official language, their Embassy is located in Rome and their website is bilingual. A striking feature is the variety of text types included, which range from press releases, to ambassadors’ speeches, to newspaper interviews, to information-giving texts. The aim of the study is to show that the nature of the translating profession is undergoing a profound change as a result of the globalising tendencies affecting today’s society. Although they subscribe to some of the more conventional trends typical of translation ‘proper’, embassies’ websites seem to favour other forms of mediated discourse such as presenting different versions of the same text, manipulating others or localising messages to suit the needs of different audiences. What emerges is a new perception of translation as an editing and rewriting activity.

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Nominalization and Encapsulation in Medical Discourse: A Corpus based Study
The use of nominalization in scientific texts as an encapsulating mechanism has been widely studied as a feature of both word formation and written discourse. Verbs, adjectives or nouns can be nominalized in order to ensure cohesion to the text and to allow the reader to “unpack” the meaning of the text with much less processing effort. The hypothesis underlying the present study is that native and non native writers of English in a specialized context use nominalization to achieve textual cohesion in different ways, thus modifying the pragmatic force of the text itself. This study investigates the cohesive procedure of nominalizing a verb present in a previous clause or a sentence using a sub-corpus selected from the MedInt Corpus, a specialized
corpus of medical clinical investigations and case reports currently amounting to over two million tokens, compiled at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan within the Contact project as part of the national E-Colingua Project. The study refers to articles published in the two year period 1995 - 1996 and 2005 – 2006, which offers a synchronic and, a relatively diachronic perspective.

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CLIL – a good way forward?

One of the fruits of the globalisation of English has been the growth of CLIL (content and language integrated learning). CLIL is being adopted in countries all over the world and promoted by a range of educational bodies.

This paper aims to examine what CLIL is in theory and in practice, and also to look at research into its effectiveness as a vehicle for teaching language and a content subject. The paper will cover both theoretical issues in language learning as well as the more practical implications of CLIL. It aims to provide a platform for evaluating whether to adopt a CLIL approach in schools.
In compliance with the topic of the conference and in consideration of the international provenance of the authors, no stylistic and morphosyntactic editing was applied to the present texts.

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