

Institution: University of Nottingham
Unit of Assessment: 29
Title of case study: Transforming curriculum design in schools and universities: the ELT sector
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research into English language teaching by staff from the School of English at the University of Nottingham has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivered significant economic and market benefits to global publishing houses and education consortia: contracts totalling over £15 million have been signed for McCarthy's <i>Touchstone</i> with governments, universities and English language schools world-wide, and Carter and McCarthy's <i>Cambridge Grammar of English</i> is CUP's best-selling grammar reference text. • informed new curricula for practising classroom teachers and learners and transformed learning opportunities for thousands of students by enabling access to real spoken English and creating conditions for learning key patterns of spoken English grammar and vocabulary. • led to advice to governments and curriculum developers world-wide which in turn led to changes in language tests and assessment, curriculum design and materials development.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Research at CRAL (Centre for Research in Applied Linguistics), with Cambridge English (the ELT division of Cambridge University Press) as a main research partner, has been and continues to be at the forefront of innovation in the theory and practice of English Language teaching world-wide. Research embraces a particular focus on corpus-informed <u>vocabulary</u> and <u>grammar</u> description and language acquisition, and on pedagogic materials development for teachers and learners of English. In terms of corpus linguistic research, CRAL bases its findings on computational analysis of naturally-occurring, "real-life" language use stored in multi-million word computerised databases that enable new insights into the most frequent and significant patterns of English and a better understanding of the most salient language needs of learners. CRAL researchers have described statistically significant corpus-informed patterns of vocabulary (Professor Norbert Schmitt, Professor of Applied Linguistics, 1998-present), grammar (Professor Ronald Carter, Professor of Modern English Language, 1979-present and Professor Mike McCarthy, Professor of Applied Linguistics, 1990-present - emeritus from 2003) and pragmatic interpersonal communication (Professor Svenja Adolphs, Professor of English Language and Linguistics, 2002-present) that were not previously available to learners. Further research has embraced work with the Cambridge English Profile language benchmarking projects to better align the work with key European levels of language assessment (Schmitt), contributing in the process to better understanding of referential and pragmatic meanings of core words and grammatical structures (Adolphs, 2006, 2011. -- 3.1, 3.2; Schmitt, 2001, Schmitt et al 2005-10.--3.6, 3.7), active listenership (Carter and McCarthy, 2006, Carter et al 2011. --3.3, 3.4) and multimodal communication (Adolphs and Carter, Research Grants 3.4). <i>Touchstone</i> research also draws on the 50 million word 'Cambridge Learner Corpus' developed as part of the English Profile Project and enabling analysis of learner errors taken from Cambridge Examinations around the world. (McCarthy et al 2004-11.--3.5). Nottingham's School of English is a research partner of English Profile (www.englishprofile.org)</p> <p>A CRAL ESRC Knowledge Transfer Grant (Research Grant 3.1) involves Cambridge English in a new digitally enhanced interface <i>Management Talk</i> for the teaching and learning of spoken academic English for Business English programmes in SE Asia and in China --- a key ELT market for CUP, as well as UK institutions. CRAL researchers have also worked (2005-11) as Co-Is on two successive ESRC-funded interdisciplinary e-social science grants (Research Grant 3.4), focussing on the construction of a ¼ million word multi-modal corpus that aligns verbal and non-verbal language (including such gestures as head nods and hand movements). The software produced to 'read' the corpus allows users to search the database for particular words, phrases, body movements or sounds, enriching through digital technology our understanding of language both in human activity and interaction and for purposes of language learning and intercultural</p>

communication. CRAL corpus research has generated numerous international publications impacting on the work of teachers, syllabus and curriculum designers and materials developers.

CUP is now working with CRAL research staff on the next generation of digitally enhanced ELT dictionaries and grammars. (Research Grants 3.2 and 3.3).

3. References to the research

Publications (all available on request)

1. Adolphs, S. (2006) *Introducing Electronic Text Analysis* (Routledge: London)
2. Adolphs, S. (2011) O'Keeffe, A and Clancy, B. *Pragmatics in Use* (Routledge: London).
3. Carter, R and McCarthy, M (2006) *Cambridge Grammar of English* (CUP: Cambridge)
4. Carter, R et al (2011) *English Grammar Today + Workbook* (CUP: Cambridge)
5. McCarthy, M. et al (2004-11) *Touchstone* (CUP: Cambridge) (a series of books and blended learning materials)
6. Schmitt, N. et al (2005-10) *Focus on Vocabulary* (Pearson: Harlow) (a series of text books and materials)
7. Schmitt, N. (2001) *Vocabulary and Language Teaching* (CUP: Cambridge)

Proof of Quality of Research

Cambridge English at Cambridge University Press has invested significantly in corpus-based ELT research at Nottingham since 1994 with funding of over £100K awarded directly to the School and in the census period alone there are grants of over £290K (including PGR and post-doctoral grants) awarded from UK research councils with Cambridge English as a named research knowledge exchange partner. The CANCODE (Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English) (1994-2004), CANBEC (Cambridge and Nottingham Business English Corpus) (1998-2004) and CANELC (Cambridge and Nottingham e-Language Corpus) (2010-12) projects remain key elements in the development of applied linguistic research with Cambridge English.

Other grants include:

- (Grant 1) £70K ESRC Knowledge Transfer 'follow-on fund' grant 'Exploiting corpus research for English Language Teaching'. (Carter (awardee) P.I. and Adolphs, co-I), commenced January 2011.
- (Grant 2) £21K. Nottingham and Cambridge Digital Research Grant (CUP funded). Commenced January 2011 (Carter and Adolphs awardees and P-Is) for the development of the CANELC e-Language corpus (including data from electronic English sources such as texts, social media sites and business e-communication)
- (Grant 3) £20K EPSRC Knowledge Transfer secondment (Carter and Adolphs awardees and PIs) for work with Cambridge University Press on digital enhancements for new generation English language grammars and dictionaries. Commenced Nov 2010.
- (Grant 4) ESRC grants in excess of £1.5m. The 'digital record for e-social science research node' (with the Schools of Psychology and Computer Science) (2005-2011) (PIs Rodden and Crabtree, School of Computer Science and IT; CO-Is Adolphs, Carter and Schmitt) (approx 20% of grants to the School of English).

4. Details of the impact

Economic impact for global publishing houses through best-selling research-informed publications

Carter, R. and McCarthy, M. (2006) *Cambridge Grammar of English* (3.3) is recognised as CUP's best-selling grammar reference text with over 70,000 copies sold world-wide since first publication (over 50,000 since 2008 and over 6,000 in 2012-3). It is now a core research reference resource and adopted text in over 300 school, college and university departments of English, with main uptake in S. America, Russia, E. Europe, the Middle East, S. Korea, Japan and China (5.1). A companion volume (3.4) for students and teachers was published early in 2011 entitled *English Grammar Today* (with over 8,000 copies sold internationally in the first twelve months of publication and with adoptions in several of the above-mentioned countries) (5.1). Prof Schmitt's vocabulary introduction (3.6) is a standard textbook for ELT teachers, with sales of over 4,000 copies since 2008. (5.1) His corpus-informed course books in the *Focus on Vocabulary* series

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(3.7) have sold over 40,000 copies since 2008 and are key instructional materials for teaching and assessing academic vocabulary in schools, colleges and university preparation contexts world-wide. (5.2)

Emeritus Prof Michael McCarthy's *Touchstone* project (3.5) is one of CUP's best-selling English Language course books of all time, especially in its blended learning format. The research into corpus-informed grammar, vocabulary and discourse which underlies the project was funded by and undertaken with CUP as part of the CANCODE and CANBEC projects in the 1990s (Section 3, para 1). Sales figures are commercially sensitive but contracts totalling over £15 million have been signed for *Touchstone* with governments, universities and English language schools world-wide. Executive director and head of publishing at Cambridge University Press writes:

"*Touchstone*, has been a transformative success for Cambridge University Press, and is recognised throughout the industry as a game-changing innovation, transforming the lives of millions, in cultures and settings as diverse as Turkey, Spain, Russia, China and Saudi Arabia". (5.1)

The Chief Executive of the Laureate English programme writes:

"Laureate Education is the world's largest network of private universities, with over 60 institutions in 27 countries and a student population of 750,000. In 2008, recognizing the need to prepare their students for global citizenship, Laureate initiated the Laureate English Programme, with the stated goal of guaranteeing that any student exiting a Laureate institution would emerge with a minimum of B1 English language proficiency. After a thorough selection process, Laureate chose *Touchstone* as the flagship programme to meet these goals. Over the past five years the programme has grown to over 100,000 students". (5.3)

Supporting improvements in English language teaching with advice to national and international government and international testing agencies.

Grammar and spoken English: Based on research undertaken (3.3 & 3.4), in 2011 Prof Carter was appointed member of an advisory panel to the Secretary of State for the new National Curriculum for English in England and Wales (primary and secondary schools) to be introduced in 2015: Nottingham's corpus-informed grammar research has informed syllabus and curriculum design, especially in respect of the differences and distinctions between spoken and written grammars (5.4). Since 2011 Professor Carter has also been advisor to the Ministry of Education in Singapore. The Principal of the English Language Institute, Department of Education, Government of Singapore reports:

"The research undertaken in the School of English at Nottingham over many years in language learning and in corpus-informed learning materials in vocabulary, grammar and spoken English continue to be important for our understanding of how English is used across the curriculum in Singapore." (5.5)

Professor Carter was also awarded an MBE for services to local and national education in the 2009 New Year's Honour's list with outreach to UK and international schools and contributions to English language curriculum development, especially in grammar, a key factor in citations.

Testing and assessment: Prof. Norbert Schmitt is a member of the Committee of Examiners for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), one of the two main international tests (along with IELTS) which determine whether a person has sufficient English proficiency to study in English-medium higher education. It has been taken by more than 27 million people worldwide to date. Professor Schmitt's work in corpus-informed vocabulary development has been a crucial component in test development and associated syllabus and curriculum design. His work has led to improvements in test design, strengthening the educational influence and provenance of these associations. Executive Director of the TOEFL programme comments:

"Professor Schmitt's vocabulary research and considerable contributions as a member of the

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TOEFL Committee of Examiners have had a strong influence on the ongoing development and quality assurance of the TOEFL test. As a result, Dr. Schmitt's work impacts more than a million test takers around the world each year." (5.2)

Prof. Schmitt also consults with Cambridge Assessment, the leading UK language test developer (including IELTS), and its Director of Test Research and Validation states:

"In the past 5 years, Professor Schmitt's input in the areas of vocabulary acquisition and the assessment of lexical knowledge of L2 learners of English has had a beneficial influence on the development of construct-based arguments to support the development and use of the Cambridge English language assessments. Analyses he has done in this area based on his own corpus-based vocabulary research has contributed to enhanced quality assurance procedures and this has informed improvements which have been made to the Cambridge English examinations themselves. The Cambridge English examinations are taken annually by over 4 million English language learners in more than 130 countries." (5.6)

Influencing teachers and curriculum developers

It is a feature of the field of applied linguistics and ELT that international conferences and invited talks regularly involve presentations not simply to other academics but also to audiences of practising classroom teachers of English as a second or foreign language. All CRAL staff are regularly involved in such presentations. In 2009 Prof Carter was appointed a member of Cambridge University Press Syndicates, with responsibility for applied linguistics and ELT, one part of the role involving work with teachers world-wide that disseminates Cambridge English and CRAL research in seminars and workshops for English language teachers. Presentations have led to the wholesale adoption of *Touchstone* by Anadolu university in Turkey, the second largest university in the world, as a key element in their language development programme.(5.1) In 2011-12 Professor McCarthy presented on curriculum development in USA (e.g. TESOL, 2011 and 2012), Japan, UAE, S. Korea, Ireland and extensively in S. America, leading to extensive adoptions of *Touchstone* and *Cambridge English Grammar* in Brazil and Mexico; (5.1) Prof Schmitt gave talks on corpus and vocabulary studies at international applied linguistics teacher conferences in the USA (AAAL 2010, 2011,2012 and also in Russia, Portugal, Sardinia, Turkey, Wales), and invited seminars (Austria, Denmark, The Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, USA), benefiting Cambridge Assessment and TOEFL directly by influencing the take up of their tests. (5.2 and 5.6).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Executive Director, Cambridge University Press
2. Executive Director, TOEFL
3. Chief Executive, Laureate Education Group
4. Department for Education, London
<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/l/list%20consulted%20about%20draft%20primary%20programmes%20of%20study.pdf> (page 2)
5. Principal of the English Language Institute, Department of Education, Government of Singapore. See also <http://www.elis.moe.edu.sg/>
6. Director of Test Research and Validation, Cambridge Assessment