



Cambridge University funds unique EF Education First research project



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Cambridge University is to fund a unique project that uses millions of words from thousands of students at the world's biggest online language school to work out one of the 21st century's billion-dollar questions: how people learn foreign languages.

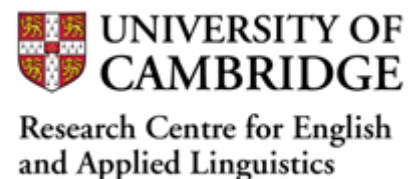
The Isaac Newton Trust, set up by Cambridge's Trinity College, has announced a grant to the EF Research Unit jointly established in 2010 between Cambridge University and EF Education First. The Trust, named after the Trinity scholar who transformed global science in the seventeenth century, has already funded research into an exciting range of areas, including peace-making, bio fuels, and tropical forest conservation.

These insights will lead to more efficient learning, teaching and assessment

Dr. Dora Alexopoulou, Senior Research Associate and head of the Unit, said: «Trinity College has educated many of the world's greatest communicators, including the poet Lord Byron and the computer pioneer Charles Babbage. We are proud to be able to continue this tradition of communication, through the generous grant of the Newton Trust.»

The grant funding from the Trust will support the development of the EF-Cambridge learner corpus of English, an electronic database based on samples of spoken and written language production from thousands of EF students around the world and on [Englishtown.com](http://www.englishtown.com), an EF subsidiary and the world's largest online language school. The Trust's grant will

allow the EF Research Unit to employ a specialist researcher in computational linguistics for two years to complement the on-going work of the team of applied linguists. This will help turn the database into a widely available resource which top academics across the world can use to work out how humans learn English the most commonly studied foreign language in the world. The EF Research Unit is also looking into expanding the database to include samples of children's second language production, working with students, teachers and parents across the EF network of schools worldwide.



Dr. Christopher McCormick, EF's Vice President for Academic Affairs and head of the EF-Cambridge University research collaboration, said: «We are thrilled to have this important area of research recognized by the prestigious Isaac Newton Trust. EF offers extensive access to learners from a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Insights gained into how these individuals make progress in English over time will advance our understanding of second language acquisition and lead to more efficient learning, teaching and assessment.»

The EF Research Unit is part of Cambridge University's Research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics. The Newton Trust gives grants to promote learning, research and education within Cambridge University.

About EF Education First

Education First is the largest private education company in the world. Founded in 1965 with the mission of "breaking geographic, linguistic and cultural barriers", EF Group has 29,000 employees, 400 schools and 75 offices in 51 countries. Originally conceived in collaboration with Apple, EF's Efecta(TM) System is the world's most advanced English learning method and is used to power EF's language schools and online English courses. In addition to helping 1,200 corporations with English training, EF was the Official Language Training Supplier to the Beijing Olympics and is helping Brazil prepare for the 2014 World Cup.

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