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**REPORT ON THE SECOND BRITISH COUNCIL
SPONSORED CONFERENCE HELD ON 7–8 OF APRIL 2002
IN CHEŁM: THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF VOCABULARY
TEACHING AND TESTING**

In 2002 the annual conference was held in Chełm on 7–8 of April. The event was sponsored for the second time by both the *British Council* in Poland and the *Teacher Training College Chełm Language Society*. Yet it would probably never have come into being were it not for the work of the organisers: **Maria Czechowska, MA** – the conference crash-guard, **Beata Lipczyńska, MA** – the head of the *Teacher Training College* in Chełm and **Grzegorz A. Kleparski, Prof. UR** – the head of the *English Section* in the *Teacher Training College* in Chełm and the head of the *Department of Theoretical Linguistics* at the University of Rzeszów.

As usual, the informal part of the conference commenced with a welcoming supper. In anticipation of the head of the *Teacher Training College* (who is never late) a short history of the *College* and the Chełm chalk quarry was presented by **G.A. Kleparski** as a good number of conference participants had never been to Chełm before. The evening passed in a pleasant and cheerful atmosphere. The foregoing speakers had an opportunity to get to know each other and mere chatting alternated with constructive exchange of linguistic thought.

On the following day, all the scheduled presentations were held punctually. The discussions following presentations were led by the workshop chairman, **G.A. Kleparski**, who announced the subsequent speakers to the audience which comprised a mixed party of speakers, students and graduates of the *Teacher Training College* in Chełm, local teachers of English as well as college teachers from all over Poland, for example, **Allan Riciardiello** – representing the *Teacher Training College* in Siedlce and **Magdalena Nowakowska** – a representative of the *Teacher Training College* in Puławy.

The body of presentations given at the conference can be divided into two main subjects: **VOCABULARY TEACHING** treated as a whole, and

PHONETICS, especially its importance in the Second Language Teaching process. The presentation by **Beata Lipczyńska** (TTC-Chełm) and **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** (University of Rzeszów) titled *Kilka propozycji ćwiczeń kontrolujących poziom kompetencji leksykalnej* was exceptional in the respect that, firstly, it dealt with testing lexical competence (which covered the *testing* part of the conference subject while other speakers devoted their attention to the *vocabulary teaching* part), secondly, it was held in Polish. The material presented by **B. Lipczyńska** systematised and stressed the possibilities of infrequently employed ways of testing lexical competence at higher levels of language proficiency. She also demonstrated some problems in language testing peculiar to the teaching of German, unparalleled in English teaching classes. The discussion that followed **B. Lipczyńska's** presentation did not directly concern her lecture, but nonetheless it was very instructive and aimed at discovering the reasons for an enormous influx of Americanisms into German after 1960s. German native speakers participating in the conference made valuable contribution to this discussion. The bulk of the presentations covered **VOCABULARY TEACHING** as follows:

Marcin Kleban (Catholic University of Lublin) *The choice of vocabulary in speech.*

Robert Giszczak (TTC-Chełm) *Introducing new vocabulary in the process of teaching Anglo-Saxon culture.*

Grzegorz A. Kleparski (University of Rzeszów) *Stockings, tights and nylons: The application of field theory to vocabulary teaching at advanced level.*

Grzegorz A. Kleparski (University of Rzeszów), **Małgorzata E. Bartosiewicz** (TTC-Chełm) *In search of aids for teaching vocabulary at primary level.*

Anna Śmiały (University of Rzeszów) *Mnemontronic techniques in vocabulary teaching.*

The first presentation in this series pointed out the effectiveness of analytical activities performed by students, such as recording their own speech and evaluating the recorded material. The practical implementation of **M. Kleban's** theory was soundly supported by research that he had conducted. The discussion that followed the first presentation provided some invaluable suggestions for the author's continuing doctoral work. Although most of the presentations were very inspiring, the two produced by **R. Giszczak** and **G. A. Kleparski** seem to have appealed to the participants most, mainly due to the fact that they were both clearly structured (one could follow them without recourse to hand-outs) and, secondly, they both proposed methods of teaching vocabulary which, though rather demanding for teachers, are truly rewarding. **A. Śmiały's** paper is also worth singling out. The assembled audience had an opportunity to test what type of learners they were, for example, visual, aural, or kinaesthetic. They also had an opportunity to experience the suggestopedia-based method of learning new

words, which involved using both hemispheres of the brain, as well as senses. This method additionally requires relaxation and largo baroque music played in the background. While this method might not have appealed to all conference participants, the discussion that followed the presentation continued long after the conference ended. The second group of presentations, stressing the importance of **PHONETICS** in language teaching/learning included the following papers:

Piotr Cymbalista (*University of Rzeszów*), **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** (*University of Rzeszów*) *Teaching vocabulary inevitably implies teaching pronunciation and hence elements of phonetic transcription (at any level).*

Jacek Wołk (*University of Rzeszów*) *The principle of resonance in teaching vocabulary.*

Magdalena Margol-Klimek (*TTC-Chełm*), **Grzegorz A. Kleparski** (*University of Rzeszów*) *Towards the methodology of teaching pronunciation at elementary level.*

J. Wołk presented his original method of vocabulary teaching based on natural phenomena, i.e., on the principle of resonance omnipresent in the physical world. In his theory of vocabulary teaching he employs one of Saussure's dichotomies, that is syntagmatic versus associative relations and it seems that although the method is established on natural and well recognised grounds, it is innovative and a breath of fresh air in the vocabulary teaching theory. **P. Cymbalista**, **M. Margol-Klimek** and **G.A. Kleparski** concentrated on the importance of introducing phonetic transcription to classroom activities at the earliest stages of learning of a second language. They attempted to show not only the critical errors that may emerge from applying a substandard transcription, or not applying any at all, but they also demonstrated the ways in which phonetic transcription can and should be put to use in language classes. The suggestions provided, especially those by **M. Margol-Klimek**, were truly instructive and practical.

To sum up, the whole conference proceeded in a friendly and enjoyable atmosphere. It enabled its participants to become acquainted with new techniques and methods of vocabulary teaching while assessing those already employed by some teachers who were kind enough to share their experiences with other conference participants and the assembled audience. The conference was productive and its participants expressed their earnest wish to take part in such workshops in future. The papers presented during the conference were published in June 2002 as *The Twists and Turns of Vocabulary Teaching and Testing: Papers from the Second British-Council Sponsored Symposium Held in Chełm in April 2002* (**Grzegorz A. Kleparski** (ed.)).