Teaching particular languages

English

88–68   Deyes, Tony (British Council, London). Towards a minimum discourse grammar for ESP reading courses. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Birmingham), **3**, 2 (1987), 417–28.

A description is given of research being carried out within the context of the Brazilian National ESP Project. This Project, supported by the Brazilian Ministry of Education, the British Council, and the UK Overseas Development Administration, aims to bring Brazilian university and technical college students to a point where they can 'cope' with the sort of texts they have to read in English in their own disciplines. Having defined the term 'Minimum Discourse Grammar', the paper surveys the aims and purposes of science as expressed by three well-known scientific philosophers. This deductive procedure for establishing a Minimum Discourse Grammar is followed by an inductive one, with a summary of the findings of a reading miscue study carried out among Brazilian teachers and students engaged in the Brazilian ESP Project. The third input to the Grammar is elements of a comparison between scientific language in English and Portuguese.

88–69   Esling, John and Downing, John (U. of Victoria, BC). What do ESL students need to learn about reading? *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), **4**, 1 (1986), 55–68.

Reading is a member of the class of behaviour named 'skill' in psychology. The process of acquiring the skill of reading includes the adaptation or cannibalisation of existing behaviour as well as the learning of new behaviour patterns. There is a universal pattern of skill developments passing through three overlapping phases: (1) cognitive, (2) mastering, (3) automaticity. In the cognitive phase, learners try to discover what performance of the skill entails; in the mastering phase, as the learner's comprehension of the task improves, he or she works to perfect the performance of the skill. Practice must continue beyond mastering until overlearning produces automaticity. If the cognitive phase is neglected, learners flounder in misunderstood concepts of reading and cannot practise effectively for mastery. Language awareness is very important for the cognitive phase, in particular, two kinds of conceptual representation of language activities and objects: (*a*) functional concepts – the purposes of these skills, and (*b*) technical concepts – characteristics of speech and writing.

What ESL students, in particular, need to learn about reading depends on what level of reading skill in any language they bring with them to the ESL task. They may differ in (1) level of reading skill development; (2) valorisation of reading – cultures vary in the values they accord to reading; (3) orthographic differences – some guidance in the basic principles of English orthography will benefit most students, but those with a high level of L1 skill development may require explicit teaching by conventional rules, whereas learners with a low level of L1 skill development may require more attention to the meaningful content of experience, and continued reading practice in the L1.

It is concluded that by developing task awareness, especially in the L1, ESL students can be led to transfer these concepts to L2 literacy. Teachers need to be aware of the teaching register they are using and whether the students can understand it. Teachers need to assess students' motives. The Language-Experience Approach seems to be fruitful (it is similar to the Natural Approach as used with adults).

88–70   Penfield, Joyce (Rutgers U.). ESL: the regular classroom teacher's perspective. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **21**, 1 (1987), 21–39.

A large number of limited English proficient (LEP) students in the United States spend only a small fraction of their school day with ESL teachers. Yet regular classroom teachers are unprepared in how to integrate the LEP student into the regular classroom. This article analyses the results of a survey of regular classroom teachers' perceptions of LEP students and ESL teachers. An open-ended questionnaire was administered to 162 New Jersey teachers who had LEP students in their classrooms but who had had no training in ESL. A content analysis of the responses revealed five broad categories of concern: programmatic setting and instruction, training needs, LEP students and their parents, peer inter-

action, and the role of the ESL teacher. The responses indicate the difficulties which regular classroom teachers encounter in integrating LEP students socially and academically into the regular setting. Accordingly, it is recommended that ESL teachers and teacher training programmes devote greater attention to preparing the regular classroom teacher for dealing more adequately with the educational needs of LEP students.

88–71 Piepho, Hans-Eberhard. Die Wandtafel als Medium im Englischunterricht. [The blackboard as medium in English teaching.] *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, FRG), **76** (1985), 255–65.

Each of the five surfaces of a typical German blackboard should be used for different material: main content, paradigms etc., new language presentation, new language recall, setting work. The board should not be used to pre-teach all the vocabulary of a text, as this prevents authentic reading behaviour, but can be used for advance, concurrent or retrospective organising of material studied, stimulating learners' imagination and interest and leading them to speculate, reason and negotiate meaning. [Examples of activity sequences and board layouts.]

88–72 Sivell, John. ESL and EFL, same or different? – The question of professional roles. *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), **4**, 1 (1986), 13–22.

Appropriate teaching methods and classroom materials can vary widely between ESL (for instance in Anglophone Canada) and EFL (in a non-Anglophone environment abroad). However, additional changes between the two domains also exist: ESL instructors moving into EFL overseas will often find their role as language-teaching professionals considerably modified, in terms of their politico-cultural impact, their professional prominence, and their psychological security. Adaptation to such changes – both for maximised effectiveness and satisfaction abroad, and for greatest long-term growth after returning home – depends on clear-sighted expectation and comprehension of the demands of these challenging but rewarding new experiences.

88–73 Swales, John (U. of Michigan). Utilizing the literatures in teaching the research paper. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **21**, 1 (1987), 41–68.

Teaching research English, particularly the writing of papers, to non-native speakers (NNS) has not been given the attention it needs. Available evidence points both to the overwhelming role of English as a medium of communication in the international research literature and to the low level of NNS contributions to that literature. This article outlines and illustrates an approach to the teaching of research English (on a group rather than an individual basis) which derives from four bodies of literature: (*a*) the sociology of science, (*b*) citation analysis, (*c*) technical writing, and (*d*) English for academic purposes. It is argued that this approach gives the ESL instructor insight into research writing processes and products, increases instructor confidence, provides accessible content, and produces texts from the literatures that can be used directly in class. The discussion reviews present knowledge of the research paper; considers the issues of genre, schema, and rhetorical structure; and relates the orientation taken in this article to the current debate about 'process' and 'product' approaches to ESL writing.

88–74 Takashima, Hideyuki (Kagoshima U., Japan). To what extent are non-native speakers qualified to correct free composition? *British Journal of Language Teaching*, **25**, 1 (1987), 43–8.

An English essay written by a Japanese graduate who had majored in English was corrected by a Japanese teacher of English and by two native speakers of English. The corrected versions were then compared. Marked differences were found between the non-native's (NNs) and the native speakers' (NSs) corrections. The NNs corrected almost as many mistakes as the NSs but modified the essay in a different way from them, sometimes deviating from the originally intended meaning.

Advanced composition requires some degree of reformulation to improve style and clarify thought.

There is a serious shortage of experienced examiners of composition in Japan, so undoubtedly Japanese teachers of English will need help and further training to improve their performance.

French

88–75 Ali Boucha, Abdelmajid (U. of Algiers – Centre). Un niveau 3? Contenus et enjeux. [Is there a Level III? Content and aims.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number 2/3 (1987), 6–15.

If Level I constitutes an introduction to the language being taught and imparts certain basic skills, while Level II sees the learner achieve written and oral comprehension and acquire the language needed to proceed to a degree of autonomy, then the goals of Level III may be defined as an objective understanding of the target language and competence in performance. The needs of students at this level may be very specific and differ markedly from each other; consequently course books for this level are rare. However, students are usually strongly motivated. A Level III course could comprise such skills and activities as: reading specialised texts, use of the telephone, letter-writing conventions, conversational skills, nuances of the language, and writing lengthy texts. It is legitimate to use literary texts to teach the language, but this should be clearly distinguished from teaching the literature of the language. Texts used should be the real thing and should be whole texts and not extracts.

88–76 Chaudenson, Robert and others (U. of Provence). The dynamics of linguistic systems and the acquisition of French as a second language. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, Ind), **8**, 3 (1986), 277–92.

It has been observed that learners of French as a second language at different stages of the acquisition process tend to use forms and rules that are comparable to those of French-based creoles or pidginised French. The more advanced learners employ rules and forms akin to dialectal variants of French or to French as spoken in isolated areas such as Old Mines, Missouri. The learners produce non-standard forms considered unacceptable by the purist tradition of French grammarians. It has been noted that the observed similarities between interlanguage, regional dialects, etc., occur in given 'sensitive' zones of French morphology and syntax such as the use of verbs and auxiliaries, morphology and placement of clitic pronouns, over-generalisation of given prepositions, those very areas which are problematic in the acquisition of French as L1. Since the 17th century, these have been the object of a strict codification by purist grammarians who disregard actual usage in various dialects. It is hypothesised that such similarities between the interlanguage forms at various stages of development, French regional dialects, and areas of conflict over the elaboration of norms in standard French can be partly accounted for if one considers the dynamics of the target language. To explain the functioning of this process, the authors posit a 'system' comprising a learner–speaker, the specific linguistic system itself (including pressure to conform to the norm), and the interactions with native speakers. Through self-regulation, this system devises solutions which perforce pertain to that common area which in any language is at the crossroads of variation, language change, and acquisition. This hypothetical zone (called *français zéro* by Chaudenson, 1984), is the point of convergence of the self-regulating processes which are responsible for the formal and functional similarities between French-based interlanguages, language change, norm conflicts in the standardisation of French, and the creolisation process.

88–77 Hare, Geoffrey (U. of Newcastle upon Tyne). Preparing to teach contemporary French society at 'A'-level. *Modern Languages* (London), **68**, 1 (1987), 5–12.

A potential syllabus for teaching about contemporary French society is outlined for teachers, and precise suggestions for reading on a range of different topics are made. It is probably best to begin with an overview of society, including the evolution of France's population, certain aspects of its socio-economic development, social class structures, and possibly its political system. This could be followed by a look at individuals' experience of French society in the family, education, work, and leisure.

The 20 topics suggested easily fill a two-year Sixth Form course. [Sources of information for each area/topic are given, together with a book list.] Students will need to be familiar with commonly used tools of social analysis, such as graphs, diagrams, statistics, etc.

88-78 Harvey, John E. (U. of Utah). Beginning French via the Read-and-Speak method. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **20**, 1 (1987), 31-8.

An innovative foreign language methodology, Read-and-Speak, was tried in a year-long pilot section of beginning French at the University of Utah in 1984-5. The method involves the following: (*a*) from the outset students were assigned massive easy readings in the foreign language (300 pages during the first quarter); (*b*) from the outset they were encouraged to speak the foreign language in class; and (*c*) formal grammar instruction was delayed until April when an entire introductory text was covered in five weeks. At the end of the year, standardised testing showed the Read-and-Speak method to be significantly more effective than the traditional method. Moreover, student response was positive: the new method was perceived to be a relatively pleasurable way to learn French. Read-and-Speak's success may be explained by its grounding in basic learning theory: the new method lays down maximal memory traces, widely spaces those traces over time, and sets the traces in pleasing contexts. The success of Read-and-Speak may also be explained by its insistence upon early unstructured speech.

88-79 Heinrichs, Volkhard. Die Massenmedien als Unterrichtsgegenstände des Literaturunterrichts Französisch in der gymnasialen Oberstufe. [The mass media as subjects of study in French literature in the final years of grammar school.] *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, FRG), **86**, 2 (1987), 135-61.

The author examines a selection of literature from 1969 to 1985 on the role of mass media in the teaching of French, and notes certain deficiencies in current practice. There is a heavy bias towards the printed media, at the expense of film, radio and television, whilst the strip cartoon, for example, is almost totally neglected. Media are mostly used in teaching as a means of studying other sociopolitical topics; teaching about media is rarer, and teaching with and about media rarer still. The opportunities afforded by modern technology (colour copying, viceo-recording etc.) for detailed study of non-print media have not been exploited. Teacher training is needed to overcome prejudices against 'lowbrow' media and to explore the consequences of Saussure's insight that language is only one semiotic system interacting with others including layout and pictures. Learners should ultimately be able, in analysing a film for example, to show how linguistic and non-linguistic elements can complement, counterpoint or clash with each other.

88-80 Hunnius, Klaus. Der Konjunktiv in der Diskussion. [Discussion of the subjunctive.] *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, FRG), **86**, 1 (1987), 48-62.

As an important part of a long tradition, the last 20 years of research on the French subjunctive have been characterised by detailed analyses of usage and discussions of methodology. The publication of a number of major comprehensive grammars prompted the writer to examine the extent to which these new works reflect and incorporate the approaches and findings of contemporary research. In addition to focusing on the way in which the subjunctive's function is defined and treated as such, certain sentence and construction types are selected for examination owing to the descriptive or interpretative problems that arise from them. The relationship between grammatical mood and semantics proves to be the overriding consideration, as it not only determines the course of scientific debate, but is also important from the standpoint of teaching the subjunctive in the classroom.

88–81 Sacco, Steven J. (Michigan Technological U.). Crap detecting: an approach to developing critical reading and thinking skills in the foreign language curriculum. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **20**, 1 (1987), 57–66.

This paper describes a three-part approach to the enhancement of critical reading and thinking skills. In particular, this paper proposes (1) a rationale for emphasising the skill; (2) a specific role foreign language can play; and (3) two classroom-tested activities presented in French. This active and problem-solving approach to reading a second language advocates the use of authentic and un-simplified non-literary texts for use by advanced high school and intermediate college students. It is hoped that this approach will encourage foreign language students to think more actively, objectively, and critically when reading both native- and second-language texts.

88–82 Wenk, B. J. (U. of Nijmegen) **and Wioland, F.** (U. of Strasbourg). Phonetic training for immigrant worker pupils. *ITL* (Louvain), **73** (1986), 27–50.

Details are given of a project designed to identify the phonetic problems of migrant worker pupils (MWP) in speaking French and to devise pedagogical procedures for dealing with them. A small group of MWPs of diverse origins, 10·9 years average age and having spent less than one year in the French educational system, was studied. Perception tests showed a greater ability to compute numbers of non-linguistic auditory items than syllables but a general ability to match intonation contours on linguistic rather than non-linguistic sequences of syllables; phoneme identification tasks were successfully carried out except where nasal/ oral vowel contrasts and nasal consonant contrasts were involved. Production tests revealed a predominance of the following errors: the use of intensity (rather than length) to mark group final syllables, marked acceleration in the second of two successive rhythmic groups, failure to copy non-final contours and improper intersyllabic timing relationships. The investigators sought to promote improved performance through a games-type approach involving exercises that encourage a sense of rhythmicity, short, balanced rhythmic groups, articulatory tension towards the end of groups and proper 'articulatory setting'.

German

88–83 Good, Colin H. (U. of East Anglia). 'Du mußt deine Sprache verbessern', or the transmission of linguistic norms. *New German Studies* (Hull), **14**, 1 (1986/7), 1–20.

The guidelines and the curricula for the teaching of German of the various states in West Germany have since the 1970s advocated the adoption of a modern 'linguistic' approach towards the teaching of German. The author sets out to examine the manner in which teachers of German actually express their assessment of written work produced by their pupils. The aim is to discover what views about language and what 'linguistic norms' are transmitted in this way. Several hundred exercise books of grammar-school children from a school near Bonn in the age range 11–16 were analysed. Striking examples of teacher comments are discussed in some detail. Fussiness over style and expression reflects traditional precepts. Non-standard forms are ruthlessly edited out with scant regard for the match between expression and content. One of the results of this editing is that, paradoxically, it contradicts the creativity insisted upon in most curricula, tending to flatten the style of the individual towards something more wooden. A number of forms still appear to be proscribed, other 'correct' views about various forms of language continue to enjoy institutional protection. [Examples are given.] It is concluded that resistance to 'new' and support for old forms usually turns out to rest on principles which have more to do with ideology or a traditional aesthetic canon than with linguistic structure or function. Moreover, the norms transmitted by school and other institutions (*Duden*, etc.) will often be triggered when a speaker or writer feels insecure in a given social encounter.

88–84 Ladmiral, Jean-René (U. of Paris X). Pour la traduction dans l'enseignement des langues. [Role of translation in teaching languages.] *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **81**, 1 (1987), 9–21.

The direct method with its emphasis on the spoken language has led to the disappearance of translation from the language classrooms of French and German secondary schools, although it is still to be found at university level. Consequently many students come unprepared. In the belief that it is time to restore to their rightful place both the written language and translation and that modern language departments have something to learn from classical languages, the author has instituted a translation seminar as a way of teaching the target language (German) and redressing the existing balance in language teaching. A collaborative effort by the students to translate into the mother tongue is preceded by a detailed study of the text.

88–85 Luchtenberg, Sigrid. 'Mein Vater war vielleicht wütend': zur partikel 'vielleicht' und ihrer Vermittlung an ausländische Deutschlerner(innen). [On the particle 'vielleicht' and how to teach it to foreign learners of German.] *Deutsche Sprache* (Berlin, FRG), **15**, 1 (1987), 1–24.

This article takes as its starting point the difficulties that foreign learners experience with the word *vielleicht* as adverb and modal particle. The particle *vielleicht* (in its function as modal particle, stressed particle, particle of scale) is analysed in its syntactic, semantic and pragmatic–functional qualities. Proposals are made on how to treat *vielleicht* in courses of German as a foreign language.

88–86 Rings, Lana (U. of Texas at Austin). Exophoric reference in beginning textbooks. *Die Unterrichtspraxis: For the Teaching of German* (Philadelphia, Pa), **19**, 2 (1986), 193–9.

Exophoric reference refers to a state or item which has not been named but which must be understood through an understanding of the situation. Exophoric language cannot be fully understood without a visual depiction of a situation or without a running commentary accompanying the text. As a phenomenon, it occurs regularly in spoken texts but rarely in written ones. A description of exophoric reference is given, with analysis of the spoken texts in eight first-year German textbooks. All but two textbooks omitted pronominal and definite article exophora, perhaps because of their traditionally ungrammatical status. Nevertheless, they regularly occur in spoken German, so should be taught. Ideally, a videotape should accompany each text, or at least a photograph or line drawing, as well as an audio recording [example].

Italian

88–87 Nuccorini, Stefania. Note sulla tipologia e sulla valutazione dei dizionari bilingui. [Notes on types of bilingual dictionary and their evaluation.] *Lingua e Nuova Didattica* (Rome), **2** (1986), 22–8.

The task of the user of a bilingual dictionary is to find, by a process of adjustment (Widdowson, 1978) a term in the target language which will substitute for that used in the source language. The user has two types of general Italian–English/English–Italian dictionary to choose from: bilingual dictionaries in the true sense, in which the source language is English for the English–Italian part and Italian for the Italian–English part, and 'Italian' dictionaries, in which the source language is always Italian. Following Kroman *et al* (1984), the ideal dictionary would be either active or passive. An active dictionary is characterised by information to assist the user in meaning discrimination of equivalents for written production and translation from L1 to L2, whilst a passive dictionary contains information about the term itself to enable it to be understood and translated from L2 to L1. No such dictionary in fact exists, although the second, 'Italian' type dictionary approaches it in certain respects.

Of the criteria used to evaluate bilingual dictionaries, those used by Lepschy (1973) and Bujas (1975) are basically concerned with whether or not a specific term is included. Al-Kasimi (1977) reports a

number of criteria for evaluating the purpose, content and format, of which those relating to examples are particularly significant. These do not cover every possible function of examples, but they are important since they check that (1) every sense is illustrated with an example, (2) the examples reflect the culture of the target language speaker, (3) all examples are translated, (4) the examples are brief and informative and illustrate usage. Marello (in press) tested three Italian–English/English–Italian dictionaries against these criteria and found that none of them met all of them. A further test was carried out on four dictionaries to see how well they dealt with the kind of difficulties encountered by students because of semantic, cultural or stylistic differences. None of the dictionaries was entirely satisfactory, and it is concluded that in order to make accurate and efficient use of a dictionary a process of adjustment is indeed essential, since only by an active use of reference skills will the student arrive at the appropriate link between the term in the dictionary and its use in context.

Spanish

88–88 Weissenrieder, Maureen. Listening to the news in Spanish. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **71**, 1 (1987), 18–27.

Since it cannot be assumed that acquisition of other skills leads automatically to aural comprehension, listening skills must be specifically taught. Listening to the radio news poses particular problems on account of characteristics of the language used and the need to balance economy and predictability which arise from the special circumstances of radio and television journalism. The condensed telescopic form of the items requires a greater processing efficiency on the part of the listener, while the predictability of the patterns they examplify fails, through unfamiliarity, to aid comprehension.

On the positive side students are probably already acquainted with the topics being presented. A cyclic approach is suggested. Students are asked to focus on one or two simple perception or comprehension tasks at each listening; with instructor guidance, each cycle builds on the knowledge accumulated in the previous cycle so that more information is obtained every time. This spiral comprehension technique is described as used with an intermediate/ advanced class at Ohio University but the method can be adapted to match the linguistic level of other students.