Je suis intervenue avec une communication qui porte sur l’approche linguistique mise en œuvre dans ’Advanced English Grammar - a linguistic approach’, une grammaire que j’ai publiée avec Chad Langford. L’intervention a été bien appréciée et elle a donné lieu à des échanges sur l’utilisation de métalangage dans l’enseignement de la grammaire dans l’enseignement supérieur.

Le colloque m’a permis de tisser des liens avec Andrea Nava (Bologne), qui utilise la grammaire dans son département. Nous avons décidé d’élaborer une convention Erasmus entre nos établissements (mobilité étudiants et enseignants). Il en va de même pour Xavier Fontich (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona – Chercheur invité à Exeter pour l’instant), qui travaille sur le métalangage dans l’enseignement de la grammaire.

Teaching Tense and Aspect to Advanced Learners: a Linguistic Approach

In this paper, I would like to present and analyse the applied linguistic approach to tense and aspect adopted in Depraetere and Langford (2012)’s grammar of English. The target group of this grammar is advanced students, who could be registered in a specialized (English) or a non-specialized programme. Their approach differs from other grammars that target the same level of proficiency in two respects: first, in specialized grammars (e.g. Aarts 2012, Larreya and Rivière 2014), the usual pattern is for tense to be introduced before aspect. Depraetere and Langford start from situation types, then move on to aspect, and it is only in the final stage that tense is introduced. Also, the tense system as it is presented here comprises eight forms (cf. Declerck 1991), rather than two forms (the present tense and the past tense). Secondly, the general rationale is that, irrespective of the students’ background in linguistics, the appropriate use of linguistic concepts will give them a better insight in the underlying system and will hence facilitate the acquisition of this particularly challenging area of English grammar. Therefore, Depraetere and Langford’s grammar differs from the majority of the more practically oriented grammars, which avoid technical terminology, and it also differs from specialised grammars in the selective approach that is adopted. That is, choices have been made in terms of the degree of detail, technicality and the comprehensiveness of the overview: it is only theoretical concepts that are practically relevant that have been integrated. An additional characteristic is that the style adopted is meant to engage in conversation rather than list the facts. An outline will be given of the progression in the chapter on aspect and tense and it will be compared to that in three other grammars that target the same level of proficiency (Aarts 2012, Hewings 2012, Larreya and Rivière 2014).

The overall aim of the talk is to show that an appropriate use of linguistic concepts can facilitate the acquisition of usage patterns, irrespective of the background of the students. An additional advantage of this approach is that, in the context of students registered for an English degree, they get to familiarize themselves with basic linguistic concepts, and acquire an insight into their relevance, knowledge which provides a solid base for more theoretically oriented courses in linguistics.