

### **Körperlich-räumliche Aspekte der Interaktion<sup>1</sup>**

Schmitt, R. Körperlich-räumliche Aspekte der Interaktion [Text] : [Monografie] / Reinhold Schmitt ; Studien zur deutschen Sprache. Forschungen des Instituts für deutsche Sprache. Band 64. – Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013. – 334 p. ISBN 978-3-8233-6738-3.

Edition «Körperlich-räumliche Aspekte der Interaktion / Corporal and spatial aspects of interaction» reported by publishing house Narr (Tübingen, Germany) is a monographic work of the scientist from Germany Dr. R. Schmitt investigating multimodal aspects of interaction space.

The basic aim of the reviewed monograph is to expand perceptions of multimodal interaction concept from the point of view of researching the aspects of corporal and spatial «behavior» of the participants of interaction microstructures formed in the space during the process of acts of communication on the basis of two maximum contrastive situations (videotape recordings and collection of video fragments of lessons in the premises of a grammar school and filming in the open space of a street).

Thus on the basis of analytical methodology the researcher reconstructs multimodal actions with the help of which the participants of communication use existing aspects of space for achieving their situational and specific aims and through their own corporal and spatial behavior reorganize the space not only «relevantly» but also make it «notionally comprehensive» for other participants of communication. In other words communicators constitute and reconstitute situations on their own.

The monograph discusses and develops the following statements and concepts important for analyzing multimodal interaction: «focus personality» (Fokuspersion), «interaction process space» (Interaktionsraum) и «interaction ensemble» (Interaktionsensemble).

The reviewed monographic work organizes the following praxeological priorities and uses methodology-theoretical approaches:

– on the assumption of acceptance as foundational thesis about spatial basis of interaction the scientist focuses on thematically important concept «coordination» (Koordination), that is supposition and base of mutual constructing of personal and spatial structures by the participants of interaction which in their turn are the basis of verbal exchange and special and temporal flattening of communicators' connections with each other or coordinating during the transaction of such modalities as proxemics, verbalics, gestics, etc.

– the development of coordinative conditions of any interaction process in various social situations and contexts led to the necessity of elaborating the thesis of space as interaction resource (Raum als interaktive Ressource) and thus encouraged the recognition of possibility of systematic verbal concepts reflections and verbal object-notional images and nominations; the latter are significant objects temporarily generating interaction process space (e.g. video monitor and video camera in the time of filming) around themselves and around the participants of communication. Consequently, in the author's opinion, it is important to examine phases of situation

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beginning (multimodale Situationseröffnungen) considering them as a process of multimodal organizing focused interaction.

So, the main contentious issue in the center of space relevant multimodal discussions of microsituations in any communication is the following: for deciding which interaction tasks, when, by whom, how and in what way one can apply relevant determined or relevant existing aspects of space?

The given problematic thesis leads to logical disposition or presupposed correlation: from external structuring to verbal structuring – from verbal structuring through dialogue organization, posing «self» and «other» to adjustment of relations, connections, etc.

It is obvious that dialogue participants in the phase of situation «opening» actively create together the conditions of focused interaction. It is the author's idea that the situation of «beginning» is sequentially the prophase of verbal information exchange expressed in corporal and spatial contingency, replacing each other visual contact, regulating the distance of contingency and mutual coordination.

Therefore, resource quality of space is evidently appeared just in this phase as it is the only and dominant channel put at disposal of interaction participants for overcoming problem moments.

Space is systematically used not only in definite phases of interaction development but is also applied in deciding specific tasks locally arising within the process of any communication.

R. Schmitt's idea of constant variability of the space itself in the reviewed monograph is very important in our opinion; the fact that space is not something given and invariable is well shown by the example of studying close interaction space of a lesson and open interaction space of the street in which filming is being unfolded. And if the space of the lesson is processed in specially prepared for such purposes premises and seems invariable at first sight, the space of the street is created by interaction participants at a definite moment of action and ceases to exist after its ending. Thus the author logically comes to the idea of spatial dialectics expressed in multiplicity of interaction process, its multidimensionality, social topography and substructuredness.

So, social topography of educational space of the lesson is connected with status-oriented inequality of using the latter as a resource of educational communication: on the one hand invariant pupils' attachment to their seating positions and impossibility of free moving in the room is fixed, on the other hand, there is spatial mobility of a teacher allowing to structure the space of the lesson. Apart from social and topographic spatial structures as culturally stable and stipulated it is necessary to differentiate also corporal correlated «I»-territories.

The following spatial dialectics is valuable:

- dividing space into the given and variable, in this case both types are connected with each other in such a way that if the first is absent, the second can't be generated and the second is already interaction space;

- differentiating notions of interaction space and interaction ensemble understood as space +participants of interaction anticipates or creates interaction space which in its turn is internally differentiated and substructured, and includes corporal and spatial constellations – interaction diads, triads, etc.;

- differentiating subject and object: thus, subjects are isolated single aspects of the given material surrounding which occupy their specific or designated for them positions in the space of this or that premise; they become objects only if they get the status «relevant» for concrete information exchange through definite actions and relations with them from communication participants and in this case they are used as interactive resources of interaction;

– differentiating place and position (location): thus, place signifies a definite reconstructed point in socio-physical surrounding existing independently from interaction as determined points of intersection in the premise. Opposite notion to «place» is notion «position» defined as end point of every interaction participant's moving from A to B. Therefore, these notions are systematically twofold oriented: they correlate to space either as the given, or created, or organized. Crucial is the fact that position is categorically connected with such an analysis perspective that correlates to the reconstruction of socio-physical and semiotic structuredness of the surrounding, and consequently this notion focuses aspects of spatial surrounding existing independently from interaction but still crucially relevant for interaction. So, the following dialectic interaction of place and position is opened: position in interaction space is always identical to a specific place in material surrounding; place and position are identical to each other relative to their physical coordination but they are different relative to their implications they have for reconstruction of space as interactive resource.

The concept of interaction space is crucial while comprehending personal and spatial constellations as substructures when differentiating ideas of this concept and connected, first of all, with studying situations in which interaction and spatial implications are concealed. The researcher points out situations where event participants can be integrated into interaction space but without being the part of interaction ensemble (for example, film director's position on the set of the film). Interaction ensemble is organized by the group bound by a mutual project and presenting thematic and pragmatic and chrono-stable constellation in which, however, not all members organize the composition of such ensemble for equal time.

In conclusion the author drawing up the results of his investigation put forward the following important thesis concerning differences in notions «interaction space» and «interaction ensemble»: working with these concepts it necessary to take into account the meaning of ethnographic information. The point being made is that interaction spaces as corporal and spatial constellations can be reconstructed only on the base of audio and visual interaction documents; interaction ensembles determined as thematic and pragmatic constellations grounded by mutual projects of communication participants must be reconstructed on the basis of this ethnographic knowledge.

In whole, it may be noted that the given monographic work obviously opens new horizons in researching interaction space not only in the field of multimodal researches but undoubtedly in general theory of communication. The monograph is perfectly structured, enunciated in the forms of available academic language and is notable for overriding logic of the author's position representation.

The book is evidently will be useful for specialists from various fields of the humanitarian knowledge. It is also of students and post-graduates interest.

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## **Teaching to Learn, Learning to Teach: English for Educational Purposes**

Hanesová, Dana. *From Learning Facts to Learning to Think*. Banská Bystrica: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici v OZ Pedagóg, 2014. 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 95 pp. ISBN 978-80-557-0655-9.

Dana Hanesová has published this textbook for students of pedagogic/educational sciences in order to facilitate their acquisition of specific English (English for specific purposes), academic skills and teaching/learning competences. The publication is a result of a wide-ranging project, Mobility – Enhancing Research, Science and Education at Matej Bel University of Banská Bystrica (ITMS 26110230082).

As the author claims in the introduction, the textbook is designed for students of the pedagogic faculty with the aim to develop the specific English of the disciplines they study and the skills that a university learner should develop during university studies. As the target audience is future teachers (pre-service teachers), this kind of textbook presents a unique connection between learning specific English and acquiring the basis of modern concepts of teaching and learning. The whole methodology of working with the content units is aimed at learning skills, learner autonomy, self-directed learning and the pedagogic competence facilitating these skills.

The book contains 13 units which seem to be designed for a 13-week semester at university. Each unit has a single structure consisting of three parts: 1. a text explaining a teaching/learning concept, 2. a practical section on a real classroom situation, and 3. tasks, exercises and reflections. The structure of each unit is similar, but the size of the content is different. While in some of the introductory texts learning/teaching concepts are explained, defined, exemplified and require demanded reading skills, in some others they are extended by personalised learning questions and tasks. The topics include learning concepts and thinking skills based on the revised Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (each level dealt with in an individual unit: remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating). For the author the development of creative and critical thinking skills is of utmost interest; therefore, the emphasis on them is placed in five other units that present, analyse, practise and reflect on these skills in most untraditional ways.

The first unit (What Helps Me to Learn?) introduces learners to the work of the human brain based on the latest results of educational neuroscience. A three-page text contains a heavy content of specific technical vocabulary which would normally be difficult to manage by most of B1 students. This is presumably done intentionally by the author, who has in mind various levels of the target groups of students. The unit includes activities for different types of reading skills, evaluating the text difficulty, vocabulary and key words search strategies, note-taking, reflection on self-development, etc. Most useful from the learning point of view is the section on self-discovery, allowing one to explore one's own realm of learning. Based on this individualized reflection, a discussion follows requiring students to make some summary conclusions (another important academic skill). I am devoting more space on this unit just to illustrate how the author puts the whole content of a unit into gradually developing stages to allow for the self-development of academic learners.

This is similar in unit 2 (Bloom's Taxonomy: A Way to Improve My Thinking Skills?), in which it is clarified how critical thinking skills can be gradually developed and applied, for example, in the decision-making processes. From this unit on, the section, *A Glimpse into the classroom (for self-learners)*, is built in and makes a most significant part of the whole textbook. Short or longer monologues (the teacher's) or dialogues (teacher - students) are transcribed directly from classroom conversations

based on the author's continuous action research. These short takes try to expand on the knowledge gained of specific terms and elaborate on the topics through questioning, exemplifying, examining or simply explaining more complex contents. This passage leads to the third part of the unit *Tasks*, where tasks and exercises help students reflect on their understanding of concepts and use the knowledge and skills in new contexts (building their thinking skills which reach from the level of applying through evaluating to creating). A *Glimpse into the classroom* gives examples of the classroom language which may be useful for future teachers. In some cases, however, it is not clear what should be done with these texts. They are addressed to the self-learner so we assume they are intended for home reading, reflection and classroom language development.

As the titles of unit 3 (Remembering: Knowing Facts – Just the Beginning?) and 4 (Understanding: I Want to Comprehend It!) suggest, the first basic cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy are dealt with. The emphasis is put on those thinking skills that are developed on these levels – both from the point of view of the learner and the teacher. To distinguish between these two levels, a self-test is included, for example, and interaction with internet resources as well. Word learning strategies are also applied and practiced in the given pedagogic context.

Unit 5 (Applying: The Privilege of Putting My Knowledge into Practice!) explores the ways thinking can be brought to a higher level in the classroom. It offers a lot of support to students in comprehending what the application level means through giving examples from real classroom situations and requiring them to interactively solve some problems typical for this level of thinking. These classroom conversations are the results of evidence-based research in which pedagogic data were collected in a year-long classroom study and adapted for learning purposes. They show the expertise of the author as an educator, researcher and teacher.

Higher levels of thinking are dealt with in units 6 (Analysing: Instead of One Huge Problem – a Few Smaller Ones), unit 7 (Evaluating: Is This Solution Really the Best?) and unit 8 (Creating: Being Able to Make up a New Recipe?). As practice shows, these levels are not satisfactorily developed in our universities; therefore, the author devotes a considerable amount of material in these units to clarify for learners and teachers what it means to think on these levels and how these thinking skills should be developed. To describe the thinking levels, clues, questions and supporting verbs are practised, and students are made to demonstrate their understanding and application in the teaching process. A self-test section is regularly built in the content of the units for learners to distinguish between thinking skills and show a full understanding of them. Much space is devoted to teaching students to distinguish between objectivity and subjectivity, consideration and recommendation and the organisation of thoughts – all necessary skills university students need for academic discussions and writings.

As creativity is considered to be the highest level of thinking skills, the author presents an adequately appropriate extent of materials on these skills (unit 8 Creating: Being Able to Make up a New Recipe? and unit 9 Can I Develop My Creativity?). Theoretical concepts of creativity are explained as well as activities that promote creativity but also those that can stifle it (in the classroom). These examples, including the *Glimpse into the classroom* sections, show future teachers how to facilitate creative thinking, how to measure their own creativity and how to reflect on what they have learned and where they need some more expansion.

Units 10 – 13 go beyond these basics of creativity and show in concrete examples how creativity can be stimulated in the teaching practice. The author has chosen the methods that she is very well acquainted with. *Lotus Blossom* (unit 10 Creativity 'Blossoms' Via Lotus Blossom), a brainstorming technique of a graphic organizer, helps generate problem solving ideas. Situations and the process of creating

new ideas are given and clarified through appropriate tasks where students are required to work with reliable online resources. This reference to online resources makes these units unique among teaching materials as it motivates students to further explore the topics on their own. Another technique is developed in unit 11 (Do Mind Mapping and Your Mind Will Radiate). It guides the learners in understanding the cognitive functions of the human brain and explains the importance of using this device for better learning, note taking, and scaffolding knowledge while supporting and helping various types of learners. Unit 12 (SCAMPERR – Eager to Improve Something?) exposes learners to another brainstorming method which helps create new ideas, solutions or products based on the expertise of a person or a group of persons. SCAMPERR stands for the verbs indicating creative thinking, i.e. substitute, combine, adapt, magnify/minimize, modify, put it in some other order, eliminate, rearrange, reverse, and as a result this helps the student to see the problem or idea in its whole complexity. A rich list of questions that can be used in a classroom situation is given, from which students can acquire those that are close to their own understanding of this method. Pedagogical situations are presented in the Tasks section for students to apply the SCAMPERR method to solve the problems involved.

Creativity also means approaching problems from diverse, unexpected perspectives, breaking out of established patterns. This way of thinking is called lateral thinking (the term coined by De Bono). As the author believes that it can be learned, she designs a whole unit (unit 13: Six Coloured Hats – Six Ways of Thinking), in which she describes the technique in detail and shows how it can be used. In our opinion it would be good if students were exposed to some real-life situations or problems to solve together in the classroom (designed by the author) while using the technique and experiencing it in collaboration “on their own skin”. On the other hand, the Glimpse into the classroom section is very rich in showing what the teacher does in order to facilitate different ways of thinking.

The final part of the textbook is designed for students’ reflections on what they have learned. This section demonstrates the fulfilment of the author’s main intention: to guide students in their learning of both the specific language and the academic skills, actually learning the language through the very specific pedagogic content. Appendices include a personal organizer that students use throughout the whole course (focusing on specific learning needs, ambitions, and reflections on what, when and how they learned). They are also stimulated by a learning diary, learning log, word glossary, grammar log, including a list of mistakes and their corrections during the learning process, and, finally, the key to the tasks and exercises. It shows that the author has included all the prompts to support and facilitate the student learning process.

To conclude, we can say that this ESP teaching/learning text is one of a kind among ESP textbooks in Slovakia. It differs much from traditional ESP textbooks in the way that it does not teach the content of the science (e. g., it is not based on the teaching of facts about pedagogy parallel (similar) to the content of Slovak subjects), but utilizes carefully chosen, contemporary trends in higher education pedagogy and their values. Then it builds a net of thinking skills necessary for university studies but also transferable into future professional situations. This combination is a significant contribution of this publication to the efforts to overcome traditional university teaching. The latest theories are transformed into teaching material in English, and the texts are written to address the self-development of a student as a learning human being. The personal involvement of the author is implicit in every chapter and demonstrates the author’s pedagogic expertise, which makes the textbook student-friendly learning material. I would not hesitate, (if it was possible) for any reason, to

recommend this book to teachers and students of other pedagogic faculties in Slovakia or abroad.

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