

SCORE Fellowship Final Report By Alannah Fitzgerald, Durham University

TOETOE tɔɪtɔɪ Technology for Open English – Toying with Open E-resources

Alannah's project ran from 11th January 2011 until the 1st May 2012, the aim of the project was to look at uses for research corpora in developing OER for academic English language teaching and learning. Along with other open corpus-based projects, another focus of TOETOE was the promotion of the FLAX (Flexible Language Acquisition project) collections, featuring open source software text analysis tools that effectively combine both open and proprietary English language content.

<http://www8.open.ac.uk/score/fellows/alannah-fitzgerald>

Activities

The TOETOE project with SCORE was based at Durham University English Language Centre (DUELC) for just over a year. Durham University awarded further funding by way of an Enhancing the Student Learning Experience award to extend the project from January to May 2012. In addition to training resources development and dissemination at conferences and professional issues meetings to interested stakeholders, an OER cascade training and research project was carried out with EAP teachers and students at DUELC during the Michlmas or Spring Term of 2012.

Four experienced EAP practitioners at DUELC -Terri Edwards, Jeff Davidson, Clare Carr and Lesley Kendall – volunteered to engage in open educational practices (OEP) for the design, development and delivery of innovative corpus-based OER for EAP courses. Learning support OER in open file format were developed collaboratively for teacher and learner training across two different EAP student cohorts (intermediate and proficient users of English) for developing learner autonomy with open tools and resources to enhance student reading, writing and vocabulary acquisition in specific subject areas. The learning support OER for EAP used in training sessions can be found online at

<http://www.slideshare.net/AlannahOpenEd/>. It was viewed that international students enrolled on EAP programmes at DUELC would benefit directly from being involved in teacher and student training workshops for the use and development of corpus-based OER for EAP. Furthermore, it was believed that by encouraging teachers to engage with open educational resources and practices, that this would in turn lead to 'ownership' of the OER by the teachers for further (re-)use and development to be fed into design iterations of the OER used in this project.

Further resources for use in EAP across higher education contexts were sought to incorporate within the FLAX project. Based on FLAX's earlier work in effectively linking the [British National Corpus \(BNC\)](#) with open content from Wikimedia, the Oxford Text Archive (OTA) was approached through SCORE fellow, Melissa Highton, and her colleague at Oxford University Computing Services (OUCS), Ylva Berglund-Prytz, who is a corpus linguist working on further JISC-funded OER projects in the digital humanities. Among the many language collections within the OTA, the FLAX project team based at the University of Waikato in New Zealand requested access to the [British Academic Written English \(BAWE\) corpus](#) of university student writing. It was determined that student texts from the BAWE would serve as an achievable model for academic writing for EAP students, and that this corpus of student texts would serve as a starting point if linked to wider resources, namely the BNC and Wikimedia resources (Wikipedia and Wikionary), thereby providing a 'bridge' to more expert writing and useful language support resources.

Outputs

Useful outputs from the FLAX team to support the TOETOE project have been the BAWE collections in FLAX which are divided into EAP subject-specific sub corpora ([Physical Sciences](#), [Arts & Humanities](#), [Life Sciences](#), and [Social Sciences](#)) for the search, identification, retrieval, usage and storage of key phrases as they occur within the texts. The language in the BAWE can also be compared with further usage in the BNC and Wikipedia corpora through the [Learning Collocations](#) collection in FLAX.

Different stakeholder groups were engaged for training with corpus-based OER as part of the TOETOE project, including: EAP teachers and students at Durham University English Language Centre (DUELC); BALEAP (the Global Forum for EAP practitioners, formally the British Association for Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes); Open Education practitioners looking to incorporate corpus-based OER into their courses; Corpus linguists interested in pedagogical applications for open corpora; and, Learning technologists.

A range of workshop training and conference paper/presentation material was produced as part of this project. This included:

- Fitzgerald, A., Comas-Quinn, A., Martínez-Arboleda, A. & Borthwick, K. (April, 2012) *An OER Kaleidoscope for Languages*. Special Panel on OER for Languages, Cambridge 2012: Innovation and Impact – Openly Collaborating to Enhance Education. Cambridge, United Kingdom
<http://www.ucel.ac.uk/oer12/abstracts/330.html>
- Fitzgerald, A., Edwards, T., Davidson, J, & Kendall, L. (April, 2012) *Openness in English Language Teaching*. Paper Presentation, Cambridge 2012: Innovation and Impact – Openly Collaborating to Enhance Education. Cambridge, United Kingdom <http://www.ucel.ac.uk/oer12/abstracts/331.html>
- Fitzgerald, A. & Ehiyazaryan, E. (March, 2012) *Introduction to JIME Special Edition on Open Educational Resources (OER)*. Guest editors, The Journal of Interactive Media in Education. The Open University, United Kingdom <http://www-jime.open.ac.uk/article/2012-01/html>
- Fitzgerald, A., Carr, C. & Edwards, T. (March, 2012) *Open Educational Resources in teaching English for Academic Purposes: opening up practice with open corpora, open tools and open content*. Paper Presentation, CMC & Teacher Ed SIGs Joint Annual Seminar – Learning Through Sharing: Open Resources, Open Practices, Open Communication. Bologna, Italy
- Fitzgerald, A. (March, 2012) *Addressing the Training Resource Deficit Utilising Open Corpora and OER*. Presentation, The 46th IATEFL Conference and Exhibition. Glasgow, United Kingdom
<http://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/2012/sessions/2012-03-22/addressing-training-resource-deficit-utilizing-open-corpora-and-oer>
- Fitzgerald, A. & Berglund-Prytz, Y. (November, 2011) *How Open Are You to an Exploration of Resources for ESAP?* Workshop, BALEAR Professional Issues Meeting, ‘English for Specific Academic Purposes’. Sheffield, United Kingdom. <http://www.slideshare.net/AlannahOpenEd/openness-in-english-for-specific-academic-purposes>
- Fitzgerald, A., Gay, J., Connolly, T., Browne, T. & Reedy, G. (September, 2011) *Enhancing Synergies between Technologists, Learning Support Specialists and Academics Utilizing Open Educational Resources*, Workshop, Eighteenth International Conference for the Association for Learning Technology (ALT-C 2011: Thriving in a Colder Climate). Leeds, United Kingdom.
<http://altc2011.alt.ac.uk/talks/22262>
- Fitzgerald, A. & Wu, S. (July, 2011) *Open Educational Principles for Designing and Developing Digital Language Learning and Teaching Collections*, Workshop, Corpus Linguistics Conference. Birmingham, United Kingdom <http://www.slideshare.net/AlannahOpenEd/open-educational-principles-for-designing-developing-digital-language-learning-teaching-collections>
- Fitzgerald, A. (July, 2011) *Open Tools & Open Content for Language Resources*, Demonstration/Presentation, SCORE Short Term Fellowship. Milton Keynes, United Kingdom
<http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/preview.php?whichevent=1738&s=31&schedule=2195>

- Fitzgerald, A. (May, 2011) *Technology for Open Education – Training with Open E-resources*, Demonstration/Presentation, Open Educational Resources 2011 Conference (OER11). Manchester, United Kingdom <http://www.slideshare.net/AlannahOpenEd/technology-for-open-education-training-with-open-eresources-toetoe>
- Fitzgerald, A. & Thurman, L. (May, 2011) Delivered a 1-day OER teacher training workshop for Durham University volunteers embarking on the 2011 Project Sri Lanka mission. Durham, United Kingdom <http://www.slideshare.net/AlannahOpenEd/project-sri-lanka-esl-teacher-training>
- Fitzgerald, A. (April, 2011) *Open Educational Resources in English for Academic Purposes – Cross Pollination from the Open Access and Open Source Movements in the Age of Digital Scholarship*, Workshop, BALEAP Biennial Conference, 'EAP within the HE Garden: Cross Pollination between Disciplines, Departments, Research & Teaching'. Portsmouth, United Kingdom <http://www.slideshare.net/AlannahOpenEd/open-educational-resources-in-eap-cross-pollination-from-the-open-access-open-source-movements-in-the-age-of-digital-scholarship>
- Fitzgerald, A. (March, 2011) *Technology for Open English – Training with Open E-resources (TOETOE) Project – Planning for Impact*, Presentation, A [JISC](#) funded event, in collaboration with [SCORE](#) and [LORO](#), "Does it make a difference? The impact of repositories and OERs on teaching and learning". Milton Keynes, United Kingdom <http://www.slideshare.net/LORO-Repository/alannah-fitzgerald-the-toetoe-project-planning-for-impact>
- Fitzgerald, A. (February, 2011) *Introducing Open Educational Resources for Lower Level Learners of English for Academic Purposes*, Presentation, BALEAP Professional Issues Meeting, 'How Low Can We Go? Issues, Insights and Innovations'. Bristol, United Kingdom <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/languagecentre/efl/baleappim>

Findings

Primary insights gained so far on this project include the realization that my work fits more within the wider area of digital infrastructure, drawing on open content, OER, OA, and open tools for enhancing both open and proprietary resources through effective linking. Because I have been working with open source software developers and corpus linguists there is also a lot more emphasis placed on open metadata and open standards, so this has been extremely exciting to see all these areas link up but also rather challenging when trying to explain to English language practitioners the scope of this work. I have had to do a lot of re-shaping and re-focusing of my project's aims to enable the various stakeholders involved and interested in this project to engage with the project.

Reflection

It is hoped that EAP practitioners and their students within both the formal and informal HE contexts will be able to benefit from insights into corpus-based OER for EAP. I am very interested in widening the stakeholder vision for how OER for EAP can be employed and further developed in different contexts of learning. Over the next year, the TOETOE project will be working with EAP practitioners working in conventional higher education contexts along with those working in open education who are pushing at the boundaries for developing new models of higher education like the Open Educational Resources University (OERu) initiative. At the joint conference on OER and OCW, Cambridge 2012¹ hosted at Queen's College Cambridge in April 2012, Rory McGreal who is the UNESCO chair for OER, talked at the OERu pre-conference workshop about de-boning existing curricular to replace proprietary content with open content. This will be a necessity with the international OERu project but this is also a possibility for more conventional EAP programmes taught around the world. In conjunction with FLAX and the OTA, TOETOE will be exploring potential uses for Open Access (OA) publications and Creative Commons-licensed podcasts from Oxford in the further development of open EAP resources, so that there is a greater alignment of texts and audio-visual media used in both classroom teaching and independent student learning for EAP. The open agenda will continue for effectively linking open content in the form of podcasts and OA publications with existing proprietary corpus-based resources to provide even richer EAP resources for teachers and learners in different contexts around the world.

Dissemination

To be continued and to come:

Blog There have been regular postings on the [TOETOE blog](#), which will continue throughout 2012-13 as I travel to promote OER in English language education in Asia, Oceania and the Americas. In particular, as part of my doctoral studies I will be writing and reflecting on the **projects**, the **players** and the **practices** that are iterating toward openness in English language teaching. I hope to continue with this work in my future professional career.

FLAX Collections within FLAX incorporating Open Access publications of peer-reviewed writing in the different professional and academic subject domains are currently being prepared by the TOETOE project in conjunction with FLAX.

¹ Cambridge 2012: Innovation and Impact - Openly Collaborating to Enhance Education. Jointly held by OER12 and the OCW Consortium's Global Conference, April 16-18, 2012. <http://conference.ocwconsortium.org/index.php/2012/uk>

OUCS Continued collaboration for exploiting OTA and creative commons podcast resources for EAP learning and teaching, to be incorporated within the FLAX project and promoted via the TOETOE project.

TTV Development of CC-licensed training video resources for FLAX (and later for the Lextutor and AntConc) to be embedded and disseminated through Russell Stannard's Teacher Training Videos (TTV) website <http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/>

EFL 2.0 Collaboration with David Deubelbeiss of the popular EFL Classroom 2.0 website and project to further promote and strategize on how to bring more openness into the English language teaching field internationally.

Papers Various papers including the two HEA/JISC case studies as well as entering the Bologna and Cambridge conference papers to be published in relevant journals. I am also hoping to publish two more papers within corpus linguistics journals in the next six months.

Slides OER for training in workshops and for presenting at conferences will continue to be uploaded onto Slideshare from the following scheduled dissemination events in 2012:

Fitzgerald, A. (September, 2012) *Openness in English for Academic Purposes*. Open Educational Resources Case Study: Pedagogical development from OER practice. Commissioned by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), United Kingdom.

Fitzgerald, A, Carr, C., Davidson, J., Edwards, T. & Kendall, L. (June, 2012) *Freeware resources for the EAP practitioner*. Workshop, BAILEAP Professional Issues Meeting, 'The English for Academic Purposes Practitioner'. Durham, United Kingdom

Fitzgerald, A. (June, 2012) *The TOETOE Project on re-using academic corpora for open language learning*. Presentation, Beyond Books – There and Back Again. Oxford, United Kingdom

Comas-Quinn, A. & Fitzgerald, A. (July, 2012) *Open Educational Resources in Language Learning*. Open Educational Resources Case Study: Pedagogical development from OER practice. Commissioned by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), United Kingdom.

Comas-Quinn, A. & Fitzgerald, A. (July, 2012) *Open Educational Resources in Language Learning*. Presentation, Showcase Event with the Support Centre for Open Resources in Education at the Open University. Milton Keynes, United Kingdom

Fitzgerald, A. (July, 2012) *Prizing Open and Enhancing Corpora for Language Teaching*.

Paper/Presentation, The 10th bi-annual Teaching and Language Corpora Conference. Warsaw, Poland.

Peglar, C., Fitzgerald, A., Hardy, S., Waller, S. & Manista, F. (September, 2012) Stairways to Open Educational Resource (OER) nirvana. Workshop/presentation, ALT-C 2012 – A Confrontation with Reality. The 19th international conference of the Association for Learning Technology. Manchester, United Kingdom.

Fitzgerald, A. (October, 2012) Presentation/Call for Action. Open Education 2012 Conference – Beyond Content. Vancouver, Canada

Fitzgerald, A. & Wu, S. (October, 2012) *Promoting Open Educational Resources for English Language Teaching*. Presentation/Workshop, Global Local Computer Assisted Language Learning (GLoCALL) Conference. Beijing, China

Fitzgerald, A. (November, 2012) Presentation/Workshop, Tertiary Writers' Network (TWN). Hamilton, New Zealand.

Fitzgerald, A. (December, 2012) Presentation/Paper, 17th Applied Linguistics Association of New Zealand (ALANZ) 2012 Symposia. Hamilton, New Zealand.

Conclusions

A shift away from proprietary textbook resources toward authentic and open digitized English language resources that reflect the latest in research and design for enhanced digital infrastructure can change the related fields of English for Academic Purposes and general English language teaching. However, a lot more work is required by way of promoting this open approach to English language resources development if openness is to gain traction within these two inter-related fields. I am constantly networking to engage leading practitioners in these fields to carry the open agenda forward and can foresee this work expanding and developing in the years to come. I am also looking to collaborate with publishers to see where we can join up with pushing openness forward for more OER in English language teaching.

Summary

Toying and trialing with open resources for English language education is at the core of the TOETOE project. This involves the development of training resources to engage potential end-users, namely language teachers and students, in the research and development cycle of specific OER for EAP. This also involves widening the stakeholder vision to include those practitioners and students found in both formal and informal learning contexts, to provide them with open resources that are flexible and authentic but also well supported with learning designs for their uptake and use.

A variety of innovative corpus-based OER were identified, adapted and enhanced for promotion in hands-on training workshops and in conference presentations during this SCORE fellowship period for the TOETOE project. These collections include the [British Academic Written English \(BAWE\) corpus](#) of university student writing, the [British National Corpus \(BNC\)](#) of published writing, along with corpora derived from Google and Wikipedia. Freeware for concordancing academic language were also introduced in the workshops for assistance with searching, identifying, retrieving, analysing, storing and applying discipline-specific language for use in EAP teaching, learning and training contexts. Open source tools for text analysis included those found in: the Flexible Language Acquisition ([FLAX](#)) project based at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, the [Compleat Lexical Tutor](#) centered at the Université du Québec à Montréal with the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance at Concordia University in Canada, and [AntConc](#) for building your own corpora, established at Waseda University in Japan. Currently these OER are not being exploited in higher education due to a lack of training among EAP practitioners in corpus approaches to language teaching, stemming from past accessibility issues with corpora and text analysis tools being copyrighted and licensed proprietary resources only.

OER collections building and dissemination of the TOETOE project and the support it has received from SCORE will continue both here in the UK and further afield in the Americas, Asia and Oceania in the coming year 2012-13.