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CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

Digest

My research interests focus on several issues concerning the process of learning and teaching foreign languages. In my empirical studies I draw on my experience as a foreign language teacher, a teacher trainer and a reviewer of coursebooks and other teaching materials.

Key words:

1/ learning strategies, 2/ reading skills, 3/creativity, 4/research skills, 5/evaluation and testing, 6/teacher education

Description

The most important issues investigated in my studies are presented below. The link between my teaching experience and research endeavors is underlined.

[1] Learning strategies

I have investigated reading strategies applied in reading in English as a foreign language and an effectiveness of reading strategy training in Polish schools. In an experimental study I looked at the impact of the strategy training on metacognitive knowledge, reading comprehension and strategies used before and during reading texts

Key findings:

- the training can be effective for students at an intermediate level of language proficiency; it can influence both the learners' metacognitive knowledge and their reading comprehension skills.

Issue further elaborated in:

Kusiak, M. 2001. The effect of metacognitive strategy training on reading comprehension and metacognitive knowledge. In: S. Foster-Cohen and A. Nizęgorodcew (eds.). EUROSLA

Yearbook, Vol.1. Annual Conference of the European Second Language Association. John Benjamins Publishing Company. 255-274.

[2] Evaluation of reading comprehension skills

I've focused on the use of various reading taxonomies in the construction and evaluation of reading comprehension tests, particularly the nature of the reading construct, i.e. what we test when we test reading.

Key findings:

- there is a need to introduce alternative forms of testing which would focus on evaluating not only the product, but also the process of reading comprehension.
- There is a need to assess extensive reading skills
- More attention should be devoted to increasing validity of tests that assess interpretation skills.

Issue further elaborated in:

Kusiak, M. 2002. What we test when we test FL reading skills. In: E. Mańczak-Wohlfeld (ed.). Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the Polish Association for the Study of English. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press. 213-221.

Kusiak-Pisowacka, M. 2016. How to test for the best: Implementing positive psychology in foreign language testing. In: D. Gabryś-Barker and D. Gałajda (eds.) Positive Psychology Perspectives on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching. Switzerland, Springer International Publishing. 289-306.

[3] Comparing L1 and FL reading skills

One of the most extensive studies I've done is an attempt to compare how Polish EFL learners read in EFL and their mother tongue, i.e. Polish. An introspective think aloud study allowed me to explore the process of reading in both languages.

Key findings:

- Think-aloud protocol proved to be an effective technique in exploring reading processes
- While reading in L1 learners seemed to demonstrate a more critical approach to the text

Issue further elaborated in:

Kusiak, M. 2006. Comparing L1 and L2/FL reading. In: J. Leśniewska and E. Witalisz (eds.). Language and Identity. English and American Studies in the Age of Globalisation. Vol. 2: Language and Culture. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press. 60-69.

Kusiak, M. 2013. Reading Comprehension in Polish and English: Evidence from an introspective study. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

[4] / Developing reflection and research skills in FL teacher trainees

The experience gained during my work as a teacher trainer and a supervisor of students' licenciate projects inspired me to undertake studies which aimed to investigate the most effective ways of promoting and developing self-evaluation and reflection skills in FL teacher.

Key findings:

- the teaching practice plays an important role in trainees' development.
- certain types of teaching materials can help trainees to develop skills necessary in the teaching profession.

Issue further elaborated in:

Kusiak, M. 2001. Teaching means researching: Promoting research skills in teacher training. Network 4(2): 9-15.

Kusiak, M. 2011. Teaching Practice Tasks. Kraków: Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Kraków University Press.

5/ Educational role of reading skills

My participation in the ERL network inspired me to look more closely at an important issue: "reading to learn vs learning to read", which I've investigated in cooperation with Daszkiewicz and Wenzel.

Key findings:

- the distinction between "reading to learn" and "learning to read" is important in producing teaching materials and tests

Issue further elaborated in:

Daszkiewicz, M., R. Wenzel i Kusiak-Pisowacka, M., 2018. Educational Role of Language Skills. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.