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**REPORT ON THE BRITISH COUNCIL SPONSORED
CONFERENCE HELD IN 20–22 OF MAY 2001 IN CHEŁM:
THE PITFALLS OF TEACHING GRAMMAR, LEXIS AND
ANGLO-SAXON CULTURE AT A COLLEGE LEVEL.**

The conference took place on 20–22 of May 2001 in Chełm. It was brought to fruition by both *Teacher Training College* in Chełm and the *Department of Theoretical Linguistics* at the University of Rzeszów, and was generously sponsored by *British Council* in Poland. The conference organisers were Prof. **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** – the head of the *English Section* (NKJO-Chełm), and the head of the *Department of Theoretical Linguistics* (Rzeszów University), **Beata Lipczyńska**, MA – the head of the *Teacher Training College* in Chełm, and **Maria Czechowska**, MA, the general crash-guard of the Chełm conference.

The informal part of the conference commenced on Sunday evening with the welcoming address by Grzegorz A. Kleparski and Beata Lipczyńska. Small gifts were given by the conference hosts to all guests who at the same time could help themselves to a plethora of drinks and dishes nicely served by two conference assistants (**Bożena Rejman** and **Paulina Pietrzyk**), simultaneously enjoying themselves chatting while listening to the local rock band.

The official part of the event began on Monday and the two following days of the conference were a mixture of academic endeavour, sightseeing trips and friendly discussions. The conference was chaired effortlessly and grippingly by Prof. G.A. Kleparski who introduced the participants and encouraged the discussions after each paper presented. Thanks to his incessant support given to all presenters (to many of them it was the first publicly read paper), as well as all participants, the conference passed in a pleasant atmosphere. The presentations were given in three plenary sessions covering three main subjects, i.e.:

LEXIS:

Grzegorz A. Kleparski (Rzeszów University, NKJO-Chełm) **Anna M. Pietrzykowska** (Rzeszów University) *Openers, links and closers: Selected problems of teaching English communicative strategies.*

Grzegorz A. Kleparski (Rzeszów University, NKJO-Chełm) *On the necessity of introducing elements of language panchrony in the teaching of idioms.*

Beata Lipczyńska (NKJO-Chełm), **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** (Rzeszów University, NKJO-Chełm) *Kilka uwag na temat zależności między rodzajem analizowanego tekstu a doborem ćwiczeń lesykalnych.*

Dorota Skulimowska-Grymuza (NKJO-Chełm) *Communicative language teaching as a method of teaching vocabulary.*

Bożena Kochman-Haładyj (Rzeszów University) *English lexical elements in Polish as a result of American globalisation.*

Tomasz Karpiński (NKJO-Chełm) *Moving pictures as the means of vocabulary acquisition by first year students.*

The presentations listed above concentrated on the problems involved in learning phraseological idiomatic expressions, teaching English communicative strategies and also reported on the selection of frequently used lexical exercises for the advanced level of teaching. When it comes to idiomatic expressions it was stressed that very frequently it is not enough to interpret the semantics of the constituent parts to be able to supply a satisfactory interpretation of the given idiom. Rather, it is necessary to go into the historical senses of its constituents to be able to provide an exhaustive semantic interpretation. As for teaching English communicative strategies is concerned, the presenter concentrated on selected approaches to the act of communication and provided examples of communicative strategies being in fact almost infinite collection of expressions meant to encourage, start, maintain and enhance the flow of the conversation. The presentation dedicated to the so-called communicative language teaching stressed the importance of vocabulary teaching in contextualised, meaningful language. It discussed the main types of contextual clues that the learner may take advantage of in the production and comprehension of both spoken and written texts. Furthermore, the paper reported on a widely quoted strategy of guessing the meaning of unknown vocabulary items from context. Finally, a practical model for guessing from context was delineated and its effectiveness evaluated. The remaining two presenters pointed at English exemplary lexical items in the Polish language resulting from the process of what may be referred to as American economic globalisation and stressed, basing on own research results, that moving pictures are very attractive but – simultaneously – very demanding way of acquiring new vocabulary items.

GRAMMAR:

Tomasz Zygmunt (UMCS, NKJO-Chełm) *The Grammar Translation Method in the integrated approach of “Bottom-Up” and “Top-Down”*.

Adam Urban (NKJO Chełm), **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** (Rzeszów University, NKJO-Chełm) *I (have) milked my cow (yesterday): Aspectual approach to teaching English tenses.*

Beata Czekaj (NKJO-Chełm), **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** (Rzeszów University, NKJO-Chełm) *Some remarks on the available grammar books.*

The paper on Grammar Translation Method concerned lexical and grammatical competence of foreign language learners which is especially discernible in translation. The theoretical part of this presentation was supported by the research results carried out at the University of Philadelphia. The paper dedicated to the aspectual approach to teaching English tenses made an attempt at formulating a different way of accounting for the use of English tenses – not seen as individual tenses of so many different applications, but looked upon through their aspects, whose number is four, whereas the number of tenses as such is at least up to twelve. As a result, it may be concluded that the aspectual approach tries to simplify the whole system at least three times. The third presentation given in this session drew our attention to the importance of acquiring the grammatical system of the target language since without grammar it is impossible to communicate beyond a very rudimentary level. Accordingly, the authors attempted to present various grammar books available to Polish students and their varying opinions on the suitability and effectiveness of the ones that are most frequently referred to and/or resorted to.

ANGLO-SAXON CULTURE:

Grzegorz A. Kleparski (Rzeszów University, NKJO-Chełm), **Marcin Wysokiński** (NKJO-Chełm) *Some remarks on selected Anglo-Saxon culture teaching materials.*

Marta Chwalewska (NKJO Chełm) *Paralinguistics and the process of teaching Anglo-Saxon culture.*

Tomasz Niedokos (KUL, NKJO-Chełm) *Rule Britannia versus Cool Britannia: The two alternative approaches to teaching British history and culture.*

Robert Giszczak (WszPiZ-Warszawa, NKJO-Chełm) *Only the first-hand experience counts: The double-distorted picture of American 1960's counter-culture.*

The papers presented in this section dealt with broadly-understood culture and history of English-speaking countries. The authors of the opening presentation recommended a few handbooks and publications on Anglo-Saxon culture. The next presenter discussed *paralinguistics* as a form of non-verbal

communication and gave selected examples of the differences in paralinguistic behaviour used by people with different cultural backgrounds. The following paper compared two alternative and – at the same time – contradictory approaches (*Rule Britannia* and *Cool Britannia*), reflected in the existing syllabuses and available teaching materials. The presentation dedicated to the 1960's American counter-culture showed the double distorted picture of that generation in both American media and abroad and emphasised that this counterculture cannot be perceived in a limited perspective of music, fashion free-love and drugs. Rather it should be treated as a rightful protest of the majority of a generation against the hypocrisy, narrow-mindedness and indifference of the society they lived in.

The papers presented during the conference have been published in form of a book edited by **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** and **Anna M. Pietrzykowska**, the editorial assistant (Rzeszów University-Publishing House, 2001). They provide a source of current topics and problems encountered while teaching lexis, grammar and Anglo-Saxon culture at a college level.