

AI

SEMINAR 1

Language

QUOTES

Task 1 – Read the quotes, then discuss your views about some of them in class.

1 “Conversation is the slowest form of human communication.” ~Author Unknown

2 “A different language is a different vision of life.” ~Federico Fellini, Italian filmmaker

3 “Learn a new language and get a new soul.” ~Czech Proverb

4 “Language is by its very nature a communal thing; that is, it expresses never the exact thing, but a compromise - that which is common to you, me, and everybody.” ~Thomas Earnest Hulme, *Speculations*, 1923

5 “He who does not know foreign languages does not know anything about his own.” ~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Kunst and Alterthum*

6 “Words signify man's refusal to accept the world as it is.” ~Walter Kaufmann

7 “But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.” ~George Orwell

DISCUSSION

- 1 Why do you study foreign languages?
- 2 Are studies of foreign languages important at university? Why?
- 3 Why is it important for an academic to speak at least one or two world languages? (lingua franca)
- 4 Which foreign language is the most important one for you personally?
- 5 Which foreign language is the most important one for you professionally?
- 6 Why do you study English?
- 7 What do you expect of this course (the two-semester one)?
- 8 What are your priorities in studying English? (speaking, writing, reading, grammar, stylistics, etc.)
- 9 Which of these skills will you need most in your academic life / everyday life?
- 10 Is this course your only way of improving your English?
- 11 How much time are you planning to spend on self-study?

Task 2 - Try to match the languages with the numbers of people speaking them.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| A) Portuguese | 1. 885 million speakers |
| B) Chinese (Wu) | 2. 332 million speakers |
| C) Bengali Standard | 3. 322 million speakers |
| D) Russian | 4. 189 million speakers |
| E) German | 5. 182 million speakers |
| F) Spanish | 6. 170 million speakers |
| G) Czech | 7. 170 million speakers |
| H) English | 8. 125 million speakers |
| I) Chinese (Mandarin) | 9. 98 million speakers |
| J) Japanese | 10. 77 million speakers |
| K) Hindi | 73. 12 million speakers |

READING – English in the World

How many people in the world speak English? In the first place, it is not simply a matter of taking all the English-speaking countries in the world and adding up their populations. America alone has forty million people who *don't* speak English -- about the same as the number of people in England who *do* speak English.

Then there is the problem of deciding whether a person is speaking English or something that is *like* English but is really quite a separate language. This is especially true of the many English-based creole or pidgin languages in the world. A second and rather more serious problem is whether a person speaks English or simply *thinks* he speaks it.

Task 3 – Read the following examples and decide which one is correct English, which is creole/pidgin, and which is incorrect English.

- a) Dem plaan di tri.
- b) I even cannot say you how I have bad mood.
- c) I am having lunch with my friends tomorrow.
- d) It was written in the newspapers that the cinema doesn't play.
- e) I hope the above is convenient.
- f) Wanpela man i kam, sikspela man i kam.

POLYSEMIES

We can talk about *fine* art, *fine* gold, a *fine* edge, feeling *fine*, *fine* hair, and a court *fine* and mean quite separate things. The condition of having multiple meanings is known as **polysemy**, and it is very common. The polysemic champion must be *set*. Superficially it looks like a wholly unassuming monosyllable, yet it has 58 uses as a noun, 126 as a verb, and 10 as a participial adjective. Its meanings are so various and scattered that it takes the *OED* [Oxford English Dictionary] 60,000 words -- the length of a short novel -- to discuss them all. A foreigner could be excused for thinking that to know *set* is to know English.

Task 4 – Look at the following words and try to find as many meanings as possible.

BANK
CHIP
CONTROL
FOUND
LIE
STAND

CONTRONYMS

Sometimes, just to heighten the confusion, the same word ends up with contradictory meanings. This kind of word is called a **contronym**. *Sanction*, for example, can either signify permission to do something or a measure forbidding it to be done. *Certain* can mean something definite or something hard to specify (He had a certain feeling). Something that is *fast* is either stuck firmly or moving quickly.

Task 5 – Think of the contradictory meanings of the following contronyms.

APPARENT
CONSULT
DUST
OVERLOOK
QUITE
VITAL

INFLECTIONS

Let us consider the parts of speech. In Latin the verb has up to 120 inflections and in Czech there are usually about 30 inflections; in English it hardly ever has more than five (e.g. *see, sees, saw, seeing, seen*) and often gets by with just three (*hit, hits, hitting*).

Task 6 – Look at the following verbs and say which belong to the “hit type” and which to the “see type”.

DRIVE
CUT
WRITE
THROW
LET
SPLIT

How many inflections do the majority of verbs have?

How many inflections does the verb BE have?

VERB FORMS

Task 7 – Fill in the gaps with the following expressions:

present tense - participial - conditional - past tense - future

According to any textbook, the present tense of the verb *drive* is *drive*. Every secondary school pupil knows that. Yet if we say, “I used to drive to work but now I don’t”, we are clearly using the present tense *drive* in the _____ sense. Equally if we say, “I will drive you to work tomorrow”, we are using it in a _____ sense. And if we say, “I would drive if I could afford to”, we are using it in a _____ sense. In fact, almost the only form of sentence in which we cannot use the _____ form for *drive* is, yes, the present sense. When we need to indicate an action going on right now, we must use the _____ form *driving*. We don’t say, “I drive the car now”, but rather, “I’m driving the car now”. Not to put too fine a point on it, the labels are largely meaningless.

SPELLING

Task 8 – Read the text on Euro-English and correctly spell the underlined expressions.

Euro-English

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the European Union rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a 5 year phase-in plan that would be known as "Euro-English".

In the first year, 's' will replace the soft 'c'. Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard 'c' will be dropped in favour of the 'k'. This should klear up konfuzion and keyboards kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year when the troublesome 'ph' will be replaced with the 'f'. This will make words like fotograf 20% shorter. In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkourage the removal of double leters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. Also al wil agre that the horibl mes of the silent 'e' in the languag is disgrasful and it should go away.

By the 4th year peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing 'th' with 'z' and 'w' with 'v'.

During ze fifz year, ze unesesary 'o' will be dropd from vords kontaining 'ou' and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters. After zis fifz year ve vil hav a reali sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand each ozer. Ze drem of a united urop vil finali kom tru!

PRONUNCIATION

Read this poem and notice the irregularity of English pronunciation.

When the English tongue we speak
Why is **break** not rhymed with **weak**?
Won't you tell me why it's true
We say **sew**, but also **few**?
And the maker of a verse
Cannot rhyme his **horse** with **worse**?
Beard is not the same as **heard**,
Cord is different from **word**,
Cow is cow but **low** is low,
Shoe is never rhymed with **foe**.
Think of **hose** and **dose** and **lose**,
And think of **goose** and yet of **choose**,
Think of **comb** and **tomb** and **bomb**,
Doll and **roll** and **home** and **some**.
And since **pay** is rhymed with **say**,
Why not **paid** with **said** I pray?
Think of **blood** and **food** and **good**;
Mould is not pronounced like **could**.
Why is it **done**, but **gone** and **lone** –
Is there any reason known?
To sum it up, it seems to me
That sounds and letters don't agree.

Soars, J. & L.: *Headway, Upper-Intermediate, Student's book, Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, 1987, p.34*

Task 9 – Although there are very few rules visible in the above poem, can you think of any rules for English pronunciation?

GRAMMAR EXERCISES

Task 10 – Fill in the gap with a suitable preposition if necessary.

1. He speaks English well enough to get in an English speaking country.
2. Have you ever been the U.S.A.?
3. Let's discuss this issue over lunch.
4. If you don't understand the word, look it in the dictionary.
5. I'd like to introduce Mr Maiden you.
6. We met a conference two years ago.
7. She translates Czech English.
8. I need to take a course to brush my German.
9. Excuse me, would you any chance be Mr Atkinson?
10. I study Spanish and Portuguese Masaryk University.

WORD BANK

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. mother tongue/mother language | mateřský jazyk |
| 2. native speaker | rodilý mluvčí |
| 3. broken English | lámaná angličtina |
| 4. improve one's language | zlepšit si jazyk |
| 5. brush up one's knowledge | oprášit si znalosti |
| 6. have a good knowledge of a language | mít dobrou znalost jazyka |
| 7. a good command of a language | dobrá znalost jazyka |
| 8. language skills | jazykové dovednosti |
| 9. mispronounce | špatně vyslovovat |
| 10. misspell | psát s pravopisnými chybami |
| 11. speak fluently | mluvit plynně |
| 12. make/correct mistakes | dělat/opravovat chyby |
| 13. speak a foreign language | mluvit cizím jazykem |
| 14. language barrier | jazyková bariéra |
| 15. limited/large vocabulary | omezená/velká slovní zásoba |
| 16. extend one's vocabulary | rozšířit si svou slovní zásobu |
| 17. consult a dictionary | vyhledat ve slovníku |
| 18. look up a word | vyhledat si slovo |
| 19. discuss a problem | diskutovat o problému |
| 20. part of speech | slovní druh |
| 21. get by | vystačit si |
| 22. translate from English into Czech | překládat z angličtiny do češtiny |

APPENDIX TO SEMINAR 1

Formal Introduction to the Course

CJVA1B and CJVA1M (with 2 credit points) are meant to be the first half of a 2-semester language option which is followed by **CJVA2B and CJVA2M** in the second semester (ending with an exam and 4 credit points). There is detailed information about the course in the IS Subject Catalogue.

- the course is primarily based on EAP (English for Academic Purposes) through readings, discussions, and presentations.

- **course requirements** for CJVA1B and CJVA1M are to have completed a presentation during the semester based on the seminar materials and presentation criteria.

- **course requirements** for CJVA2B and CJVA2M are the same as above, with the addition of the written exam which includes academic vocabulary (synonyms and context gap fill), reading comprehension, grammar, summary writing).

- **course materials** will be updated throughout the semester and posted on the information system at IS → *Osobní administrativa* → Student → *Studejní materiály* (CJVA1B) → *Microsoft WORD verze IS* → *Personal administration* → Student → *Study materials* (CJVA1M) → *Microsoft WORD version*

- the majority of **readings** are to be done at home before the lesson

- **class participation** is an important part of the course (70% attendance) – not including those in the SELF STUDY option

- **presentations** will be done throughout the semester – more information in seminars 2 & 3

- **grammar** – will be covered only minimally in class – not many detailed explanations.

You are responsible for knowing the grammar points in the materials, and are expected to have intermediate general knowledge learned on your own time.

- **vocabulary** – you are responsible for knowing intermediate level vocabulary as well as some extra EAP/ESP words (i.e. the words that are starred in the vocabulary list at the back of your seminar notes).

- There is a language studies facility available to students – the **Language Resource Centre** at the MU rectorate building (9 Žerotínovo náměstí, side entrance from Brandlova Street, go to the very top floor of the building)

Office hours are posted at the respective offices of staff:

FSS, Joštova 10, Room 555

FF, Arne Nováka 1, Building D (near the reception)