Teaching particular languages

English

95–72 Goh, Christine C. M. (Nanyang Technological U., Singapore). Exploring the teaching of discourse intonation. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **25**, 1 (1994), 77–98.

The first part of this paper outlines a study conducted in Malaysia to investigate whether a systematic teaching of intonation would increase learners' awareness of its role in discourse. Two upper secondary classes of similar proficiency were selected for this purpose.

The study indicated that intonation can be systematically taught in secondary schools. Students can learn about the roles and use of certain intonation features. The greater challenge, however, is to ensure that whatever is learnt will find its way into the students' everyday use of English.

The findings of the study also highlighted some of the major differences in the subjects' intonation patterns and those of competent speakers. Some implications for teaching intonation are also outlined.

95–73 Hung, Tony T. N. (National U. of Singapore). The role of phonology in the teaching of pronunciation to bilingual students. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* (Clevedon, Avon), **6**, 3 (1993), 249–56.

The paper examines some phonological explanations for pronunciation difficulties experienced by learners of English and Chinese. Rules of accommodation, rules of distribution and alternation, voicing and morphonemic rules are examined. Rules of transfer between related languages are illustrated by examples from Hokkien and Mandarin. Some comments are made also on suprasegmental phenomena. While 'rules' in this sense cannot be taught to learners, an awareness of them on the part of the teacher can aid their acquisition.

95–74 Lai, Cecilia (City Poly. of Hong Kong). Communication failure in the language classroom: an exploration of causes. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **25**, 1 (1994), 99–129.

A great deal of current theory and research stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities for real and meaningful communication in second language acquisition. The Hong Kong secondary school English syllabus reflects the influence of such thinking. This study aims to investigate the following issues: first, whether or not the provision of opportunities for meaningful communication in the English classroom, as advocated in the syllabus, is manifested in the secondary-level English classrooms in Hong Kong; second, what the level of learners' confidence is in using English in class communication; and third, what factors account for different confidence levels in class communication. With regard to these questions, a questionnaire was administered to 487 Form Four students of eleven local schools.

The results of the study indicate, first, the persistence of non-interactive patterns of communication in the English classroom, where learners' opportunities for participating in classroom communication are limited. Second, a majority of the learners are not confident in communicating in English in the classroom. Finally, three main factors contributing to learners' confidence levels for participating in classroom communication are identified. They are a self-esteem factor, a language anxiety factor, and a factor of non-favourable patterns and opportunities for classroom communication. Within these factors, the learners' perceptions of their poor English standards and the teachers' attitude towards the learners' performance in class were found to be particularly important.

95–75 Saito, Hiroko. Teachers' practices and students' preferences for feedback on second language writing: a case study of adult ESL learners. *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), **11**, 2 (1994), 46–70.

The first part of this study investigated the fit between teachers' practices and students' preferences for feedback and the students' strategies for handling feedback on their written work. The second part of

37

this study focused on students' perception of 'thinking prompts' for their writing, an innovative approach used in their ESL writing classes, following Bereiter and Scardamalia's idea of 'procedural facilitation' (1987). Thirty-nine students in ESL intensive courses and an ESL Engineering writing class were asked to fill out a questionnaire concerning feedback and thinking prompts. In addition, three classes were observed to see how each teacher used feedback and thinking prompts in their classes and for responding to students' writings. The results show that students preferred teacher feedback (teacher correction, teacher correction with com-

ments, error identification, commentary, teacher-students conferencing) to non-teacher feedback (peer correction and self correction), though the three teachers used non-teacher feedback frequently in their classes. These students' strategies for handling feedback varied depending on the type of feedback each teacher gave on the student's paper. Among the thinking prompts, students found the *rule* prompt most useful and the *L1/L2 comparison* prompt least useful. The results suggest that the extent to which the thinking prompts are integrated in the class and students conceptualise them is reflected in their attitudes toward thinking prompts.

95–76 Winer, Lise. Teaching classification and organisation skills in ESOL composition. *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), **11**, 2 (1994), 85–99.

In organising ESOL expository writing, students typically have difficulty with: (1) identifying and distinguishing the classifying criteria, sometimes mixing several categories at once; (2) identifying hierarchical categories in a superordinate/subordinate relation to each other; and (3) reclassifying the same content in different ways using different criteria or different hierarchies of categories. This paper relies on research in several areas – paradigmatic and

syntagmatic responses in reading comprehension, formal schemata and reading comprehension, and Brunerian learning theory – to explore some classroom approaches to these difficulties. A set of guidelines for the practice of classification skills is proposed. In the following sections, several detailed examples are given of specific class-room pre-writing lessons, and how they may be analysed in terms of these guidelines.

French

95–77 Clipperton, Robert. Explicit vocabulary instruction in French immersion. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto, Ontario), **50**, 4 (1994), 736–49.

This paper provides an overview of theoretical perspectives on L2 vocabulary knowledge and acquisition. A review is presented of research on levels of lexical proficiency and on qualitative differences in the oral and written production of French immersion students as compared to that of their francophone peers. A case is made for improved vocabulary instruction in immersion programmes. It

is suggested that this will require a reexamination of some of the basic principles of immersion teaching resulting in more form-focused instruction and explicit reference to the students' L1 knowledge. Some suggestions are made as to how these traditional ideas could be integrated into a communicative approach.

95–78 Flewelling, Janet L. (U. of Windsor, Ontario). The teaching of culture: guidelines from the National Core French Study of Canada. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **27**, 2 (1994), 133–42.

In recent years, core French teachers have been faced with a number of changes in approach with regard to the teaching of French as a Second Language. One such change is the increased emphasis being put on the teaching of culture. The culture syllabus of the National Core French Study offers not only a theoretical look at how and why culture should be taught in FSL programs, but it also provides examples of cultural topics and practical activities which could help them integrate these topics into

their teaching programmes. This article looks at the implications of the culture syllabus of The National Core French Study for foreign language teachers. It also examines some of the suggestions made regarding how culture should be taught. The information is such that it could be adapted to any foreign language teaching situation. [A list of Canadian sources for cultural information is given in the Appendix.]

38

95–79　Geva, Esther and Clifton, Susan. The development of first and second language reading skills in early French immersion. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto, Ontario), **50,** 4 (1994), 646–67.

The purpose of this study was to compare good and poor readers in the early French immersion programme to good and poor readers in the regular English stream on various indices of accuracy and speed, and to examine the emergence of accuracy and fluency in reading of good and poor readers in the French immersion programme in English, their first language, and in French, their second language. Results are discussed in terms of developmental transitions in second language reading and implications for setting realistic programme goals and adapting reading instruction to student needs.

95–80　Massey, D. Anthony. Why choose French? Secondary school students' accounts of their decision to leave or enrol in the Ontario regular FSL programme. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto, Ontario), **50,** 4 (1994), 714–35.

This article presents information given by 24 students in two Ontario secondary schools about their decision to enrol or not to enrol in the regular (or core) French as a second language (FSL) programme when it became optional for them at the end of Grade 9. Interviewed individually, the students talked about such influences on their enrolment decision as their attitudes toward the elementary and secondary schools' FSL programmes they had experienced and the role of French in their lives. While the influence of particular factors on their enrolment decision was varied, the participants indicated that achieving a satisfactory level of communicative competence in French is important as a motivator both to continue learning the language and to use it inside and outside the FSL classroom. The participants also recommended more varied learning materials and activities with less emphasis on written language and grammar in the regular FSL programme they experienced in Grades 7, 8 and 9.

95–81　Nott, David (Lancaster U.). Pronunciation: does it matter? *Francophonie* (Rugby), **9** (1994), 2–17.

Pronunciation mistakes made in 236 prepared talks in French by university students of French from 1986 to 1993 were noted by the author, and frequency tables are provided, broken down by year of study (first/second/fourth) and by type of error, with a 14-category system which is set out with detailed examples and comments. The approach is descriptive, with no claims of completeness or statistical significance. The main improvement, attributed largely to time spent in a Francophone country, was between second and fourth year, when all categories except one ('double consonant') showed a substantial reduction in error frequency. The overall frequency of noted errors per 10 minutes fell from 7·34 in the first year to 6·12 in the second and 2·54 in the fourth.

It is suggested that, whilst some aspects of pronunciation are best left to a period of immersion, others, including [y], [R]. nasalised vowels, absence of diphthongisation and vowel reduction, and behaviour of final consonants, should be explicitly taught at an early stage. [Advice on giving feedback on prepared talks.]

95–82　Winz-Luckei, Peter. Neugierig werden: das Andere – die Anderen – wir selbst. Wege des sprachlichen und interkulturellen Lernens im anwendungsorientierten Französischunterricht. [Acquiring curiosity: the other – the others – and us. Learning a language in a cross-cultural context through a practice-oriented approach to French teaching.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **93,** 3 (1994), 232–55.

Pupils learning French in the classroom, especially during the early years, do not have sufficient opportunity to experience the new foreign language as a means of expressing their ideas, communication with others or having an intelligent conversation about interesting topics. A project based on the application of a 'pragmatic and practice-oriented approach in French teaching', which is being carried out in classes 7 to 9 at the Gustav Heinemann School in Mühlheim/Rhine, attempts to integrate different

39

learning activities in practice, such as class correspondence, creative writing and various topical field studies. These contacts with the target culture open up manifold possibilities for cross-cultural learning in the context of learning a foreign language.

German

95–83 Cadd, Marc (William Jewell Coll., Liberty, MO). An attempt to reduce ethnocentrism in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **27,** 2 (1994), 143–60.

This study investigated ethnocentrism. Research regarding how well second language instructors succeed in reducing ethnocentrism is scarce. Some researchers (e.g., Lambert) suggest that prejudice and ethnocentrism, which interfere with the attainment of openmindedness and cross-cultural understanding, are already well established in children by the age of 12. If this is true, can second language instructors succeed in achieving their goals?

The study expanded upon the research of Tuttle *et al.* (1979) which found that ethnocentrism may be more efficiently reduced if the instructor stresses cultural similarities instead of differences when presenting cultural information about the target culture. The hypothesis had not been examined with college-aged subjects.

The three specific research questions investigated in this study were: (1) Does an approach to teaching German culture which emphasises cultural similarities between German and American culture result in a statistically significant decrease in general ethnocentrism compared to one which emphasises cultural differences? (2) Does such an approach result in a statistically significant decrease in ethnocentrism toward Germans specifically? (3) To what extent do variables selected on the basis of existing literature correlate to one's initial level of ethnocentrism?

The study utilised a quasiexperimental intact group design. Nine sections of first-semester German students were randomly assigned to one of three groups: one in which German and American cultural similarities were stressed, one in which German and American cultural differences were stressed, or a control group. All participants completed an attitude survey and provided demographic information prior to any of the cultural presentations. The author then presented six cultural units to each experimental group. Depending on the group viewing the presentations, either cultural similarities or differences were emphasised. All participants subsequently completed the same attitude survey in order to assess changes in ethnocentrism.

Although members of the similarities group demonstrated a greater decrease in ethnocentrism than members of the differences group, the results of the experiment were inconclusive because the difference was not statistically significant. However, the author does not view the results as a basis to dismiss the hypothesis, but to suggest the need for further research.

95–84 Walsh, Riana (RTC Tallaght). The year abroad – a linguistic challenge. *Téanga* (Dublin, Ireland), **14** (1994), 48–57.

This paper presents a comparative overview of studies based on year abroad programmes and deals with the linguistic achievements and setbacks experienced by a group of Irish DaF (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache*) year abroad students. In particular, it highlights the limitations of students lacking in linguistic awareness and validates the need for a concomitant grammatical structure that keeps pace with their (almost inevitable) improvement in fluency. A longitudinal research project was undertaken within the German Department UCD in May 1991, with the aim of monitoring the linguistic progress of undergraduate students during their year abroad in the target culture. The aim of the study is to look closely at the linguistic data obtained and provide assistance to future year abroad students, primarily in the form of practical guidelines, on how to capitalise linguistically on their year abroad. This article describes similar study abroad research conducted by other institutions; briefly outlines the structure of the German Department research; elaborates on the project data analysed so far; and summarises some conclusions of the year abroad study.

Irish

95–85 Ó Laoire, Muiris (Inst. Teangeolaíochta Éireann). Exploration, challenge and change in the teaching of Irish at post-primary level. *Téanga* (Dublin, Ireland), **14** (1994), 40–7.

This paper examines some of the implications of introducing the concept of learner autonomy into the communicative model for teaching Irish. It is partly based on research undertaken by the author and other teachers in post-primary schools 1989–1992, in conjunction with the Council of Europe's Research and Development Programme on investigating learner strategies and learner autonomy.

Reference is made to recent innovations in Irish language pedagogy and to the sociolinguistic and educational factors which set it apart from the main thrust of the communicative model generally employed in modern language pedagogy. It purports to show how implementation of self-directed learning in Irish in the context of these recent innovations may be more conductive to creating more realistic communicative situations in the classroom.

The research identifies some of the key forms of interaction which tend to promote good communication. The paper focuses on the key concepts of negotiation, choice and critical reflection as applied throughout the project as well as the challenges posed by implementation of self-directed learning in Irish class. It emphasises the need for a new approach to classroom communication and learning strategies in the teaching of Irish.

Italian

95–86 Powell, Robert C. (U. of Warwick). Minority foreign language provision: the case of Italian in the UK. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* (Clevedon, Avon), **6**, 2 (1993), 157–76.

This article describes research which informed an inter-governmental colloquium on the teaching of Italian in the UK in 1992. The context of the colloquium itself is explained and an overview of recent and current educational reforms is presented. While there is evidence of short-term gains in provision for Italian teaching and learning, concerns about longer term provision are expressed in the light of the possible outcomes of the reforms now taking place. A random sample of schools where Italian is taught was surveyed in order to define more closely examples of successful practice and some of the problems facing the language teaching profession. Recommendations are made for improving the scope of future provision for the Italian language and, more generally, UK foreign language policies. In particular, teachers' opinions reinforce the need for improving arrangements for international co-operation at school level.

Japanese

95–87 Austin, Theresa (U. of Massachusetts) **and others.** A yen for business: language learning for specific purposes – a Japanese example. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **27,** 2 (1994), 196–220.

This paper chronicles the steps taken in developing a curricular project to design, implement, and evaluate a simulation business course for beginners learning Japanese at the university level. The steps in developing the programme, from the selection of materials to the evaluation of the entire project, are presented together with insights gained from the experience and suggestions for improvement.

Spanish

95–88   Brooks, Frank B. (Florida State U.) **and Donato, Richard** (U. of Pittsburgh). Vygotskyan approaches to understanding foreign language learner discourse during communicative tasks. *Hispania* (Worcester, Ma), **77,** 2 (1994), 262–74.

This article presents and analyses speech data from secondary-level learners of Spanish who are engaged in a problem-solving speaking task commonly used in classrooms and in research. It applies a Vygotskyan perspective to understand the nature of selected aspects of their speech activity, such as talk about the task, talk about the talk, and the use of English. The findings suggest that encoding-decoding perspec- tives, prevalent in much second language research on learner-to-learner speech activity, are inapprop- riate for capturing and understanding what these learners are attempting to accomplish during their face-to-face activity. In other words, not all speech activity between classroom learners during class- room communicative tasks is necessarily commun- icative in intent.

95–89   Santos Maldonado, Carmen (U. of Edinburgh). Some aspects of 'foreignness' in the pronunciation of upper intermediate English students of Spanish. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* (Edinburgh), **5** (1994), 78–97.

This study was designed to address the following three questions related to the pronunciation of Spanish as a foreign language: (1) Is the pro- nunciation of upper intermediate learners 'fossil- ised'? (2) Is there a relationship between 'quality' in pronunciation and 'amount of improvement'? (3) When judging degrees of 'foreignness', are linguis- tically trained native judges 'harsher' than linguis- tically naive native judges? Some upper intermediate learners of Spanish were recorded 'before' and 'after' a programme in Spanish pronunciation. Then the same ten 'before' and 'after' pairs of sentences of each student were carefully randomised and rated for quality of pronunciation by native speakers of Spanish. Results suggest, on the one hand, that phonological fossilisation is present but does not affect everybody to the same extent; on the other hand, that even at this high level some studies can benefit considerably from pronunciation train- ing. A reconsideration of the place of pronunciation in language teaching in a university setting concludes the article.