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editorial

Dear all,

This is the first issue of this magazine to go public. The Messenger has been registered with the competent Ministry and is aiming to become a more widely-read magazine for English users and enthusiasts, within our university and beyond. Let us hope we will succeed. There are some more hopes I would like to share with you here.

Let us hope that the spirit of the department stays on the rise. Thanks to the revival of both the film club and the theatre group (see below for details of both), thanks to our regular parties and the people in this department who really try, relations within the department have become much warmer. I dare say they are almost as good as they used to be when I was a student here. I love remembering those years. They were my intellectual, creative and fun years. I wish for all of you that you, too, are given the opportunity to feel this way about the department.

Let us hope that we, as a department, will not be closed down due to our bad results in accreditation. We have tried again to get our courses accepted. We should all be grateful to certain members of our team who, while some of us were playing in the classroom or out of it, struggled under enormous piles of paperwork. In this way they fought to preserve what is good, to preserve our intellectuality, creativity and the fun factor. Let us thank Tamara Váňová, Renata Povolná, Petra Hoydenová and others. Let us thank our head Světlana Hanušová above all. She fights all our battles, not just this one, and the difficulty of it all must be a heavy burden for her to carry.

Finally, let me just highlight some of the contributions to this issue. It is impossible to overlook the interview with famous scientist and teacher Dalibor Povolný by his friend Mike George.

Marvellously moving! For those of you who feel like an excellent academic piece by Ludmila Urbanová, have a look at our linguistics pages. Interesting! I bet you enjoy Corinne Hutchinson's intellectual view of Janet Jackson's nipple. Thought-provoking! For those of you who feel like something sweet and light-hearted, I would recommend the first part of Amy Jarvis's Style Diary.

The opposite of thought-provoking! If you want to understand men a bit more, have a look at Andrew's football page. Manly female! And if ... Well, basically, I have to admit this issue seems so marvellous that you will feel inclined to spend an evening in bed reading The Messenger and eating chocolates. The way Amy Jarvis would.

Your editor
Gabriela Oaklandová

P.S. This magazine is very much ready for your comments and suggestions. You can write to gabroska@hotmail.com. Thank you.

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news from the department

English Department Film Club

On March 3 the English Department Film Club came back. Every Wednesday fortnight in room 30 you are warmly welcomed to come and watch. In this issue you will find its programme for this semester. The film club was started by Mike George years ago. Now it is back thanks to Petra Hoydenová, Petr Najvar, Eva Čížková and Martin Maláník.

80's Party

On March 2 the English Department threw another party for students and teachers (past and present) and other interested members of public. This department has a long history of parties. Like anything else, our parties have gone through their ups and downs. Those of you who attended the last one know that we are currently on a HIGH. You will all remember the success of the pre-Christmas party, with our theatre group's sketches and the poetry and song-lyric production of Jaroslav Suchý and co. This time a group of Eighties enthusiasts - Irena 'Legs' Adámková, Petra 'Superstar' Hoydenová, Our Man Mike George, Our Man Jaroslav Suchý, Andrew Oakland, Petr Najvar and Jiří Mičkal - got the party going by performing some Eighties songs and a couple of absurd sketches by English humorist Peter Cook. As usual the party lasted till 10pm. Let us thank Mr. Khail, our ever-helpful pan vrátný, for keeping us open.

Paul Clifford is Back

The former head of the department, Paul Clifford, is back as our teacher. He is mainly a methodology and practical language teacher. Under his reign the department flourished. Be nice to him.

SAC

In Pracovna doktorandů our new Self Access Centre is opening. There you will find many audio, visual, audio-visual and other opportunities to improve your English. The room is in Poříčí 7, 3rd floor, between rooms 11 and 12. Keep your eyes open for further information in this issue.

Accreditation

The department has submitted new documentation for accreditation of our courses. To preserve our courses - and therefore the department's existence - acceptance of these by the Accreditation Committee is crucial.

Cooperation with Nitra

At the beginning of February, Světlana Hanušová, Renata Povolná and Jitka Hásková travelled to Nitra, Slovakia, to attend a conference entitled Child, Language, World (Dieťa, jazyk, svet). On this occasion, 'teacher mobility' was negotiated between our Department and the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra.

Accreditation Support From the Faculty of Arts

The winter exam period saw the Department trapped in a trial of a nerve-racking procedure, preparing re-accreditation materials for a new bachelor's study programme.

The Department has negotiated support in the accreditation process with the Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts. HOD Jeff Vanderziel and associate professors Ludmila Urbanová and Milada Franková have kindly agreed to act as guarantors of our bachelor's programme.

Teaching and Evaluation

Nad'a Vojtková has taken part in a British Council networking seminar entitled "ELT and Assessment", held in Windermere, England.

Roma Children and Learning English

Nad'a Vojtková and Lucie Podroužková are involved in a project called Integration of Roma Children through Teaching English. In a series of seminars, teachers of primary schools with a large percentage of Roma pupils are trained in communicative

methodology and alternative teaching approaches, which they subsequently apply in in their lessons. The project is run and financed by the British Council and the Ministry of Education.

Exchange Students

The Department welcomes Dutch exchange student Cécile Cuvelier (Erasmus programme), Laura Kivikoski from Finland and Brigitte Jansen from Holland (Argonauts of Europe).

interview

Even at 80 years of age, Professor Dalibor Povolný is a hard man to keep up with. Besides his duties as professor of entomology at Mendel University, and continuing fieldwork on mount Etna in Sicily, he is in wide demand as a speaker at international conferences. Closer to home, he is one of our more outspoken ecologists, working with the Czech government on issues of environmental damage caused by light pollution, and with the Czech and German governments in an attempt to save the Šumava forests from logging, as well as with local homicide investigators as a forensic specialist, using his knowledge of entomology to help solve murders.

Most recently, he's been called on by the French and German governments as well as the European Union to help fight the potato moth which is now threatening Europe's potato crop. As I said, he's a hard man to catch sitting down. But one Saturday morning not so long ago, he took a break and we sat in his office and talked for nearly 4 hours. I wanted to ask him about language (he's fluent

in English, German and Russian, not to mention Latin, of course) and how it had affected his life. But like most truly memorable conversations, this one, conducted in English, took on a direction all its own.

I began by asking him why he's still teaching.

Actually, I'm retired, now emeritus, but I'm still teaching because the situation is critical. Ecology was nearly forgotten by the former regime, and now we see the consequences – aside from the destruction of our environment, education has suffered as well. Biology classes in secondary schools didn't teach the theory of natural relationships, so our students don't come to us knowing these basics. Because real ecology cannot begin with street demonstrations, it must begin with a deep working knowledge of nature; this means extra work for us as teachers of biology in order to build the next generation of environmentalists.

And your work as an ecologist outside the classroom?

I am a founding member of "Veronica", an intellectual – not political - green movement

that tries to explain the practical applications of environmental policy. Our aim is not political, our power is in the force of argument. For instance with the problem of the Šumava forest, the government saw only the easiest way, not thinking of the future. They say, "the trees are sick, cut them down".

The German part of the Šumava, the Bayerischer Wald, also has the bark beetle problem, but the Germans are much more advanced in their environmental thinking and practices. Because the Czech government saw forests only as a source of wood, its solution was to cut down the trees. (We also have a conflict of interest problem here as some of the people in the forestry administration have relatives who are owners of wood processing firms). But the Germans are able to see the whole principle of the ecosystem. They leave their dead trees standing, and it makes for a much healthier forest. It takes patience, because there is always a generational delay, but we must think in terms of centuries.

For example when you see lava eruptions on mount Etna, you see a river of fire 20-25 km long and several hundred meters wide, which burns and destroys totally. But come back in 15 years, and you will see that everything is amazingly renewed. Such fertility! It would cost billions to do that artificially. We environmentalists think that nature should be given a chance to work naturally.

The TV program "Nedej se" wanted to present a series of interviews wherein they would ask the same questions to the directors of the Šumava and Bayerischer Wald National Parks, but they couldn't find a Czech/German interpreter who also had an understanding of environmental issues. Therefore, I was asked to do this, and in doing so have had an opportunity to renew

acquaintance with many German scientists. In fact I've been invited to speak at the 100th anniversary meeting of the Munich Entomology Society. And that's the irony, I've known many of the German biologists for 40 years or more, some even from the last days of WW2.

There must be a story there... Meeting German biologists during WWII!

Well, you see the Nazis systematically destroyed our intelligentsia. Especially, they concentrated on killing our university teachers – a kind of decapitation of the nation. Our best people nearly all disappeared in the concentration camps. I wanted to study, but there was no one left here to teach me. In that way, German professors became my doctor fathers. That's the absurdity of war.

It does sound absurd, studying under "the decapitators" of your nation.

No, it's a matter of personalities, not politics, but it's a longer story than that. Because I was born in 1924 I had to stop my schooling and go to forced labor near Dusseldorf. At that time the cities were already in ruins, but the Americans were still bombing almost daily, then at night the British would come with the Mosquito bombers and bomb the dams on the Rhine and flood the cities. I can't describe the terror I felt. Knowing German language helped me survive.

And we Czechs were the first to go into the bombed area and dig women and children out of the piles and put out fires. But by 1944 it was complete chaos and I sometimes took advantage of the confusion and ran away for a few days or a week to Berlin to professor Hering – an active anti-Nazi, but I didn't

know it at the time. He became my teacher during this time. It was nothing formal, but he had collections in his house and it was like a university for me. At that time I also came to know professors Stein, Peus and Zimmermann.

How did it feel for you, as a Czech to be studying in the capital of Nazi aggression? Didn't the German language ring in your ears?

On one hand, of course. When people ask me how I learned German, I can only say from the Hitler war. But really, it's the same as speaking Russian. Politics is one thing and personalities are something else altogether. I have friends from Germany to Russia, and we have absolutely no problem. My Russian language is not as good as my English and German, but language is always a matter of wanting to understand someone.

But speaking of my German; in the 1950's, our universities expelled all researchers, so we had no literature for research. I was sent to Professor Hennig in Berlin to borrow literature. I made an appointment and was shown into his office. It was very dark, and he sat behind this great desk, very stern, slowly smoking one cigarette after another. I began to explain our request and he interrupted me: "Where does your German come from?" I said, "From the Hitler war". "How?" he asked, not even moving his eyes. "Explain." And he listened without speaking or even moving for the next half-hour while I told my story. When I finished, he got up, went to his bookcase and took out 60 volumes of his own encyclopedia and gave them to us.

A few years later, I had a chance to repay him. In 1958 in London at the 15th Internal

Congress of Zoology, I served as interpreter between him and Charles Remington of Princeton University when for 2 hours Hennig explained his idea of applying Kant's ideology to Darwin's theory. As a result of that conversation, he was invited to Princeton where he lectured and published what became known as his "cladistic" theory which now rules the world of systematics.

So, you see, it's very ironic, but it's all personalities and not politics.

When did you first start studying German?

When I was 10 and living in Třebíč, my father, a schoolteacher, decided that I should go on this exchange of children between Czech and German families. This was after Hitler had come to power in Germany and the intelligentsia in Czechoslovakia set up this summer exchange program in an attempt to tie the Czech and German parts of the nation together.

So my father took me to Prague (It was the first time I had seen a city, and I even saw the Graf Zeppelin airship over Prague with the Nazi flag. Nobody knew then that they were taking photographs of Prague streets.) And from Prague on to Bečov nad Teplou, where I stayed with a family and spoke only German all summer.

And then when the Nazis took over in 1939, German became the language of our gymnasium in Třebíč. I remember the day when our Latin class changed from translating into Czech to translating from Latin directly into German.

So, you see, all my German comes in one way or another from Hitler.

When and why did you first start speaking English?

In Denmark, 1947. It was love. A student exchange. I was in the second year studying at the Janáček Conservatory and also entomology here at Mendel. I had had a bit of classroom English, but had never spoken with a native speaker. Didn't know that it really "worked".

We Czechs all had guitars and played after dinner and all of the international students joined in. But there was one lady there, English, and a bit older than the rest, about 30, who stayed in the background and watched but didn't join. After a couple days, she asked me if I minded if she corrected my English. I said that, on the contrary, I would be very happy.

My colleagues were all meeting girls, but I disappeared every afternoon to visit another museum or botanical garden. After 3 or 4 days, this lady asked if she could join me on a trip to a local peat bog where I wanted to study the dragonflies and moths. Of course I said yes, but I hardly had enough money for myself, certainly not for the both of us.

But she paid. And that evening we went to the Tivoli gardens and danced – drank a bit of red wine, which she also paid for, which was very embarrassing for me. We also met the next day, and the next.... She was very kind, but all the while my debts were increasing. It was intolerable for me.

Just 2 days before I was scheduled to leave, I was walking by the royal opera house and saw that Smetana's "Bartered Bride" was playing, with Tyge Tygessen conducting. Well, imagine the coincidence! In 1941 I had

seen him sing "Dalibor" right here in Brno. After 13 curtain calls, he kneeled on the stage and pulled the Czech flag out of his jacket pocket to show the audience. I heard later that the Gestapo had taken him off.

So I didn't know he was still alive until I saw his name on the poster that day in Copenhagen. And I thought to myself, this is the only thing I could do to repay this lady who had been so kind and generous to me – invite her to see a real Czech opera. But of course I had no money and besides the concert was sold out. So I asked the lady at the cash desk to please tell Maestro Tygessen that a student from Brno wished to see him. He came down from his office. I explained the situation and he gave me 2 tickets - for seats in the loge!

Well, I borrowed a suit, and picked up my friend – her name was Monica – and went to the opera. When the curtains opened, I saw that the scenery was not the country around Plzeň, but the Bavarian Alps, and all the costumes were German, not Czech. Then the chorus started, and IT was in German. I was simply shocked. Then the first polka – those rhythms and melodies so emotionally Czech and close to my heart – sung in German language! It so devastated me that I simply started to cry and ran away to the WC. At the end of the first act, I returned to Monica and apologized.

But with the beginning of the second act, the jumping polka, I had to run away again. This time she followed and asked what was the matter. I didn't understand it myself at the time, (though I know now that it was my wartime experience all condensed into the absurdity of that corruption of Smetana) but I

explained to her as best I could. She looked at me and said, "Dalibor everything's all right."

After that, she told me her story. She had been a medical student before the war, engaged to marry one of her classmates. But he was lost at sea when a German submarine near Archangel, USSR, torpedoed his ship. She was still in mourning for him, and felt his presence at this gathering of international students. So, we had both suffered terribly from the war, and were suffering still. Afterwards we went dancing and I felt very close to her. I didn't know it at the time, of course, but it was love.

Two days later I had boarded the ship to return, I was on the top deck, and as I looked down, I saw her on the dock, waving for me to come down. I asked the seaman how many minutes we had and ran down to her. She presented me with a scarf – red and blue with white dots, and then she said, "Dalibor you haven't even kissed me." Well, I was so surprised! We were both overcome by emotion, and I've never forgotten her. And that was my introduction to real English.

How has English influenced your career as an entomologist?

Here's one example: In 1958 I was a member of the Czech delegation to the Royal Zoological Linnean Society in London. Prof. Obenberger of Prague was head but he asked me to accompany him because he didn't speak English very well. That was the first time I met Professor Robert Usinger, and I was surprised to see that he had a reprint of my paper about bedbugs in his pocket. I had studied them in bat populations in the Slavkov castle and the tower of Křtiny church. He was especially enthusiastic because it had long

been suspected that human bedbugs originated with bats, but mine was the first scientific documentation of the fact.

In fact he was so interested that he wanted to come see them for himself, and I spent the next 2 months trying to get his visit approved by the bureaucracy. The police couldn't believe that he really wanted to study bedbugs! They were convinced he must be a spy. It was finally approved, but only on the condition that we would be driven and accompanied everywhere by the secret police.

When we got to Slavkov, we found that the entire bedbug population had died since I had studied them. But in Křtiny we found heaps of bedbugs! He was so happy! And that's why I was invited to the 16th International Congress of Zoology in Washington DC in 1963. I was introduced there as the man who had discovered human bedbugs in bats!

Washington DC in 1963 must have been an interesting place.

The congress ended on August 25, and Prof. Usinger wanted me to come to San Francisco but my visa was valid only for a couple more days. He accompanied me to our embassy where the ambassador finally said yes, I could go, but the Czechoslovak government wouldn't finance my trip. Usinger, relieved to get the approval, smiled and said, "No problem". Leaving the embassy, he turned to me and said, "O.K., Dalibor, buy your plane ticket and I'll see you in San Francisco." I said, "But, Bob, with what"? He couldn't understand that I really had no money, that even a university professor here couldn't afford a plane ticket. He thought a moment and then said, "Be ready tomorrow morning and somebody will pick you up." The next

morning a car came for me at the YMCA where I was staying and took me to Trinity University.

There was a greeting committee waiting when I got there, led by a Scottish nun about 90 years old and more than 2 meters tall. She embraced me and started to weep. I didn't know why, but I could feel her tears falling on my head. It turned out that her name was Jean of Nepomuk and I was the first countryman she had ever met from the homeland of her chosen church name. Anyway I lectured that day and that way got enough money to buy a plane ticket to San Francisco. That evening the nuns took me out to dinner and were full of questions about Jan Hus and Jan Amos Komensky. I was surprised how little they had been told about these "heretics". After dinner they drove me back to the YMCA, and it was on the television there that I saw Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech on the evening news. He had been speaking just across town while I was lecturing that afternoon.

When it was time to return from California to New York for my flight home, I wanted to travel by land so that I could see the country. Well, it took 1½ days by bus just to get to Salt Lake City. I was tired but I wanted to see the Mormon museum. I counted my money and didn't have enough, so I joined a tour in progress. Afterwards, I began talking with the guide, a very kind man who invited me to his home for dinner that evening. It was still afternoon, so I went to my hotel and thought I would sleep for an hour. After I showered, I looked out the window and saw people putting up signs welcoming President Kennedy. I learned that he was coming to give a speech that very afternoon. I had no ticket, but I noticed that everyone showed

something at the door and got a ticket. So I got in line and when my turn came, I showed my Czechoslovak passport. They didn't even look at it and gave me a ticket for the 16th row! That was September 1963 – just 2 months before he was killed.

You were one of the founding professors of Jalalabad University in Afghanistan. How did that happen?

It was an opportunity to collect insects in an unexplored land. You see, even with their repeated attempts during the 19th century, the British had never succeeded in conquering Afghanistan, and therefore their entomologists had never classified the fauna there. The University of Kabul was basically in German hands, with all lectures translated into Persian language.

Because of the cultural and linguistic problems with the Pashtuns, the King wanted to establish a university for Pashtun speakers in Jalalabad. (The same problems still continue – the Taliban is ethnically a Pashtun movement.) He wanted this university to be in English, but, of course not British, So the Americans were invited. Basically it was Peace Corps, Fulbright, and World Health Organization teachers, with everything taught in English and translated into Pashtun. And so that this wouldn't become a CIA cell, they wanted Central Europeans there as well. That was in 1964 when there was a relatively freer atmosphere here, and I was allowed to go.

I had expected palms, but Jalalabad is in the mountains and the weather was extreme, sometimes at night -25 and during the day +25. I lectured – mostly in English, but sometimes in German – and spent all my

spare time in the desert collecting insects. They saw me as something of an eccentric, this man wandering unarmed in the desert. The Americans traveled about in jeeps and carried pistols in the desert, but it was a great mistake on their part. In desert societies, when the people see someone alone and unarmed, they assume he is innocent and go to see if he needs help. When Afghans would stop me, and I would explain what I was doing, sometimes they would halt their whole caravan for hours and help me collect. I would get kilos of bugs and scorpions.

The World Health Organization was there inoculating people against diphtheria, tuberculosis, and other such diseases, but the people were much more infected by parasites than by the diseases they were vaccinating against. Around Jalalabad 70% of the people had parasites. So gradually they began to visit my lectures on infectious parasitology and it eventually made a difference in the overall health of the local community.

At the end of my stay, the dean asked me to extend my stay and the Czechoslovak government offered me an assistant. By the end of my time there, I had a 5-member team. We Czechs became the life of the international community's social events. We showed them how to dance cardas and polkas, and for one party I even got our embassy to donate some Plzen beer. When I left to come home after the fourth stay, I was invited to Kabul to meet the King.

Can you explain what you do with homicide investigators?

Basically I use insects to estimate the time of death as closely as possible – and also to determine if the body has been moved. It's a

difficult matter, because the longer the body lies, the less the accuracy. It's also important that the police don't disinfect or disturb the body before I come. Some murders have been solved by forensic entomology establishing the time of death when the suspect could be proven to have been with the victim at that time

I've done some 80 cases since 1958. A few years ago I was called in by the Frankfurt police to help with a case, and since that time they've asked me back on a regular basis. I also give specialized lectures there, and in London as well.

How did your cooperation with the University of Palermo begin?

The European Lepidoptery Society was founded in 1982. As Czechoslovaks, we couldn't become members, but our foreign colleagues supported us and paid our membership. So after the changes, in 1992, I organized the annual meeting in Lednice. It was a success, and the president of the society, an Italian professor, asked me what he could do in return. I told him I needed to collect insects from the most inaccessible parts of Mt. Etna on Sicily.

He arranged it and I collected there for 3 summers. One evening towards the end of my 3rd stay, a delegation of people came to me and asked if I could come to Palermo that evening. I was very surprised. I was tired and dirty from working all day in the heat, but they insisted. When we got to Palermo the senate of the university was waiting for me! They asked me what was so interesting that I kept returning. I told them that they were the most untouched and unspoiled part of Europe. During the evening, it became apparent how

much they valued an official connection with the Czech Republic. It was because of President Havel - they have the greatest respect for Havel there. So the next year I managed to get the Brno TV station to send a crew of 7 back with me to film a documentary of the land. The Sicilians were so pleased that they were recognized by, as they put it, "the land of Havel".

I was made an honorary citizen of Palermo and we even began an exchange of students and professors between their university and our own. Just last Spring, Mendel University granted the first Ph.D. to a student from Palermo.

Can you explain this work you're doing now on the potato moth?

Just before Christmas, I received a letter from the French ministry of agriculture, asking me to send a reprint of a paper I wrote in 1973. But this story really begins in the early 1970's when this moth had been found in Costa Rica and sent to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC for identification. It was unknown to them, so they sent it on to the British museum where Dr. John Bradley didn't know it either, but recognized it as one that would fall into my field of taxonomy.

But by that time it was the period of "normalization" here and I had been expelled from the university and forbidden to teach. For the next 18 years I worked as the pest control specialist on a farm near Lednice. Anyway, John Bradley managed to have this

dead moth smuggled in to me. I identified and classified the moth and wrote a paper on it, but because I wasn't allowed to publish officially, it didn't receive international distribution. Over the next decades, the moth spread through South and Central America, destroying 40% of the potato crops and causing a great deal of human suffering in those agricultural economies.

Now this moth has just shown up in the Canary Islands and is threatening the continent of Europe. My original paper and drawing was found and published and now I've suddenly - as the first author - become the "authority" on the potato moth. I'm working with experts from the Port of Montpellier, with plant protection agencies in Brussels, as well as with the European Potato Producing Association. We are working to develop a whole system of safeguards - everything from pheromone traps to transparent shipping bags, trying to slow the invasion and minimize the damage here in Europe.

But the irony is that in 1975 the Costa Rican government somehow found my paper and wrote asking me to come and help them when this moth first began to attack their potato crops. The university wrote them back that I was too important and they couldn't afford to let me go, when the truth was that they had forbidden me to teach and sent me to work on a farm. That's the perversity of totalitarianism, and you can see that we are still living with the consequences today, even in the price of potatoes.

linguistics pages

On Authenticity and Naturalness of Language Data

Ludmila Urbanová, FF MU Brno

Branches of linguistics which have recently been successfully cultivated in linguistic research and also in teaching linguistics at university level, such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, stylistics etc., have one thing in common: linguistic observations are made on the basis of language data which are commonly described and evaluated as **authentic and natural**. The relevance of the selected language material can hardly be disputed, and every researcher has to be prepared to meet the requirements of authenticity and naturalness. Let me briefly tackle the problems of authenticity and naturalness of language data in relation to their reliability.

1 Authenticity of Language Data

To obtain naturally existing data can be difficult, due to the personal involvement of the speakers as well as the subsequent transcription and tagging of the spoken texts by linguists, namely because the participants need not always agree with the publication of their private conversation, and the division and tagging of such texts usually becomes a very demanding task, even for linguistically-minded people.

Question 1: How do we understand the impact of authenticity of the research material on valid generalizations about the functioning of language?

In the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* the entry **authentic** is defined in the following way:

- 1) of undisputed origin, genuine
- 2) based on facts, accurate and reliable

In harmony with the dictionary definition, the most significant qualities attached to authentic language materials used by language researchers and language learners seem to be the **genuineness** and **reliability** of the given data. In pragmatic terms, the data are manifestations of **language in real-life situations**, neither modified nor changed to suit better the purposes of research resulting in a neat, unproblematic classification of the phenomena under investigation.

In linguistic terms it means that the manifestations of language which occur in authentic texts are not always "correct" in their formal appearance, in their structure, but are appropriate and acceptable with regard to the context of situation. As such they can be easily deciphered in the given context. Correctness is no longer the main issue.

Example 1

do you want so you want some how are you doing more

(A Corpus of English Conversation, 1980, S.2.11 824)

Example 2

the trouble is, was, they were a lot of people there who sort of felt a used to assert

themselves and then that affected the other people there as well

(A Corpus of English Conversation, 1980, S.2.11 856-859)

The understanding of authenticity is also connected with the use of non-linguistic means of communication, which enhance the meaning of the message. Therefore language corpora also take the visual and kinetic means of communication into consideration, such as colours, the general lay-out and the graphetic means used in the written texts and the body language (facial expressions, gestures etc.) in its spoken counterparts. Both linguistic and paralinguistic features of communication have to be studied because they coexist and equally contribute to the meaning of the message.

2 Naturalness of Language Data

McCarthy and Carter (1994.117ff) deal with the question of naturalness from the point of view of language teaching. In their view, learning foreign languages requires learning “patterned behaviour within particular cultures”, having in mind the ways of expression in their natural sequences, to master the natural flow of speech.

Question 2: Why should the linguistic material used in research and teaching be natural?

Many ways of expression tend to be culture-specific, such as politeness strategies in speech act sequences with regard to the individual functions of language (apologizing, thanking, arguing, explaining, favour-seeking etc.) To be natural can thus be explained as the endeavour of the speaker to use strategies which sound natural in a particular culture.

Example 3

B *you like it there do you Monica*

A *well I love it there in a way I mean I don't want to stay there forever obviously or else it'll be terribly bad for me I mean it's been bad enough for me as it is I think really in lots of ways but as far as the archeology is concerned which is really much more my thing now*

(A Corpus of English Conversation, 1980, S.1.9 783-792)

Example 4

well so I feel quite sorry for her and I I can see myself doing the same thing at at really some times

(A Corpus of English Conversation 1980, S.1.12 1182-1184)

In the examples above, the speakers are rather indirect and vague, which is a typical English discourse tactic used in such situations. The speakers are reluctant to give a straightforward answer. The initial *well* showing reservation, and the high degree of tentativeness and subjectivity on the part of the speaker expressed by pragmatic markers such as *I mean, obviously, I think, really, so* sounds perfectly natural in spoken English. Foreign learners are expected to acquire this way of rendering the message to behave according to the ritual current in English culture.

Recommended Reading

McCarthy, M. and Carter, R.: *Language as Discourse. Perspectives for Language Teaching*. Longman 1994

culture pages

Trouble For The BBC

Andrew Oakland

(I should make it clear at the outset that the main aim of this piece is to comment rather than to report, and that I have strong feelings of pride - detestable - ugh! - in the British Broadcasting Corporation that make me aggressively resistant to the claims of its critics.)

In the last week of January, the BBC was hit by a crisis bigger, some commentators say, than any it has suffered since it was established as a public body under royal charter in 1927. It is nothing new for representatives of His/Her Majesty's Government to criticise the BBC – but for this criticism to be supported by the findings of a super-high-profile public enquiry is, well, a bit of a shocker.

The enquiry in question is the Hutton Report into the circumstances surrounding the death of senior civil servant David Kelly. Dr Kelly committed suicide in July 2003, having been in the days leading up to his death the subject of intense government, media and hence public interest. He was a departmental head and a recognised expert of longstanding on chemical and biological weapons.

Kelly was 'outed' as the source of information reported by BBC radio journalist

Andrew Gilligan. In his report, Mr Gilligan presented the revelation that the Government dossier making the case for Britain's participation in the military action in Iraq had been 'sexed up'; Mr Gilligan's essential point was that the dossier exaggerated Iraq's ability to take offensive action. The Government cried that Mr Gilligan (*ergo* the BBC) had accused it of misleading Parliament in order to gain its acceptance of British aggression against Iraq. Put more simply (!), the Government accused the BBC of accusing it (the Government) of lying.

The Hutton Report was heavily critical of Gilligan (hence the BBC) and very gentle with the Government. According to Lord Hutton, Mr Gilligan had accused the Government of deliberate fabrication without justification for this assertion. The press was heavily critical of Lord Hutton (a senior judge and Member of the House of Lords), whom it accused of being biased in favour of the Establishment. (But the press can be expected to come down in favour of fellow journalists. In this instance, the press was surely not a reliable barometer of public opinion.)

The BBC must be seen to be politically impartial: for some of its activities – most notably its overseas services – it receives a government subsidy; it takes a licence fee from every household with a television set (and theoretically a radio set) in the United Kingdom. Most Britons are happy to support it – perhaps because they (like me) accept as fact that its commitment to impartiality outstrips by far any of those of its would-be world competitors, perhaps because, in their

(as in my) opinion, the BBC continues to make consistently excellent programmes for all kinds of audiences.

The day the Hutton Report was published (28 January), Gavyn Davies, the BBC Chairman, resigned. The following day, Greg Dyke, the Director-General of the BBC (and effective Commander-in-Chief), took the same step. Mr Gilligan, whose readiness to act independently had been criticised within the BBC, was the third to go. Mr Davies and Mr Dyke quit because the organisation they headed had failed to maintain the standards of journalistic accuracy the BBC demands.

On Saturday 31 January, The Daily Telegraph ran a full-page advertisement placed by BBC staff at their private expense: it comprised line

after line of names of staff who wished to thank Mr Dyke for the splendid work he had done in his four years at the BBC's helm. Most of the signatories knew that Mr Dyke would not be returning; the most important thing was that his professional integrity should not be called into question.

The BBC is central to the health of Britain, and it is properly served by people such as Messrs Davies and Dyke who put the reputation of the organisation before their own careers. In so doing, we must hope that they have strengthened its position.

Nipplegate

Corinne Hutchinson

While millions of Americans focus on the upcoming elections and the race for president, millions of others are concerned with something a little different: Janet Jackson. Well, her breast, to be exact.

Less than one month ago, on February 2, 2004, droves of American sports fans turned on their televisions to watch the most publicized television event in America—the Super Bowl. The Super Bowl is to American football as the World Cup is to international

football. An annual contest, it is ranked as the most watched event on television in the United States. With ratings like this, advertising during the show sells at astronomical prices: one 30-second advertisement costs roughly \$2.5 million, and entertainment is expected to live up to these pricey standards.

Janet Jackson, sister to the well-known Michael Jackson, and an entertainer in her own right, was hired to perform a song along with singer Justin Timberlake. They were in the middle of a sexually suggestive dance act when Timberlake reached out and ripped off Jackson's bra, exposing her breast for an estimated one second.

Both performers claim that the exposure was due, as Timberlake put it, to “a wardrobe malfunction.” In short, they claim it was an accident.

This, however, has not satisfied the numerous Americans who are angrily claiming to have been ‘injured and traumatized by the performer’s lewd actions.’ Many American parents are outraged, claiming that in the midst of wholesome family entertainment, their innocent children were subjected to the lewd sight of a naked breast. Terri Carlin, a banker from Knoxville, Tennessee, filed a lawsuit against Jackson and Timberlake, seeking millions of dollars in punitive charges. (She has since dropped the charges, claiming that she has ‘made her point.’)

Yet these scandal-mongers seem to have misplaced their passions. The performance that was brought to a halt by the exposed breast was no innocent square dance, but a series of carefully choreographed moves in which Timberlake grabbed and stroked his crotch numerous times, and Jackson’s dance moves left little to the imagination in the way of simulated sexual acts. Parents who did not want their children exposed to images of a sexual nature could have easily turned off the televisions at the beginning of the performance. Had they done this, their children would never have seen the scandalously nude breast.

Children’s eyes aside, it seems that the entire issue rides on the fascinating notion that a body part covered by a thin layer of fabric is ‘decent’, whereas when this same body part is uncovered it becomes lewd and unfit for polite company. A young woman may wear a swimsuit so insubstantial that mere triangles cover her nipples and pubic area, and as long as these forbidden areas are covered, she is seen as a ‘decent girl.’ A man may wear a pair of blue jeans so tight that the mint date on the coin in his back pocket is legible, but should he remove these jeans in public, he would find himself facing ‘public indecency’ charges.

These rather contradictory views are an outstanding example of the human willingness to abide by arbitrary rules and social norms. American lips agree that public nudity or sexual explicitness is unacceptable. Yet American hands tremble in their eagerness to empty their wallets on performances in which Madonna simulates the act of sex on stage, or Britney Spears gyrates her (clothed) pelvis for a crowd of appreciative 50-year old men. Americans have managed to fabricate for themselves a world in which it is only the sight of bare human flesh that is indecent. Perhaps soon performers will cover their breasts in plastic wrap, and thus avoid any cries of impropriety.

literature pages

In each issue of The Messenger, Lucie Podroužková browses the library shelves for both new arrivals and all-time favourites to give an informal review and a personal recommendation, concluded with a comprehension question for potential readers.

BEATING BACK THE PAST

When Toni Morrison received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, many people put it down to politics rather than the literary qualities of her work. Indeed, being an African American and a woman writer, Toni Morrison does have all the politically correct parameters to qualify. But if there were any doubts then, the years since have shown where Morrison's genius resides: in a unique narrative force which makes reading her novels sheer delight, in an intricate and intriguing style, in her steadfast belief in the healing quality of storytelling, and in a singular, strong-headed determination with which she weaves her stories around the black present and past.

Morrison herself does not absolve her writing from political implications. In an essay on the art of the novel *The Site of Memory* she makes a conscious link between her work and African American literary heritage, especially the so-called "slave narratives". But she begins where the slave testimonies end: instead of their sober accounts meticulously guarding objectivity, in the name of which any interior life is absent, she makes her characters "go inside". Such is **Beloved**, a novel not only about what slave experience

was like but also, and more importantly, what it felt like.

Set in the mid-1800s, **Beloved** is about remembering and not wanting to remember. Sethe is a young slave woman who manages to escape from captivity, from a farm ironically called Sweet Home. With three children sent ahead and the fourth born on the way, Sethe finally crosses the demarcation line of the Ohio river and reaches her mother-in-law in Cincinnati, where she is initiated into a life in freedom. Her master, though, is not willing to give up so easily on a "property that reproduces itself without cost" and has "at least ten breeding years left" (149). But Sethe refuses outright to let her children back into the old, unlivable life. Recognizing the master's hat from behind the fence, she is determined to stop him at any cost. Briskly assembling all her children in a garden shed she determines to kill them and before she can be prevented, her elder daughter's head is sawn off.

White justice acts instantaneously and sends Sethe to prison. But when she comes out she still has to face the resentment of the local black community. What she believes was an act of love ("I stopped him," she said staring at the place where the fence used to be. "I took and put my babies where they'd be

safe."164), they condemn as a trespass against God, who is the only rightful judge of man's life and its worth. Unforgivably, she has dared to weigh the value of life and draw the line: death is more tolerable than life under slavery.

For eighteen years, Sethe is able to counter the neighbours' silent disapproval with her head up, to put up with the rage of the dead daughter's ghost haunting her house, and fend off sudden and painful eruptions of memory, because she is there only to protect her children from the "other", terrible life: "The best thing she was, was her children. Whites might dirty her all right, but not her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing – the part of her that was clean." (251)

When Paul D, the only surviving ex-slave of Sweet Home, turns up on her doorstep, she even allows herself to ask if she could "trust things and remember things because the last of the Sweet Home men was there to catch her if she sank"(18). But the past has yet to take its toll. A young woman stranger emerges from the river, fully dressed and beautiful, with a skin as smooth as a baby's, and claims her name is Beloved (the very word Sethe had engraved on her dead daughter's tombstone).

We never get to know who or what exactly Beloved is. Sethe of course believes that it is her dead daughter who has come back to retrieve the love she has been deprived of, and tries hard to make up for the eighteen years of frustrated affection. However, Sethe's fierce mother's love, which seems to others to

border on excess and indulgence ("Your love is too thick", says Paul D, 164) strikes back at her. Gradually, Beloved and her demands suck the life out of Sethe and they begin to exchange roles: Beloved is looking more and more like Sethe eighteen years ago, while Sethe is shrinking into a child. It is then that the women of the community decide to act.

When Beloved finally disappears, Sethe views it as a loss of herself: "She was my best thing." (272). Although it is her other daughter Denver and the women from the town who save her life, it takes Paul D, who is fighting his own battle with the past, to piece it back together: "You your best thing, Sethe. You are."(273)

Beloved might seem a complicated novel because it is in no way chronological. Rather, it follows the incoherent and unruly paths of memory to illuminate the darkness and through telling, shed its burden and be free:

He wants to put his story next to hers.
 "Sethe," he says, "me and you,
 we got more yesterday than anybody.
 We need some kind of tomorrow." (273)

For thought:

Layers of meaning of the word "Beloved".

The book is available in English in the library upstairs and has also been filmed.

In 2002, **Lonesome West**, a play by young Irish playwright **Martin McDonagh**, opened in Činoherní klub under the title *Osiřelý západ*. It was hailed as a remarkable theatrical event and the actor-turned-director Ondřej Sokol, who also translated the piece, received a Thálie Award for the most promising young artist of the year. A year later, the play made it to the Mahen theatre, where it is still running. In December last year, a **Meeting Cultures** seminar went to find out how a stone theatre tackled a play which many find dark and unsettling. **Michaela Marková** reports:

Is your brother/sister more valuable than a bottle of whisky?

One of the pleasant duties the students of the "Meeting Cultures" course have is to attend several events that are in some way connected with English Studies. Amongst them was an Irish play called "*Osiřelý západ*" by Martin McDonagh.

I did not think it would be anything special. After all, students are usually not happy when they have to experience culture compulsorily. I did not know what to expect. All I knew about it was that it was a black comedy by a talented and successful Irish author. But believe me (or not), I was nicely surprised.

What is the play about? Two brothers – Valene and Coleman – live together in their father's house. That's nothing extraordinary, is it? One of them is an alcoholic and the other is mad about collecting figures of saints (not exactly normal but still acceptable). But

the problem is that Coleman killed their father because of his constant criticizing of Coleman's hairstyle. What is more, Valene promised that he would not tell anyone about it in exchange for being the only heir.

Coleman is not the only murderer in the village. Almost everyone who lives there is graceless. Would you like to be a priest there? It can hardly be a satisfying feeling to have murderers, prostitutes and alcoholics in your congregation. No wonder Father Welsh (or Walsh, as the people constantly mispronounce his name and thus make fun of him) is terribly exhausted and running low on hope. He even doubts God's existence, and he, too, finds his only solace in alcohol. He tries to reunite Valene and Coleman. But they seem deaf and blind to each other, and there is no mutual respect. One praises whisky more than anything else in the world, the other is so possessive he marks all his belongings with his initials. Figures of saints, chips or a cooker mean more to him than a brother's life ...

Father Welsh-Walsh wants to open their eyes by his own death. He commits suicide and hopes Valene and Coleman will redeem his soul through their reconciliation. But although they do feel a bit sorry for him, they have to realize the value of the other by themselves.

The play is full of cynicism and irony, and offers a moral warning about today's society and people's values in a darkly humorous way. If you fail to like the play, you can disappear during the interval (as the play has two acts). But I stayed till the end and you should as well.

amy jarvis's style diary

8 a.m. Woke up sort of tired after yesterday's shopping. Not easy these days. So many things! So good! So bloody stylish! Oh girlie me, I feel like looking really cool today. I'm gonna wear what is really in! But what *is* really in? Shall I wear my cool black trousers and my cool tight black top? Top it up with my silver jewellery? "No!" the stylish me replies. "You cannot be stylish and black at the same time! You have to be *pink*! Pink is *in*! *Very in*!" Would never have thought that I, stylish chick that I am, could become a pink girlie-girl.

10 a.m. Have got nothing stylish. Oh God, have to go shopping otherwise will never be stylish again.

12 noon. Right. Here I am. Back and all pink. Lovely. Got myself nice pink New Look top with Pussy Cat writing across my chest. Also got trousers and a jacket matching the top. Lots of cats and sequins all over them, though. Had no idea this could become *cool*. Popped in Accessories on way home. Oof, could not resist stuff in there. So overwhelming and cool and pink. Although do not know what am going to live on for rest of week.

3 p.m. Right. I'm nicely tucked up in my beddie. Reading India Night's *My Life on a Plate*. Will have to do something about my

pyjamas. Not cool, you see. Should be more pinky, maybe with little flowers on them. Anyway, this book's very good. It's chick lit, though. Would never have thought I would get into stuff like this. Was thinking I'd spend my life reading Schopenhauer and stuff about Buddhism.

5 p.m. Oof, have been reading the whole time. The life of people with kids! I tell you, not easy. All this woman has to cope with! No time for dinner, no calm mornings, all this getting breakie or dinner ready business, the cleaning, no weekends for shopping and no time for her bloody husband. These men, coming home and expecting housewives to look fresh and clean. Good fun, though. Especially enjoyed the bit where she can't stand having the second side of her bikini line waxed and forces the cosmetician to leave it all waxed and pass her her panties. Oh, and I've got this new Monica Ali book called *Brick Lane* to look forward to. Goodie. Goodie. Will get a snack and then back to beddie.

8 p.m. Oh, how very clever I am! I've thought of this cool poem. Think am going to send it to Sunday Times or Telegraph Style page.

*Pink is the new black!
The girlie-girl is back!
And she's not wearing black!*

andrew's page

Football for people who don't really like football

In our previous issue, you might remember, I asked myself what it was that I liked about football. I'd half hoped that by the time I had finished writing my column, I would have convinced myself that I didn't like football any longer. Sadly, I do. I like it *so* much that I just have to write another piece about it. And this may not be the last.

Some of you will fail to understand or even accept that some people's lives are bound inextricably to the fates of the club they support; if you are one such insensitive brute, read immediately Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* - or, better still, see the film, in which the reasonable-about-football protagonist - played by Colin Firth - explains to his fool of a girlfriend how it is he knows exactly what he'll be doing every Saturday until the end of the season ("March the nineteenth? That'll be Manchester City Away, then"), and how he dreads the coming of mid-May (season's end) like he yearns for mid-August (season's start).

My heart belongs to Nottingham Forest. Nottingham Forest currently lie third-from-bottom of Division One (which is below the Premiership, making it effectively Division Two), our lowest league position since 19-bloody-50! How are the mighty fallen. (Champions of Europe in 1979 and 1980, remember?)

These days, of course, I can't get to the stadium for matches (nor, I think, would I

wish to), but I always read the match reports and catch whatever I can on radio and the telly. So I know for a fact that Forest have never stopped 'playing football', even though their lowly league position suggests otherwise. (In the argot of the football enthusiast, 'playing football' means 'playing football in a manner which makes it attractive to watch'.) Ever since the Seventies, Forest have been known and respected for producing 'footballing' teams.

After Forest lost at home to Coventry on 7 February, the club chairman sacked Forest's 'footballing' manager (Paul Hart) and replaced him with a man who has earned a reputation for somehow ensuring that his bad teams do not lose (Joe Kinnear). If Kinnear's teams are incapable of 'playing football', they are at least very good at preventing the opposition from doing so. At his first press conference, Kinnear promised some 'bollocks' from his team. (Don't ask me what he meant by this.) On 14 February, Kinnear's 'New Forest' managed a 3-3 home draw with Walsall, the equalising third coming in the final minute; according to the correspondent of *The Guardian*, the Forest fans behind the goal sucked the ball over the goal-line. (How's that for 'football'?) As Forest had not scored a league goal for over a month, this result was greeted as a moral victory.

I expect Kinnear to save Forest from relegation to Division Two, by getting his team to play rugby instead of soccer. Most fans will be delighted with him if he does. Not me. Maybe I should try again to stop liking football, and instead choose a sport which puts a greater emphasis on foreplay and a lesser on penetration.

Andrew Oakland

song lyrics and poetry page

In his lessons Jaroslav Suchý works with students interested in creating poems and song lyrics. On this page you will regularly be introduced to some of their work.

Karel Pančocha *In Southern City*

tall buildings grow
ice cold winds **blow**
T.V. sets **glow**
latecomers **flow**
busses go **slow**
it's 9.59
they all look so **low**

Karel Pančocha *Hot*

Going to a sauna with
The Finnish female hockey team
Is no longer a myth

Yesterday nite at 95 degrees
Came true my biggest dream
They said: "Do what you please"

Well...in the end I stepped back
No dream is worth
Another heart attack

Helena Vad'urová *On Learning Languages*

Trés bien! .. she said it
and I'm so delighted.

But just one short minute later
I feel I'm sliding on a grater.

All eyes upon my head,
what nonsense she said.
AGAIN

How can she dare just mime,
such abuse of French, it's a crime!

Voila, here I am standing,
your devoted student of French,,
ready to serve,
waiting.

film club page

Movie mania is rolling in

Do you fancy watching good movies? Would you like to practise your English?
Then join our English movie seminar!

The class is scheduled for Wednesdays, 5 p.m., room 30 - the first floor of Poříčí 31.

The Syllabus:

MARCH

- March 3rd: **Dangerous Liaisons** - a cutting and witty tale of deception and double-crossing among the aristocracy of 18th century imperial France (John Malkovich+Michelle Pfeiffer)
- March 17th: **A Knight's Tale** - an exciting, action-packed comedic adventure; sensational soundtrack including music from Robbie Williams and Queen is guaranteed to rock you! (Heath Ledger+Mark Addy+Rufus Sewell, directed by Brian Helgeland)
- March 31st: **Man on the Moon** - the best film of the year; maniacally funny! (Jim Carrey)

APRIL

- April 14th: **SHREK** - this is a sweet and very true story about love and courage and it will never get you down! (Dreamworks comp.)
- April 28th: **Gone in 60 seconds** - this action-packed thrill ride starts off fast and never slows down!
(Nicolas Cage+Angelina Jolie, directed by Dominic Sena)

MAY

- May 12th: **Sleepless in Seattle** - a romantic comedy with as much comedy as romance; the humour never stops (Tom Hanks+Meg Ryan; directed by Nora Ephron)
- May 26th: **Ice Age** - 20000 years ago, the Earth was being overrun by glaciers, and creatures everywhere where fleeing the onslaught of the new Ice Age.
(20th century FOX)

We are looking forward to seeing you!

Petra + Eva + Petr +Martin ☺☺☺☺

theatre group page

The theatre group: Seeds of a good thing

My heftiest contribution to this Department's re-discovered determination to 'make things happen' was to be the reformation of our theatre group. Between 1997 and 2001 we were blessed with a fine troupe, under the guidance first of Jeremy Garlick, then of the unforgettable John Fennelly. In October, I put a call across the Department for new members; the response to this was less than overwhelming, though I felt confident we were sufficiently numerous, enthusiastic and talented to make a start.

The aims of our weekly meetings were – and are – that they bring forth contributions to the entertainments programme of our regular English Department parties, and that we prepare one full-length play each year for performance before Moravia's great English-speaking public. The first of these we are managing with comfort; the achievement of the second is proving more elusive.

We had hoped to perform David Nobbs's *Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* at the Barka Theatre in late April and early May. *Reggie* is not known as a stage play, although Nobbs planned it as such before adapting it for television. It was first broadcast on the BBC in 1976 in seven half-hour episodes, and has had a wildly enthusiastic (if limited) TV audience ever since.

The script was adapted back for the stage (by me), roles were cast, and scenes were exhaustively rehearsed. Jiří Hrouda as Reggie was proving an inspired choice, bringing just the right amount of nervous energy to the role of a middle-aged middle manager in the throes of a mid-life crisis (I'm not sure if the term 'male menopause' was current in the Seventies). In the course of the action, Reggie leaves his life (which comprises his work and

his family) and embarks on another. He soon realises, however, that the original life had much to commend it after all, that the needed change is to be found within himself. Our Reggie left us in mid-February, and we are not anticipating his return as Martin Welbourne in time for the April dates.

For a couple of weeks, I respected the wishes of my fellows in the group that I try to become Reggie myself. I dug deep in the search for my inner Reggie: it seems I don't have one (although I was very good at the middle-aged bit). Besides, as I was dramaturge, director and co-producer already, I was unlikely to make Reggie a success.

The production and the theatre group as a whole have two principal weaknesses: the shortage of time available (I have so far failed to meet all our members in the same place at the same time, meaning much time lost in rehearsals as original schedules are abandoned), and a shortage of members (actors, backstage and technical help, production assistants).

Where does this leave our theatre group and *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*? The groundwork has been done. We have great material. We have some splendid actors who are ready to give sparkling and memorable performances. We surely have an appreciative audience. *Reggie* is still breathing, but we need to give him some time to reconstitute himself. Rehearsals have been suspended until December and our premiere postponed until February/March 2005.

Reggie needs a transfusion of new blood. To coin a catchphrase from another British Seventies TV classic: for Katka from Blansko, Pavel from Veselí nad Moravou, Hanka from Třebíč (and anybody else who happens to be reading this) – "Opportunity knocks!"

Andrew Oakland
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in my opinion**Socrates/Erasmus and Utrecht**

Vratislav Hutský

This is an article about opportunities offered by an international exchange programme called Socrates/ Erasmus. I spent one semester at the Faculty of Education in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 2003 and was asked to share my experiences, which I do with pleasure.

If you want to study abroad, being informed about the available programmes is a vital precondition. Lots of students don't even know such a possibility exists. I was lucky enough to learn about it from a girl who had been to Utrecht the year before me. However, if you take the trouble and go through the notice boards, particularly on the English department floor, you will come across several announcements that promote possible options.

Once you have come to a decision to participate in any of the programmes offered, you should let the contact person in question know. And you had better do it immediately in case you become only a name on the waiting list. I applied nine months before going to Utrecht, which was a time long enough.

Now, all you have to do is wait. When the time comes, you will be prompted to get in touch with your host university to obtain necessary documentation, which is required in order to get the scholarship. This might seem to be a bit of a confusing process now and then but surely you will manage.

A question people are often concerned about is money. Can the scholarship cover all the expenses? My experience was somewhat specific because the Netherlands is one of the

most expensive countries in Europe and I had to spend half of the scholarship on rent (i.e. 250 out of 490 euro) each month. Considering the fact that this rent was at the bottom of the price range, one comes to a pessimistic conclusion. However, it is not so bad. If you go to Portugal, for instance, prices are incomparably lower, and even in Holland one can maintain a reasonably high standard of living unless spending nearly every single night in a pub, like me, is your cup of tea. In that case, take an extra bundle of money with you. But even if you binge little or not at all, take some extra money with you anyway if you can. It always comes in handy for trips and sports activities or whatever else you like. From 2004, it might be easier to find a part-time job in the place you are going to.

Now, I am getting to the most important point, to the reason you are sent abroad – school. I can't speak for every university around Europe, of course, and it is up to you to choose courses you are interested in. For my part, the time spent at the Faculty of Education in Utrecht was an unquestionable eye-opener. I don't mean the courses, though; some of them were really interesting, some of them were less to my liking, which is normal. The eye-opener was the school practice we did at a Dalton school. I was frankly sorry that I hadn't been given a chance to go to a school like this one. I had seen a few Dalton lessons here in Brno but compared to this school, it was just an experiment at an early stage with dozens of drawbacks to be coped with. I was frankly sorry that I had to go to a primary school which was so grey and dull compared to this school of bright colours and an unbelievably friendly atmosphere. It just didn't seem fair at first. But then I began to enjoy working at the school, and so I brought a good deal of encouraging experience back home. When (and if) I finish my studies, I would like to put it all into practice and that, in my opinion, is the most important benefit of exchange programmes. I fully recommend that you take part in this one.

Do not miss a unique opportunity to learn more genuine English and more about the U.S.A.

Enter a web discussion with American students

If you'd like to exchange e-mails with students of the Sinclair Community College, Ohio, all you have to do is write to Professor Jeffrey Tyus, at jeffrey.tyus@sinclair.edu

How much do you know about *e-learning*?

An e-learning course is

- A. a misprint
- B. a single-course meal squeezed between supper and breakfast which you must consume in front of electronic equipment such as computers, TV, etc.
- C. an abbreviation for an error-learning course, a brand new technique in which you learn from the mistakes of your teachers
- D. the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration

Yes, you are right, it IS a misprint, but if you want to know more, try this

<http://aristarchus.ped.muni.cz/moodle> !

There are two possibilities

either

- a) your teacher is an e-teaching enthusiast and then you already have your own account waiting for you and your course is being filled with various teaching materials. In that case you know both your log-in and your password.

or

- b) your teacher finds e-learning a waste of (his/her?) time, in which case no course, of course, is awaiting you, but you can still browse the site using a default log-in: student/password: student

Have fun and let me know (vanova@ped.muni.cz) if you like the idea of being e-taught or not.

the messenger

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