

Language learning and teaching – theory and practice

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

86-1 Bailey, Charles-James N. (Technical U. of Berlin). Untapped principles of language learning. *Journal of Literary Semantics* (Heidelberg), **14**, 1 (1985), 56–70.

The author posits six principles central to FL teaching, which are illustrated by examples from German and English. Teaching the irregular, or the exceptional, before the regular or usual is more productive than the current practice in FL classrooms. Similarly, it is better to emphasise constructions in the target language that are clearly different from those in the L1. The validity of teaching informal varieties of the L2 comprises the second principle. Teachers are encouraged to be descriptive rather than prescriptive in their approach, to be observers as well as purveyors of language.

Phonetic spellings such as *gotta*, *useta* are seen as valuable shortcuts to deducing the sound rules of English. Different cognitive resources are used to learn various languages; students should therefore be steered towards those which are most congenial for them to learn. Principle five advocates the abandonment by teachers of hide-bound approaches and misconceptions, particularly a blinkered and static outlook which remains impervious to the social, cultural and historic growth of language as a living communicative tool. Finally, the role of literature in FLT is discussed, with literary criticism being dubbed a futile ‘pseudo-science’.

86-2 Campbell, Russell N. and others. Foreign language learning in the elementary schools: a comparison of three language programs. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **69**, 1 (1985), 44–54.

The results of qualitative research on the efficacy of three types of FL programme are discussed: foreign language in the elementary school (FLES), immersion, and partial immersion. Fifteen elementary schools were scrutinised, and such variables as instruction time, use/non-use of the FL to teach core curriculum subjects, variation among schools, programme longevity, continuity, and articulation are examined. The article is aimed at, for example, parents trying to assess the validity of different types of programme, at modern languages curriculum designers, teacher trainers, educational policy makers, and researchers interested in second language acquisition.

Comparisons in the study were made by assessing the four-skills competence of students of Spanish and French, using the Modern Language Association Co-operative Test (1963). Analysis of the resultant data was done by computer [graphs/tables] and it was shown that in both languages, immersion programmes seemed most effective, that increased exposure to a language apparently has a positive effect on student performance, and that the continuity and structuring of programmes are significant

factors. Moreover, it was inferred that increased FL exposure markedly improved students' self-assessment abilities. Further research on test design is needed so that communicative competence can be more effectively evaluated.

86-3 Committee for Linguistics in Education. Guidelines for evaluating school instruction about language. *BAAL Newsletter*, 23 (1985), 29-40.

The knowledge of language which most school-leavers have is inadequate. Instead of laying the foundations for a mature understanding of language, schools may be providing misinformation and prejudice. There is a shortage of teachers with experience of academic linguistics. The growth of 'language awareness' courses is to be welcomed. Criteria for selecting a reasonable minimum body of knowledge are (a) it should be teachable, (b) it should be valuable (important to the quality of life), and (c) it should be reliable, i.e. compatible with the findings of academic linguistics (any research-based studies of language, not just 'theoretical' linguistics).

Five general types of knowledge are defined which make up a minimum body of knowledge about language: (1) some analytical categories, e.g. the parts of speech, morphological categories, semantic categories; (2) some rules of general statements about particular varieties of language; (3) some major structural peculiarities of English, requiring a comparison between English and at least one other language; (4) some facts about languages of the world; (5) some structural differences between standard and non-standard English, and between written and spoken English.

This approach is not recommending a return to the grammar teaching practised in the past. It recommends a descriptive, not a prescriptive approach, a wide-ranging syllabus, teaching which reflects developments in academic linguistics, and which is matched to pupils' needs and interests.

86-4 Cook, V. J. (U. of Essex). Chomsky's Universal Grammar and second language learning. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 6, 1 (1985), 2-18.

If one accepts the Universal Grammar model for first language learning, this leaves open three possibilities for second language learning: the L2 learner could have access to the Universal Grammar either directly, or only through the L1, or not at all. The first of these possibilities seems most tenable. In this hypothetical picture, the learner contributes language principles and unfixed parameters which are then fixed into a new grammar; language forms which do not readily fit Universal Grammar are least accessible, and require the adoption of marked solutions; development reflects acquisition more closely than in L1 in terms of cognitive level, but not of channel capacity, which must be relearned in L2.

Research is needed to show if this picture is valid: even if it is not, current L2 learning concepts of hypothesis testing, sequence of development and interlanguage are incompatible with the new version of Universal Grammar.

In its language teaching implications, the model does not support the primacy of communication, but rather the humanistic trend emphasising the value of foreign language in personal growth as described by Stevick. Furthermore, meaningful input is not enough; instead, the teacher should establish when the learner is ready to learn a given structure and should provide 'triggering' examples, as in Nelson's approach.

86-5 Fortin, J. Claude (U. of Ottawa) and **Boucher, R. Claude**. Le stress chez le professeur de langues: les sources et les moyens de le surmonter. [Stress among language teachers: sources and solutions.] *Medium* (Ottawa), 10, 1 (1985), 51-8.

Emotional stress is defined and shown to be a dynamic state with either positive or negative effects, the latter leading to lassitude in chronic cases. Potential sources of stress in language teaching are identified, and ways of overcoming them are studied in a sample of teachers from the Canadian Forces School of Languages and the Ottawa Language Centre, who responded to a questionnaire. Supervision and assessment of results proved the greatest source of stress, while career considerations proved the least. The age group 33-45 was the most stressed and, among them, men were slightly more stressed than women. Both regarded the utility of the task and the nature of the clientèle as important sources of stress. The majority tried to overcome stress by looking at matters objectively; negative emotional solutions had the lowest approval. [Tables showing the pattern of responses are given.]

86-6 Lightbown, Patsy M. (Concordia U.) Great expectations: second-language acquisition research and classroom teaching. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 6, 2 (1985), 173-89.

The 'expectations' of the title refers to the expectations of teachers and researchers that research into L2 acquisition will have implications for what and how to teach, and to the expectations of teachers regarding themselves and their students. Second language studies are here grouped into three broad categories based on methodological differences: descriptive studies, hypothesis testing studies and experimental pedagogical studies. Some examples from each group are discussed.

A number of generalisations are made on the basis of the available research – all are supported by several different researchers working in different places and using different methods. (1) Adults and adolescents are able to 'acquire' a second language. (2) The learner creates a systematic interlanguage, with some errors similar to those of a child learning the language as L1, and some which are based on the learner's native language. (3) There are predictable sequences in acquisition; certain structures must be learned before others can be integrated. (4) Practice does not make perfect – learners forget forms they appear to have mastered. (5) Knowledge of a language rule does not equate with being able to use it communicatively. (6) Isolated explicit error correction is usually ineffective. (7) For most adults, acquisition 'fossilises' before native-like mastery of the target language has been achieved. (8) Native-like command of a second language cannot be achieved exclusively in the classroom after a few hours' study a week. (9) The learner's task is enormous because language is highly complex. (10) The learner's ability to understand meaningful language in a meaningful context exceeds his/her ability to comprehend decontextualised language and to produce language of comparable complexity and accuracy.

Many of the recommendations based on L2 research have been premature, overgeneralised, or intuitive, or all three. Research has not told us what to teach, or how to teach it – though some ideas of how *not* to teach have emerged. Research has

brought some explanatory support to 'communicative language teaching', even though the latter did not arise out of research findings. Knowledge of research findings should give teachers more realistic expectations about what can be accomplished; it should therefore be part of their education.

86-7 Low, Graham D. (U. of Hong Kong). Levels and labels in language teaching. *Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Hong Kong), **8** (1985), 1-11.

After a comparison and critique of the views of Anthony (1963) and Richards and Rogers (1982) about the levels on which language teaching should be analysed, the author suggests a slightly revised division into 'approach', 'design' (sub-divided), and 'procedure'.

At the level of design, two kinds of model are examined. In the 'Institutional' model, typified by Johnson (1981), objectives are drawn up and then courses designed as a separate activity. In a 'Designer' model such as Low (1979), feedback at any stage of the design process may change the product of an earlier stage, even the basic objectives. These models are irreconcilable, but both are defensible in certain conditions, and the author discusses when each might be preferred.

86-8 Porquier, Rémy. Réseaux discursifs et énonciatifs dans l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues. [Patterns of discourse and enunciation in the teaching/learning of languages.] *L/INX* (Paris), **11** (1984), 96-115.

Trévisé has drawn attention to the double speech situation characteristic of foreign language teaching: the 'primary situation' of the classroom, manifest for example in metalinguistic discussion, co-exists with a 'translated situation' arising from the topic of study or role-play. In fact there are not two but several basic patterns of discourse: the teacher is constantly changing 'masks', speaking now as a social individual, now as an authority on language, now as a fictional character and so on, and the learner must be similarly flexible. Discourse may shift suddenly from one pattern to another, as when a role-play is interrupted to discuss the gender of a word, and one would expect learners to lose the thread, but for the most part they can cope, and such shifts do not seem to make learning activities too complex or difficult. This ability to cope partly reflects the shared experiences and expectations of a given class, but also suggests more general rules of foreign-language interaction.

86-9 Trocmé, H. (IUT, La Rochelle, France). Brain research and human learning. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **73/5** (1985), 303-16.

The findings of brain research could have a direct bearing on FL learning. Teaching and learning techniques should, in effect, be made 'brain compatible'. Learner difficulties are rooted in an inability to activate sensorial, emotional and cognitive resources. Three-phase learning, comprising perception, processing and production, is discussed in terms of the following concerns: the tripartite brain, the interaction of the two hemispheres, and the organic indicators of language activity.

28 *Language learning and teaching*

Better cohesion between pedagogy and brain structure could be achieved by such methods as making instructional objectives clear to learners, providing a supportive, non-threatening, multi-dimensional teaching environment, and allowing pauses in teaching time for learning to occur. Most importantly, the learner must be perceived as a unique individual.

86–10 Van der Tuin, P. and others. (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen). Kognitieve stijlaspekten en vreemdetaalprestatie. [Aspects of cognitive style and performance in a foreign language.] *Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen* (Amsterdam), **20**, 3 (1984), 91–101.

This paper describes work in progress but not yet completed, on the relationship between language ability and various aspects of cognitive style. It is suggested that there might be a relationship between grammatical ability and speech skills on the one hand, and, on the other hand, field-dependency, levels of automaticity, sensitivity to negative interference and divergent thinking. These cognitive styles and the tests used to assess them are discussed. Also discussed is a set of tests developed in order to measure linguistic skills. The article concludes by speculating on the likelihood of finding a relationship between cognitive style and language ability as measured by these tests, and the implications of such an outcome for teaching languages.

PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

86–11 Bialystok, Ellen (York U., Ontario) and **Sharwood Smith, Michael** (U. of Utrecht). Interlanguage is not a state of mind: an evaluation of the construct for second-language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **6**, 2 (1985), 101–17.

Explanations of learner performance should be related to two separate components, namely the way the language system is represented in the mind – not (necessarily) as conscious knowledge, but as competence of implicit knowledge – and the processing system for controlling that knowledge during performance. An interlanguage is a system in which one or both these components are less advanced than in a native speaker's system.

The model is especially useful for explaining variability. 'Cognitive' or 'diachronic' variability, reflecting development in the knowledge component, is the kind documented by Brown in first-language learners. 'Synchronic' or 'control' variability reflects not the amount of knowledge but the psycholinguistic conditions under which it may be demonstrated. Learner performance may be described by variable and categorical rules as in Labov's work, with the difference that the independent variables relate not only to levels of formality but also to the cognitive demands of situations: thus a learner might demonstrate formal control of a given structure, but only for certain discourse functions. An empirical study (Bialystok, 1983) confirmed this, and showed that formal and communicative mastery of forms were not only relatively distinct but also systematically ordered. Learner strategies can also be divided into knowledge-based and control-based types.

86-12 Bullard, Nick (Cavilam, Vichy, France). Word-based perception: a handicap in second language acquisition? *ELT Journal* (London), **39**, 1 (1985), 28-32.

A group of proficient speakers of a second language were tested in their ability to identify individual words excised from spoken discourse. Subjects were tested in both their native language and their second language, and it was found that on average they were more proficient in their second language than their first. It would appear that the acquisition of a second language involves a more word-based approach than that of the first language, and that despite, or even because of, this word-level proficiency, overall comprehension is less good in the second language.

Learners should be made aware of the problem; teachers should make provision for the development of a global approach.

86-13 d'Anglejan, Alison and Renaud, Claude (U. of Montreal). Learner characteristics and second language acquisition: A multivariate study of adult immigrants and some thoughts on methodology. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **35**, 1 (1985), 1-19.

The study examined the relationship between learner characteristics and achievement in French as a second language in a sample of 391 adult immigrants completing a 900-hour course of classroom instruction in Montreal. A multivariate analysis of variance was used to assess the relative contribution of nine learner variables to individual differences in performance on an FSL achievement test. Teachers' evaluations of subjects as 'good learners' or 'poor learners' served as the dependent variable in a multivariate ANOVA comparing the two groups. Results of the various analyses indicated that subjects who have more schooling, a higher degree of nonverbal reasoning ability, make greater use of French outside the classroom, are more competent in English, and display a greater degree of field independence are more likely to benefit from formal language instruction. Higher levels of illiteracy and classroom anxiety, coupled with greater age, were related to learning difficulties. The paper underlines the importance of multivariate data analysis techniques and proposes the use of graphical data analysis techniques for researchers exploring multivariate data sets with small groups of subjects.

86-14 Ellis, Rod (Ealing Coll. of Higher Ed.) Sources of variability in interlanguage. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **6**, 2 (1985), 118-31.

Ways in which interlanguage can be described as a series of variable systems are explored. This is an accurate characterisation if due recognition is given to functional as well as formal development. Variability is not just a concomitant of development, but one of the mechanisms by which it takes place.

Horizontal variability is of two basic types: systematic and non-systematic. Systematic variability can be described by relating the occurrence of specific formal features to either situational or contextual factors. However, it is the non-systematic variation that is the key to understanding the vertical dimensions of interlanguage. Interlanguage involves at least three essential processes: (1) the internalisation of new

30 *Language learning and teaching*

linguistic forms; (2) the progressive organisation of form-function relationships; (3) the elimination of redundant forms. (1) is responsible for non-systematic variability, (2) and (3) for resolving the problems which this creates. The existence of non-systematic variability therefore is a necessary condition for continual development. Whereas a theory of second-language acquisition based on systematic learner variability (e.g. Tarone's capability model) talks of the 'spread' of forms from one style to another, a theory of second-language acquisition based on non-systematic variation helps to explain how the acquisition of the vernacular style takes place directly. This explanation is, of course, not specific to interlanguage: it also accounts for the creole continuum. The resolution of non-systematic variability underlies all language change.

86-15 Groot, P. J. M. (U. of Utrecht). Moedertaalinterferentie bij het luisteren in een vreemde taal. [Mother tongue interference in listening in a foreign language.] *Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen* (Amsterdam), 20, 3 (1984), 29-38.

This paper consists of an informal report of a study in which Dutch children performed a listening test in English, French or German, and translations of these tests in Dutch. Scores in the Dutch versions of the tests were considerably higher than the foreign language versions, but there was a high level of correlation between scores in Dutch and scores in the other languages. Listening skills in Dutch, however, correlate more highly with listening skills in German than they do with either English or French. The obvious explanation for this finding is that typological similarity between languages has a facilitating effect on the transfer of listening skills between an L1 and various different L2s. Although this idea is a commonplace one as far as productive skills are concerned, it does not appear to have been applied to transfer or receptive skills.

86-16 Merkt, Gérard. (U. of Neuchâtel). Phénomènes de régression de la compétence linguistique dans l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde en situation scolaire. [Loss of linguistic competence in second language learning in schools.] *Bulletin CILA* (Neuchâtel), 41 (1985), 85-95.

Why do learners so often forget so much of what they have been taught and have apparently understood and mastered? Part of the answer lies in the nature of human memory. Short term memory sifts incoming information and eliminates what is superfluous. Only what is meaningful and significant is passed to the long-term memory where, if it is not recalled, it is ultimately lost. Furthermore, only when information is stored within a solid frame of reference is it likely to be retained. Factors in the school situation itself also contribute to learning loss. The day is fragmented; many different subjects have to be studied and many of them require learning techniques different from those needed for language learning. Also the allocation of three or four hours a week gives too little time for revision and reinforcement if the syllabus is to be covered.

To remedy language loss, the linear concept of progress in school text-books must

be abandoned. New structures must not be taught in isolation but with emphasis on their interdependence and place in the structure of the language as a whole.

86-17 Nwokah Eva (U. of Notre Dame). Simultaneous and sequential language acquisition in Nigerian children. *First Language* (Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks), **5**, 1 (1984), 57-73.

This paper looks at the acquisition of a localised variety of English – ‘Educated Nigerian English’ – in three groups of 3-year-old children before and after one nursery school year. The groups consisted of those acquiring English first (L1), those acquiring English and Igbo simultaneously (L1a + L1b) and those acquiring English (L2) after Igbo. An analysis of the errors in English revealed that while all groups showed developmental errors, those acquiring two languages simultaneously showed significantly more unique errors. There were no clear instances of unacceptable interference errors from Igbo. It is argued that this supports Dulay & Burt’s ‘identity’ hypothesis.

86-18 O’Malley, Michael J. and others (InterAmerica Research Associates Rosslyn, Va). Learning strategies used by beginning and intermediate ESL students. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **35**, 1 (1985), 21-46.

This study was designed (a) to identify the range, type, and frequency of learning strategy use by beginning and intermediate level ESL students and (b) to determine the types of language tasks with which the strategies tend to be associated. Students at beginning and intermediate levels in English proficiency were interviewed in small groups to determine the strategies used to assist in learning each of a number of language tasks: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, following directions, listening, making a brief presentation in class, social communication, and functional communication (e.g. applying for a job). ESL teachers and other teachers of students with limited proficiency in English were interviewed to detect their familiarity with student use of strategies, and to determine whether or not they introduced strategies to their students during instruction. Findings indicated that (1) strategies could be classified into three broad categories—metacognitive, cognitive, and social mediating strategies, (2) students tended to use strategies most often with less complex language tasks, (3) strategies students used most often tended to require little cognitive processing of the learning materials, and (4) teachers were generally unaware of students’ strategies and rarely introduced strategies while teaching.

86-19 Paribakht, Tahereh (U. of Ottawa). Strategic competence and language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **6**, 2 (1985), 132-46.

Three groups of 20 subjects, two of Persian ESL students (intermediate/advanced) and one of native speakers of English, were required to communicate 20 single lexical items in English without mentioning the target word. To analyse the results, a taxonomy of communication strategies was devised, the main divisions being: (a) linguistic approach (semantic contiguity, circumlocution, metalanguage); (b) contextual approach (linguistic context, L2 idioms, L1 idioms, idiomatic transfer); (c)

32 *Language learning and teaching*

conceptual approach (demonstration, exemplification, metonymy); and (d) mime (replacing or accompanying verbal output).

All three groups adopted basically the same range of strategies, but there were differences in frequency: notably, both learner groups used mime more than native speakers, and the intermediate learners used the linguistic approach less and the conceptual approach more than the other groups. In general, the advanced learners were in mid-position between the other groups in terms of strategy use, suggesting that learner behaviour in this respect is transitional and dynamic. It is further suggested that strategic competence is similar at all learner levels (hence similar range of strategies), but differentially useful as it must interact with other knowledge (hence different frequencies).

86–20 Politzer, Robert L. (Stanford U.) and **McGroarty, Mary** (U. of California, Los Angeles). An exploratory study of learning behaviours and their relationship to gains in linguistic and communicative competence. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **19**, 1 (1985), 103–23.

A questionnaire relating to presumed good learning behaviours was administered to 37 students enrolled in an eight-week intensive course in English as a second language in preparation for graduate study in the United States. The answers to the self-report questionnaire were classified according to the students' cultural background (Asian v. Hispanic) and field of specialisation (professional engineering/science v. social science/humanities) and related to gains on four English language proficiency measures: linguistic competence, auditory comprehension, overall oral proficiency and communicative competence, conceptualised here primarily as the ability to convey information. Analyses indicated that while the Asian subjects engaged in fewer of the assumed 'good' learning behaviours than the Hispanics, they tended to make greater gains in linguistic competence and communicative competence. On the other hand, the Hispanic students made more progress in overall oral proficiency and in auditory comprehension. Examination of the relationships between specific behaviours and second language learning gains revealed an interesting split: some behaviours were associated with conscious learning, while others were related to acquisition and gains in general communicative competence. Results indicate that caution in prescribing good learning behaviours is warranted. Further research is needed to explain which behaviours are helpful for learners at various levels and to relate these behaviours to current second language learning theories.

86–21 Reiss, Mary-Ann (West Chester U., Pa). The good language learner: another look. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **41**, 3 (1985), 511–23.

In order to establish some empirical data concerning strategies and techniques used by successful language learners, the author designed two questionnaires. The following strategies were tested: guessing, motivation to communicate, attending to form, practising, monitoring, attending to meaning and mnemonics. In addition two personality variables – extroversion/introversion and high/low tolerance of am-

biguity – were considered. These personality variables and strategies were based upon previous research done by Stern and Rubin. Ninety-eight students completed a long questionnaire. Of these, thirty-eight had been chosen because they had been specifically labelled 'good' language learners by their professors. This group was interviewed and was also given a short questionnaire. The results showed that the successful language learner has a higher than average tolerance of ambiguity. Contrary to studies done previously, the successful language learner is not necessarily uninhibited. The strategies used most frequently by good language learners in order of importance are: monitoring which often involves 'silent speaking', attending to form and meaning, guessing, practising, motivation to communicate and mnemonics.

86-22 Rintell, Ellen M. (U. of Houston and U. of Massachusetts). But how did you FEEL about that?: the learner's perception of emotion in speech. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 5, 3 (1984), 255-64.

Groups of 19 native English speakers and 127 foreign students were played audiotapes of 11 conversations each intended to illustrate one of the emotions pleasure, anger, depression, anxiety, guilt and disgust, and asked to identify the emotion and rate its intensity. Intended cues were semantic content, situations described and intonation.

Correct identification percentages (native speaker figure first, foreign student second) were disgust 89, 53; pleasure 84.2, 59; depression 73.7, 37; anxiety 73.7, 10; guilt 68.4, 11.8; anger 68.4, 25. Spanish and Arabic speakers did consistently better than Chinese, but the strongest effect for learners was that of language proficiency: mean scores were beginner: 3.97; intermediate 5.99; advanced: 6.95. There was no significant effect for age or sex. A lack of differences in intensity ratings is attributed to problems of experimental design.

86-23 Selinker, Larry (U. of Michigan) and **Douglas, Dan** (Wayne State U.). Wrestling with 'context' in interlanguage theory. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 6, 2 (1985), 190-204.

A Mexican engineering student was video-recorded in two English-language interviews, discussing firstly his specialist subject with a male 'figure of authority', secondly personal topics with a female friend. The interviews were played back to the participants and their comments invited. When comparable problems – interviewer using wrong term, or student forgetting English word – arose in the two interviews, the student used quite different repair strategies. Furthermore, his general demeanour was passive and emotionless in the first case, full of expression, gesture and movement in the second. Such differences may be important for the study of interlanguage in Language for Specific Purposes.

More generally, it is suggested that language users create discourse domains, sometimes highly personal, and that processes such as language transfer, fossilisation, backsliding and avoidance do not occur globally but rather differentially within these domains. Research is therefore needed in a new area: 'acquisition in a specific-purpose context'.

86–24 Skinner, David C. (Hispanic Training Institute, Santa Monica, CA) Access to meaning: the anatomy of the language/learning connection. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 6, 2 (1985), 97–116.

The author illustrates how the theories of Piaget, Chomsky, Vygotsky and Cummins may be integrated into a single, unified model of the interactions and connections between and among language, learning and language proficiency. The model then serves as an analytical tool for examining the mutual interdependencies of language, language proficiency and learning. The model provides a new perspective that lends further theoretical confirmation to Cummins' ideas on language proficiency.

Part I emphasises the implications of this new construct for primary language acquisition and for learning through use of one's primary language. This treatment establishes a conceptual framework for the examination, in Part II, of second language acquisition; and for a more rigorous evaluation of various second language acquisition methods and their impact on learning. The language/learning anatomy portrayed by the anatomical model provides the key prerequisite for such investigations.

The stress placed here upon primary language acquisition and learning reflects the view that one cannot address second language acquisition issues properly without first articulating the anatomy and dynamics of the primary process. An important result of the articulations expressed in the model is a clearer view of how learning and language acquisition function together as different aspects of a whole process, rather than as separate and distinct processes that may be treated in isolation. [Part II will be published in the next issue.]

86–25 White, Lydia Is there a 'logical problem' of second language acquisition? *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), 2, 2 (1985), 29–41.

Arguments for universal grammar (UG) in generative theory are based on the so-called 'logical problem of language acquisition'. The nature of the problem becomes apparent when we consider the end product of the acquisition process and compare this to the input data, which do not seem sufficiently rich or precise to allow the learner to work out all the complexities of the adult grammar, unless one assumes the availability of certain innate principles (UG). This orientation is also useful in considering second language acquisition. If we focus on the successful second language (L2) learner, it would appear that he or she will also achieve complex knowledge of the L2 which goes well beyond the input. This suggests that UG might have a role to play in L2 acquisition as well, and raises the question of whether the way that UG has operated in the L1 has any effects in L2 acquisition. Current L2 research that presupposes a UG framework is briefly reviewed and some directions for further research are made.

RESEARCH METHODS

86–26 Frölich, Maria (Ontario Inst. for Studies in Ed.) **and others.** Differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington DC), **19**, 1 (1985), 27–57.

This article reports on the results of a study which was intended to validate an observation instrument (the COLT scheme) designed to capture differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classroom interaction in a variety of settings. Thirteen classes in four different L2 programmes (Core French, ESL, Extended French and French Immersion) were observed. The observation scheme used in the study contained categories derived from theories of communicative competence, from the literature on communicative language teaching, and from research in first and second language acquisition, which suggests a number of factors thought to influence the language learning process. These observation categories include features of communication typical of classroom interaction as well as of ‘natural’ language outside the classroom.

An analysis of the observation data revealed differences in the communicative orientation of the four types of classrooms. Core French was found to be the least ‘communicative’, then ESL, then Extended French, with Immersion the most communicative. The main aim of the study was, however, not to evaluate the different types of programme so much as to validate the COLT scheme.

86–27 MacWhinney, Brian (Carnegie-Mellon U.) **and Snow, Catherine** (Harvard U.) The child language data exchange system. *Journal of Child Language* (Cambridge), **12**, 2 (1985), 271–96.

The study of language acquisition underwent a major revolution in the late 1950s as a result of the dissemination of technology permitting high-quality tape-recording of children in the family setting. This new technology led to major breakthroughs in the quality of both data and theory. The field is now at the threshold of a possible second major breakthrough stimulated by the dissemination of personal computing. Researchers are now able to transcribe tape-recorded data into computer files. With this new medium it is easy to conduct global searches for word combinations across collections of files. It is also possible to enter new codings of the basic text line. Because of the speed and accuracy with which computer files can be copied, it is now much easier to share data between researchers. To foster this sharing of computerised data, a group of child language researchers has established the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES). This article details the formation of the CHILDES, the governance of the system, the nature of the database, the shape of the coding conventions, and the types of computer programs being developed.

86–28 Spada, Nina M. Effects of informal contact on classroom learners’ L2 proficiency: a review of five studies. *TESL Canada Journal* (Toronto), **2**, 2 (1985), 51–62.

In this paper, the findings of studies investigating the effects of informal contact on adult classroom learners’ second language abilities are discussed. This involves a close

36 *Language learning and teaching*

examination of five of these studies in terms of differences in: (1) type of contact, (2) type of measurement instruments, (3) type of learner, (4) differences in quantitative measures of contact, (5) intensity and duration of instruction, (6) interactions between type of instruction and contact.

Factors which might have contributed to the finding that informal contact did not lead to increased proficiency in four of the five studies reviewed include the use of proficiency instruments which may not have been sensitive enough to the kinds of linguistic knowledge which can be obtained outside the classroom setting, lack of information regarding qualitative aspects of learners' contact, the high intensity and relatively short duration of instruction, the possibility that individual differences among learners contributed to variation in amount of contact, and the absence of statistical procedures to measure possible effects of the interaction between contact and instructional variation on L2 proficiency. Differences inherent in the design of the studies combined with potential variations with respect to a number of intervening variables make it difficult not only to interpret the findings of one study, but also to make valid cross-study comparisons.

ERROR/CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

86-29 Ciliberti, Anna (U. of Rome). I modali di 'Volition' e di 'Prediction': analisi contrastiva con l'italiano e considerazione didattiche. [Modals of volition and prediction – a contrastive analysis with Italian and implications for teaching.] *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), **16**, 2/3 (1984), 1-34.

Shall and *will* are to be included with the modal auxiliaries and *be going to* may be regarded as a 'quasi-modal'. Various models explaining the characteristics of these forms and their use are examined. English examples are contrasted with Italian usage and analysed. The social situation determines the interpretation of modals of volition and prediction; stress and intonation are important indicators of intention in speech. It is not possible to give rules for every conceivable situation but a communicative methodology can help to develop awareness of, and sensitivity to, social context and the language appropriate to it. [Examples.]

86-30 Khalil, Aziz (Bethlehem U.) Communicative error evaluation: native speakers' evaluation and interpretation of written errors of Arab EFL learners. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **19**, 2 (1985), 335-51.

The study reported here attempted to evaluate the communicative effect on native speakers of a selected sample of grammatical and semantic errors in written English. Two types of measures were used: evaluation (intelligibility and naturalness judgments) and interpretation. The effects of error type (grammatical/semantic) and immediate linguistic context (in and out of context) on each of these measures were determined. An attempt was made to address some of the methodological weaknesses of the majority of such studies to date. Semantically deviant utterances were judged to be less intelligible and interpretable than were grammatically deviant utterances. Context did not influence native speakers' ability to interpret the writer's intent. Most

important, there was no association between native speaker's judgments on the two measures of intelligibility and interpretation (comprehension). This result raises questions about the basis of intelligibility judgments, since they do not appear to reflect native speakers' actual comprehension of the meaning intended by the writer. Rather, they appear to indicate the extent to which native speakers think they understand the meaning of the deviant utterances. The implications of these results for classroom teaching and future research on communicative error evaluation are discussed.

86–31 Paul, Peter (Monash U., Australia). The use of trivalent verbs of giving by advanced learners of English. *JRAL* (Heidelberg), **23**, 2 (1985), 89–110.

16 immigrants to Australia and 30 students of a Hong Kong English-medium school were given two tests involving use of 24 English verbs, all with the semantic feature 'give', in correct syntactic frameworks. Some indication of the required verb pattern was given in the second test but not the first, thus:

TEST 1 EXAMPLE: granted yesterday; the university, Mary; the scholarship

TEST 2 EXAMPLE: (a scholarship – Mary): The university granted

Furthermore, the first test required only one sentence, the second asked students to write 'as many different sentences as possible'.

Mistakes were classified as 'errors', due to absence of adequate verb pattern information, and 'contraventions', patterns used in spite of information on their unacceptability. For both groups, contraventions occurred for more verbs and more frequently than errors. To aid understanding of mistakes, the 24 verbs were divided into 5 classes on the basis of allowable syntactic patterns. Many mistakes involved using the dominant pattern, that of 'give' (in two senses) and 10 other verbs, with one of the 12 verbs in other classes.

TESTING

86–32 Babcock, Arthur (U. of Southern California). Proficiency testing in French at the University of Southern California. *French Review* (Baltimore Md), **58**, 3 (1985), 403–10.

A proficiency test for students of French is described and its rationale explained. An examination was needed showing level of achievement in French as distinct from coursework and it was decided to have a reading comprehension test accompanied by a conversation test.

The conversation test was a new and encouraging departure based on magazine pictures, which candidates had to describe to three separate and successive assessors. They were given a grading on a ten-point scale for global conversational proficiency and the interrator reliability coefficient proved very high (0.815 to 0.941). Good results were also achieved with the reading test and both together show improved statistics on each successive administration. It not only provides an accurate measure of French proficiency but also has a beneficial washback effect on teaching and learning, encouraging concentration on the most worthwhile skills.

85–33 Bensoussan, Marsha and others (U. of Haifa) The effect of dictionary usage on EFL test performance compared with student and teacher attitudes and expectations. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Birmingham) **2**, 2 (1984), 262–76.

This paper reports the results of three studies, designed to discover whether the use or non-use of dictionaries had an effect on students' performance on EFL reading tests. The general conclusion is that, when given the choice, students preferred to use bilingual dictionaries, but that the use of dictionaries had no significant effect on students' test scores. The results of a questionnaire administered to both students and teachers to ascertain dictionary use and preferences is also reported. The better students preferred not to use a dictionary in a test.

86–34 de Jong, John H. A. L. (National Institute of Educational Measurement, Cito, Arnhem). Listening, a single trait in first and second language learning. *Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen* (Amsterdam), **20**, 3 (1984), 66–79.

Research on language universals suggests that a single principle may underlie both first and subsequent language acquisition. A single trait also seems to underlie both native and non-native performance on a listening comprehension test described here. The test uses live radio recordings in English cut into samples lasting about 20 seconds each and containing a deletion. Testees listen to the tape once and have to supply the deletion from two options.

The trait being measured was an ability to understand the foreign language like comparable native speakers and the hypothesis was that this trait discriminates, not only among foreign learners, but also, provided the test is not too easy for them, among native speakers. The test had 59 items and was carried out with two groups totalling 14 native speakers and one group of 575 Dutch learners of English. The results are presented and analysed both on the Rasch one-parameter latent trait model, and by classical test theory. A comparison of scores on the 40 best items and 19 rejected items is made, and different traits and relationships are revealed between the three groups tested, including factors that may be accounted for by age, intelligence and knowledge of the world. Universals and language transfer may operate at the receptive and productive level respectively, encouraging the primacy of reception in teaching.

86–35 Fischer, William B. (Portland State U.). Not just lip service: systematic oral testing in a first-year college German program. *Die Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa) **17**, 2 (1984), 225–39.

For five years Portland State University has been carrying out oral tests every two weeks with students on introductory German courses, using the ACTFL/ETS Provisional Proficiency Guidelines and the Interagency Language Roundtable interview model of oral proficiency testing, in a modified form, to establish the floor level of students as they pass through the course. Regular tests of listening and reading comprehension will subsequently be introduced. Oral examiners are trained to give short and sympathetic interviews. Advice on oral examining is given based on their experience. The test content and procedures are described and illustrated. Results tend to confirm the value of the ILR interview model and diminish the paperwork involved in other forms of testing.

86-36 Friel, Michael (U. of Sana'a, Sana'a, Yemen Arab Republic). The Discourse Co-operation Test. *System* (Oxford), 12 3 (1984), 251-62.

The Discourse Co-operation Test (DisCoTest) relies on the maxims of successful conversation laid down by Grice as his Co-operative Principle and on the maxims of 'antecedence' and 'lexical specificity' derived by others from his work.

The test is a series of oral stimuli sequenced so as to be unpredictable to the testee but constant across testees. Five parallel dialogues all deriving from the same opening remark are drawn up and illustrated. They each consist of five exchanges between tester and testee and each time the tests speaks he flouts one of the above maxims, forcing the testee to implicate successfully in order to carry on the conversation. Thus, using multiple choice procedure, it probes 'the indirect utilisation of utterances' in genuine communication. It has been successfully used in Yemen and gave K-R reliability coefficients of 0.82 and 0.81. It is well suited to the language laboratory and to training in conversational awareness but needs further validity and reliability studies.

86-37 Henning, Grant (U. of California, Los Angeles). Advantages of latent trait measurement in language testing. *Language Testing* (London), 1, 2 (1984), 123-33.

The practical advantages of latent trait measurement techniques, in this case centring on the Rasche one-parameter linguistic model, are discussed in relation to the alleged shortcomings of classical measurement theory, which is primarily concerned with identifying difficulty, variance, discriminability and validity. A summary of classical and latent trait methods is provided; classical approaches evince problems in generalising test scores beyond the sample of persons tested and the item corpus included in the test.

Both approaches are used to scrutinise a 48-item ESL reading test, which is in turn part of a diagnostic battery administered at North Texas State University [tabularised data]. The Rasch model was chosen instead of either the Birnbaum two or three parameter models because it can be used with samples of 100 or less, and required no computer data processing. The results seem to show that latent trait measurement is a more powerful analytical tool than any classical method, even identifying, for example, those candidates for whom test scores may be invalid. Advantages for test developers are enumerated, including the facilitation of alternative test construction.

86-38 Hudson, Thom and Lynch, Brian (U. of California, Los Angeles). A criterion-referenced measurement approach to ESL achievement testing. *Language Testing* (London), 1, 2 (1984), 171-201.

The authors discuss the divergent merits of norm-referenced (NRM) versus criterion-referenced measurement (CRM) against the specific background of the final examinations in the UCLA ESL service courses. Whereas NRM highlights student differences, giving a broad, fairly imprecise view of relative standing, CRM adduces a more descriptive picture, measuring absolute standing against defined instructional goals or sets of skills. CRM, particularly in achievement testing

40 *Language learning and teaching*

contexts, allows more explicit inferences to be made about the success of teaching programmes.

Details of the UCLA testing situation and the attendant constraints are followed by general consideration of CRM/NRM techniques, with reference to item, reliability, and validity analysis. Development of the UCLA test battery is described, as is the influence of the university's Testing Project, of which this article is a product.

Subsequent CRM study [tabular data] identified items which discriminated well between masters/non-masters of particular linguistic skills, suggested possible methods of ensuring test consistency, and underscored a more direct feedback relationship between testing and teaching than could be identified by using NRM. The research conclusions are only tentative, however.

86-39 Larson, Jerry W. and Madsen, Harold S. (Brigham Young U.) Computerised adaptive language testing: moving beyond computer-assisted testing. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), 2, 3 (1985), 32-6.

Computerised Adaptive Language Tests (CALT) have the characteristic of adjusting to the ability level of the person taking the test. Such a facility is needed since item response theory has demonstrated that the most precise measurement of a person's proficiency is one derived from items at or near one's level of ability. Rasch analysis and other Latent Trait procedures attempt to capture an invariable 'yardstick' that measures student ability in relation to item difficulty. This is now made possible by CALT, and one of the software programs for analysing test results on the Rasch model is described, *viz* Microscale PlusTM. It can generate results tables portraying item difficulty and student ability, and maps and diagrams portraying each in relation to the other. It facilitates the linking of items at the same level of difficulty and the creation of calibrated item banks. The computer can administer the test and adjust questions to the candidates' ability level, thus getting a more precise measurement than by conventional means.

86-40 Perkins, Kyle and Jones, Barbara (Southern Illinois U.) Measuring passage contribution in ESL reading comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 19, 1 (1985), 137-53.

Reading comprehension items are valid to the extent that they measure what subjects have understood of the stimulus material. This article reports an empirical analysis of two administrations of two reading tests: the first time, without the reading passages, and the second time, with the passages. Data from the two administrations were used to calculate the passage dependency of each test, that is, the extent to which questions can be answered without reading the texts upon which the questions are based. The two tests in this research, *Davis Reading Test* (Davis and Davis, 1956) and *Cooperative English Tests* (Educational Testing Service, 1960), exhibited little passage dependency. The stability of item types across the two presentation conditions is discussed, and a hierarchy of item-type difficulty is established using latent trait measurement logits of difficulty. The results of this study suggest that classroom

teachers should examine commercially available tests carefully for passage dependency. Furthermore, in constructing reading tests, teachers should avoid writing items that test general knowledge. Instead, teachers should strive to write items that test memory organisation and that reveal whether or not inferences have been drawn.

86-41 Reschke, Claus (U. of Houston). Oral proficiency testing: meeting a variety of needs. *Die Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa) **17**, 2 (1984), 265-78.

The rationale of language proficiency testing is explained against the background of initiatives by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) which led to the ACTFL/ETS test. Its use at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional levels in the USA is explained and various types of oral proficiency tests reviewed, illustrated and criticised.

Then follows a description of the oral proficiency test of the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS), which trains opera singers to speak German at a summer school in Austria. It is based on the Foreign Service Institute Oral Interview Technique and Evaluation Procedure but two interviewers are used, to increase objectivity. In 1980-84 1000 students were tested and the test proved to be an accurate and reliable predictor, antedating but eventually to be superseded by the ACTFL/ETS test. Rating scales, levels and descriptors are quoted.

86-42 Schwibbe, Gudrun and others. Zur Erfa barkeit fremdsprachlicher Kompetenz mittels kontentanalytischer Indikatoren. [Evaluating foreign language competence using content - analytic indicators] *Die Neueren Sprachen* Frankfurt am Main), **84**, 2 (1985), 174-90.

The study in question discusses the inadequacies of subjective evaluations of language performance in essay writing and suggests instead an objective, content - analytic procedure. This procedure consists of parameters which record word redundancy, word length and word fluency, the abstractness and the adjective-verb ratio as well as the error count. The validity tests prove that this procedure is sensitive to the dichotomy of foreign vs. native language competence as measured by the DELTA language test. The advantages of this procedure with respect to economy, objectivity and reliability are evident.

86-43 Simmonds, Paul (Multicultural Support Service, Birmingham). A survey of English language examinations. *ELT Journal* (London), **39**, 1 (1985), 33-42.

The examinations of 14 bodies (2 USA and 12 British) aiming to test *general* English are impressionistically compared. They are shown to examine differentially the various skills, and to serve different ends and constituencies of candidates. Some 18 examinations cover listening, speaking and writing, and 17 of these test reading also. Grids show the spread of coverage and the test elements are evaluated against each other and against current testing and teaching notions. They are shown to fall into two groups: 'traditional' and 'communicative'. While this does not imply the superiority of one over the other, the tests that place most emphasis on meaning and

42 *Language learning and teaching*

the processing of information in a meaningful context are tentatively considered better than the rest, e.g. RSA/CUEFL and ARELS/PRELIM. The conclusions are based only on stimulus and question material, not on candidate response data.

86-44 Skehan, Peter (Inst. of Ed., London). Issues in the testing of English for Specific Purposes. *Language Testing* (London), 1, 2 (1984), 202-20.

Comparison is made between tests based on Oller's unitary competence hypothesis (UCH) and ESP tests deriving from the Munby model such as the British Council's English Language Testing Service (ELTS). While the strong form of the UCH has now been abandoned, it has led, because of the empirical research and testing done with it, to a widely accepted weaker version where a general factor is seen to coexist with more specific 'skills'.

By contrast, ESP testing has relied on an intuitively selected range of skills very much open to challenge by empirical research and too arbitrary and complex for most practical purposes. While the search for criterion-referencing is attractive, it is only feasible when very narrowly defined jobs are to be tested. The best language testers can hope for is 'criterion-related' testing, so the requirement now is either for the development of appropriate norm-referenced tests or the systematic use of criterion-related validity.

86-45 Smith, Karen L. (U. of Arizona). The USC proficiency-based program in foreign language instruction: methods and their effects on achievement and motivation. *Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), 17, 2 (1984), 240-54.

This describes a test in foreign languages given at the University of Southern California after 200 hours (or 3 semesters) of study, and aimed at concentrating the weight of teaching and learning on reading and oral proficiency, counteracting the influence of the multiple choice structure tests of the past. It has resulted in better achievement in Spanish and lower dropout rates through the semesters. The conversation test is an interview and is evaluated on a ten-point global rating scale, which ranks students on the degree of communication achieved. The FSI/ACTFL/ETS scale was considered and abandoned for various practical reasons. The reading test is a multiple-choice test of general reading comprehension. The internal timetabling required to accommodate this shift in emphasis, and the teaching needed for the reading test, are described. Since the test stress communicative skills, merely 'teaching the test' will now be beneficial.

86-46 Spurling, Steven (Coll. of Marin) and **Ilyin, Donna** (Alemany Community Coll.) The impact of learner variables on language test performance. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 19, 2 (1985), 283-301.

Research has shown that learner variables such as age, language background, field of study, and educational background have an impact on non-native speakers' scores on language tests. However, does this impact reflect a natural advantage of one group over another, or is it indicative of test favouritism or test bias? This article looks at how the learner variables of age, sex, language background, high school graduation

status, and length of stay in the United States affect performance on six language tests: two cloze tests, a reading test, a structure test, and two listening tests. A multiple regression approach to the problem, posed by analysis of variance, was taken to determine (1) the amount of variance accounted for by each of the learner variables on all tests combined and on each test individually and (2) the interaction of variables with test type. Such an interaction would be evidence of either test favoritism or test bias. It was found that age, language background, and high school graduation status accounted for small but significant amounts of variance on the tests. Furthermore, there was an interaction between the test and learner variables. Therefore, both test advantage and test favouritism/bias were found.

86-47 Heras, R. and Regan, M. (Adult Migrant Education Service, New South Wales). A SGAV approach to individualisation, autonomy and contextualisation through macrosimulation. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Paris), **73/5** (1985), 95-116.

A programme developed at an Adult Migrant Education Centre is described. The aim was to use macrosimulation to encourage learner autonomy and greater individualisation within an authentic Australian context. The needs of the learners were assessed by means of a questionnaire, group discussion and informal interviews. The prime motivation was to continue education or to get a job. A list of specific functional objectives was compiled.

A television series 'A Country Practice' about an Australian family with a Down's Syndrome child was used as prior input, together with a current affairs programme on the same theme. A broad range of authentic documents and 'props' was collected. The students chose an Australian town for the setting of their simulation and created their own roles, depending on their interests and motivations. As the simulation progressed, the students gained in confidence. The triggering activity to begin the simulation was the election of a mayor. Residents kept a diary to record the previous day's happenings, and to express their feelings about them. The diaries were useful feedback for the teachers and showed the learners what language tasks they had learned. Regular times were set aside for correction and remediation, including the use of video. By the end of the course, all the students felt more confident in being able to meet their long-term goals. Macrosimulation was felt to offer greater opportunities for individualisation than any other methods. It encourages learner autonomy and self-evaluation.

TEACHING METHODS

86-48 Anne H. Anderson and others (U. of Edinburgh). Hearer-effects on speaker performances: the influence of the hearer on speakers' effectiveness in oral communication tasks. *First Language* (Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks), **5, 1** (1984), 23-40.

Experiments were conducted to investigate the oral communication skills of 14 to 16 year-olds and to discover conditions which elicit the best spoken performances.

44 *Language learning and teaching*

Several conditions were tested, using instructional tasks of different levels of difficulty with speakers of various academic abilities. The performances were scored objectively, using as a criterion the amount of relevant information included by speakers in their instructions. The presence of a hearer and experiencing of the tasks in ascending order of difficulty both resulted in better spoken performances. Prior experience in the hearer's role proved particularly beneficial in sensitizing speakers to their hearer's information requirements. From these results simple training techniques are outlined for eliciting competent spoken performances in schools.

86–49 Andrews, Stephen. Interaction activities 1 – the practice stage. *Ziel-sprache Englisch* (Munich, FGR), 13, 2 (1983), 1–6. Interaction activities 2 – the free stage. *Ibid.*, 13, 3 (1983), 14–20.

The aim of these articles is to provide practical help for teachers wishing to introduce communicative activities in their lessons. Real classroom communication is distinguished from language-like behaviour, particularly when speaking occurs at the expense of listening, or when students have no genuine reason to transmit messages to one another.

The specific characteristics of the practice and free stages in a lesson are outlined, as are interaction activities such as communicative pattern drills, deductive puzzles, transactional role-plays, games, sequencing tasks and jigsaw reading/listening. Bridging opinion and information gaps is seen as a prime way of generating realistic interaction, including the procedural language which must accompany it. The teacher must choose communicative tasks with care, because student interests, abilities and attitudes need to be taken into account.

86–50 Baume, Georges J. R. Computer-assisted language learning: a pilot experiment. *Modern Languages* (London), 66, 1 (1985), 50–7.

The purpose of the pilot experiment here described was to evaluate two hypotheses which underlie many of the claimed advantages of computer-assisted language learning: firstly, that students are highly motivated to learn a foreign language using a computer as an aid, and secondly, that certain language skills may be improved with computer-assisted reinforcement of traditional instruction. Sixty-one subjects were divided into ability-matched control and experimental groups. After pre-testing, a unit of French grammar was taught to all subjects, followed by either homework exercises or computer exercises; post-testing followed. Attitudes towards learning French grammar using computer-assisted language learning were assessed by questionnaire before and after using the computer. Test scores indicated that computer-assisted language learning significantly improved performance in one of the six cases; in the remainder, there was no significant difference.

86–51 Bernhardt, Elizabeth Buchter. Towards an information processing perspective in foreign language reading. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), 68, 4 (1984), 322–31.

It is generally assumed that the difficulty of a reading text increases with increased word length, sentence length and syntactic complexity, but various studies have cast

doubt on this, and sometimes even suggested opposite effects. A student's main problem with a text may not relate to lexis or syntax but a lack of background cultural knowledge [examples]. As already recognised in L1 reading research, meaning depends on the reader's interaction with the text, relating new information to that already stored. Comprehension may consist of synthesising larger conceptual units rather than of analysis.

The main implication of this 'schema-theoretic' perspective for research, and likewise for student testing, is that background knowledge factors should be taken into account at the design stage and in reporting results. As regards materials writing and methodology, simplified or linguistically manipulated texts should not be used, but instead natural texts accompanied by ancillary material to explain background, with the teacher systematically checking and where necessary supplementing students' background knowledge.

86-52 Carey, Stephen (U. of Alberta). Reflections on a decade of French immersion. *The Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **41**, 2 (1984), 246-59.

French immersion programmes were introduced as a result of parental pressure to improve the way French was taught in Canadian schools. Care was taken to create a classroom environment favourable to language learning by children. Problems arise in evaluating the success of the programme since immersion and non-immersion students constitute distinct sub-populations as regards IQ, social maturity, motivation, parental attitudes towards French immersion, socio-economic status, etc. Similar problems attend comparisons between early and late immersion students, who in addition were taught French in different ways.

French immersion programmes have undoubtedly been successful in producing students who speak and read French fluently – at what cost to other scholastic attainment and whether this loss is acceptable depends on social and cultural factors. Somewhat surprisingly such programmes do not seem to have any perceptible effect on students' attitudes towards the francophone community.

86-53 Carrell, Patricia L. Schema theory and ESL reading: classroom implications and applications. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **68**, 4 (1984), 332-43.

This paper gives an overview of schema theory as part of a psycholinguistic model of ESL reading, and relates this to practical classroom applications. Schemata are previously acquired knowledge structures, and comprehension is seen as the interaction between a reader's background/rhetorical knowledge and a text; textual input is mapped against some existing schemata in the reader's mind. Two basic analytical modes, i.e. top-down and bottom-up information processing, are discussed. The former is seen to be conceptually driven, and in this case the reader makes general predictions about the structure of a text based upon a wide knowledge of genre and patterning. The latter, on the other hand, involves concern with the specific details of a text. Readers successfully comprehend a text if they can activate appropriate schema and deploy the relevant combination of processing techniques.

The practical applications discussed are related to pre-reading activities, vocabulary instruction, comprehension instruction, materials selection, and diagnosis of miscomprehension. The first two are seen as methods of building the appropriate background knowledge, the next two as ways of accessing or activating this knowledge [sample story schema].

Schema-based approaches should expediate the transfer of reading skills outside the classroom, and further research is called for to determine whether such techniques are really superior to traditional methods.

86–54 Clarke, Mark A. (U. of Colorado at Denver). On the nature of technique: what do we owe the gurus? *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **18**, 4 (1984), 577–94.

This article presents personal, informal reflections by the author on various influences discernible in his teaching style. Recounting in detail one of his classes in blackboard composition, he infers an eclecticism which has taken diverse strands from such prominent educationalists as Kaplan and Stevick. His initial reactions to, and practical modifications of their theories on the teaching of writing, are presented by means of an annotated list. The author concludes that good teachers should be well-informed, sensitive and decisive, selecting from current theories whatever they deem relevant to their unique and individual chalkface realities. 'Technique' is thus not a specific, easily labelled or monolithic approach, but an ongoing series of classroom decisions.

86–55 Cortese, Giuseppina (U. of Turin). From receptive to productive in post-intermediate EFL classes: a pedagogical experiment. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **19**, 1 (1985), 7–25.

This article describes a curricular innovation in a post-intermediate EFL university course. The aim of the project was to build on the reading proficiency of the learners to improve their much less fully developed oral and written communication skills. An experimental course was developed around a connected series of group and individual projects on the topic of American Indians. The main psychopedagogical guidelines for the course were provided by the maturation process as described by the Russian psychologists Vigotsky and Leontiev and by the notion that shared knowledge is a prerequisite to purposeful and meaningful interaction.

University students from different study areas used reading materials to develop proficiency in speaking and writing. In the final project, a videotaped simulation of a court hearing involving an Indian land claim, each of the 18 students delivered a speech and participated in a debate. For this and the preceding projects in the course, the issues of teacher roles, learner roles, materials, skill transfer, and empathy-building activities are discussed.

There was considerable evidence for the validity of the three assumptions on which this pedagogical experiment was based: (1) It is feasible to reverse the canonical sequence of skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in language learning; (2) needs analysis is an ongoing process of learner observation which takes into account both cognitive and affective responses; and (3) language teaching can be usefully conceived as action-based research aiming at learner-specific procedures.

86–56 Duplantie, Monique and Massey, Michael (McGill U.). Proposition pour une pédagogie de l'écoute des documents authentiques oraux en classe de langue seconde. [Suggestions for teaching listening skills using authentic documents.] *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée* (Mons), **56** (1985), 48–59.

The communicative approach has led to a greater emphasis on listening skills and to greater use of authentic documents. Students need to be exposed to as many varieties of language as possible, and assisted in acquiring appropriate listening strategies. During the pre-listening stage the teacher should relate the theme of the oral document to be studied to the learner's own interests and knowledge; he/she should then introduce the text, perhaps using visual aids or pre-teaching some essential vocabulary. The listening stage should be an active one, with students being set a task to accomplish. Post-listening comprises transfer of language to other situations; students can work individually on tasks relating to their individual needs and problems.

86–57 Edwards, Henry and others. Second-language acquisition through subject-matter learning: a study of sheltered psychology classes at the University of Ottawa. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **41**, 2 (1984), 268–82.

This paper reports the results of an experiment in teaching a second language to university students via subject-matter. University undergraduates who were intermediate level students of French and English took *Introduction to Psychology* for one semester (thirty-nine hours) in their second language, in special 'sheltered' classes. These were taught by psychology professors and followed the standard course content. They differed from regular classes in that enrolment was limited to second-language acquirers and the professors were assisted by language teachers. Gains in second-language proficiency, mastery of the subject matter, and language-related opinions were studied.

Results confirmed that adult students can indeed gain in second-language proficiency in the absence of formal language instruction when the second language is used as the medium of instruction and the input is made comprehensible. Moreover, subject-matter L2 students gained about as much as comparison subjects who studied the target language directly in well-taught language classes, while they succeeded in learning the subject-matter at least as well as those students following regular sections of the psychology course. In addition, the subject-matter students reported an increase in confidence in second-language use.

These results are encouraging with respect to the efficacy of subject-matter teaching in promoting second-language acquisition, and provide more evidence in support of the input hypothesis. The authors propose that both the sheltered and comparison groups improved in their second-language proficiency for the same reason: they were exposed to the L2 in a context which made it comprehensible, was non-threatening, and enabled them to focus on meaning rather than form. The sheltered students, moreover, gained without formal grammar study and without extensive practice in language production, as predicted by the input hypothesis. In addition, the reports by the sheltered class subjects of lowered anxiety, increased L2 proficiency and greater

48 *Language learning and teaching*

determination to use the L2 in other situations provide preliminary but encouraging evidence that sheltered courses yield increased self-confidence in using the L2.

86–58 Harper, H. How to do a lot with a little: learner strategies of communication in verbal interaction. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **73/5** (1985), 81–94.

The concept of a 'communication strategy' relates to the negotiation of a communication problem in goal-orientated behaviour. 'Gaps' in learners' knowledge can be (a) missing words or structures or (b) lack of adequate communicative means with which to attain a specific goal. Strategies to deal with such problems include finding alternatives (paraphrases, generalisations). A pause can be filled with a gesture. [Some examples of strategies taken from classroom exchanges are discussed.] In the case of borrowing from the first language, learners should indicate by signals (voice, gesture) that a problem exists, i.e. prepare the way for the borrowed item. In this way, fossilisation is not likely to occur.

86–59 Johnson, R. K. (U. of Hong Kong). Prototype theory, cognitive linguistics and pedagogical grammar. *Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Hong Kong), **8** (1985), 12–24.

Basing his discussion on the theory of natural categories, or 'prototype theory', the author demonstrates its applicability to linguistics, and points to its potential usefulness in teaching and learning languages, in particular to the theory being pedagogic grammars. The theory holds that as we tend to classify objects according to shared and distinct (or prototypical) features so we classify language entities (nouns, verbs, subjects). This identification through contrast, or negative definition, leads to the problem, not of the existence of categories but of the boundaries between them, since it is not always possible to impose categories on language.

In practical pedagogic terms there is a problem for teachers when faced with unsatisfactory 'rules' which do not account adequately for the relations between form and meaning. Grammars do not, for example, solve the formal problem of subject/verb concord in the following: *Either Tom or the girls (was/were) responsible.*

The appropriateness of the theory of prototypical distinctions to pedagogical issues is illustrated by means of several examples from the verb and noun phrase systems of English. The distinctions of meaning are clearly demonstrated by the perfective and simple tense forms: *How long have you lived in London?* and *How long did you live in London?*; whereas the boundary or 'weakened' meaning values are evident in: *They were both wearing the same hat.* This example requires context to clarify the meaning.

Although linguistic forms are discrete, the meanings they express are not. Meaning is the product of relations between elements in the language system, and those relations are not constant. Prototypical distinctions lead to precise expression of semantic value/s; context reduces prototypical distinctions and, as a result, affects the value. Pedagogical procedures could be enriched by recognition of the existence of prototypical form/meaning relations and their incorporation into teaching and learning activities.

86-60 Jones, Chris. Teachers, authoring systems and computer-assisted language learning. *Medium* (Ottawa), **9**, 3 (1984), 81-8.

Authoring systems consist of the operational part of a teaching program, plus a routine which allows teachers to put in their own data without learning a computer language. They can thus supplement commercial computer materials, albeit subject to restrictions of format. Possibilities described include tests (fill-in, multi-choice and matching), games, reading-skills, student composition and adventure/simulation programs.

86-61 Kasper, Gabriele (U. of Aarhus). Pragmatic comprehension in learner-native speaker discourse. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **34**, 4 (1984), 1-20.

The paper reports on an exploratory study on FL learners' comprehension of speech acts and discourse functions, referred to as pragmatic comprehension. On the basis of a frame-theoretical approach, some theoretical assumptions and empirical findings about L1 pragmatic comprehension are discussed. These are used as a framework for analysing two types of learners' pragmatic misunderstandings: their failure to distinguish between phatic talk and referential talk, and their failure to identify the intended illocutionary force of indirect speech acts. The data analysis indicates that the learners (*a*) rely too heavily on bottom-up processing, (*b*) do not make sufficient use of illocutionary force indicating devices, (*c*) have problems in activating frames relevant in the given context, and (*d*) have too little flexibility for frame shift if incoming data are incompatible with a currently active higher-order frame. Some implications for FL teaching are: (1) learners should be made aware of the relevance of context-determining features in communicative situations, of illocution and discourse function-indicating devices, and of how various knowledge frames can be connected to each other and to incoming data. Learners should have ample opportunities in the classroom to apply their communicative and procedural knowledge to a variety of communicative tasks.

86-62 Kramsch, Claire and others. (Massachusetts Inst. of Tech.). An overview of the MIT Athena Language Learning Project. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), **2**, 4 (1985), 31-4.

This paper discusses the MIT Athena Language Learning Project. The materials are meant to supplement regular class time and to be broad and rich in the area of linguistic resources. The lab itself is planned to accommodate the full range of peripherals including speech recognition devices and interactive video devices. The materials are for French, Spanish, Russian, German and English as a second language. A new Language Resource Centre is being designed. Some programmes being designed are LINGO, Topicks and Reverse Eliza, and some document-investigation exercises. All are dialogue-based, activate the students' initiative and are immersed in the foreign cultural perspective.

86–63 Lian, A. -P. (U. of Queensland, St Lucia, Australia). An experimental computer-assisted listening comprehension system. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **73/5** (1985), 166–83.

In the light of the current emphasis on communicative competence, and technological advances which can provide a more effective individual learning environment, this article examines the possibilities for assisting the student with outside-classroom study, and suggests that there are many advantages in computer-assisted language acquisition over conventional homework assignments, particularly in relation to listening comprehension.

The importance of recognition in the communicative process of a pragmatic component is emphasised, a component, that is, consisting of linguistic, cultural, contextual, and functional factors. All of these contribute to the meaning derived by the listener, whose interpretation of a text is influenced further by similar factors from his own experience. The complex nature of communication requires constant flexibility and creativity in the listener's reaction to the text, and the development of an awareness of the range of possible meanings, such that he may progress towards near-native inferencing.

The software system developed at the University of Queensland's Department of French provides a series of brief conversations which the student analyses at increasingly greater depths, leading to the identification of all the factors involved in the entire communicative event. The software is highly flexible and offers a wide range of facilities such as fast presentation of a large amount of information, the ability to branch quickly to various sections of the lesson, and the provision of informative feedback. It is also teacher- and user-friendly. The user requires access to a computer and a tape or cassette player.

The usefulness of such a method lies in the possible shift of all machine work out of the classroom, thus freeing valuable contact hours for other types of activity. It is envisaged that lessons will be progressively geared to individual needs, that more complex branching can be incorporated, that more effective and stimulating teaching and learning activities can be developed, and that a national language data-base of grammatical structures, lexis, pause systems and so on can be created.

86–64 MacArthur, S. (Conservatorium of Music, Sydney) and **Trojer, L.** (Sydney Tech. Coll.). Opus Z: learning language through music. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **73/5** (1985), 211–22.

Similarities are noted between the Orff–Schulwerk method for teaching/learning music and the SGAV (Structuro-Global Audio-Visual) approach to teaching/learning language. Common phonological parameters are rhythm, pitch, timbre and dynamics. Rhythms in music and language may be measured (without a regular beat or pulse) or metrical (with a pulse). Pitch, together with rhythm, determines intonation in speech. Speech frequencies are irregular, those of music are regular. Timbre relates to the quality of sound being transmitted; it is determined by social context of situation and culture. Dynamics in music communicate tension and release of tension; dynamics in speech occur (i) physiologically with the tension and release of the phonatory and body muscles, and (ii) through voice production.

The methodologies shared by Orff–Schulwerk and SGAV are: (1) they present the material globally then break it up into simpler elements; (2) they aim at involving the whole person in an active manner; (3) they assume no previous knowledge; (4) they are experiential; (5) they are self-structuring – the learner progresses at his own speed; (6) they call for creative responses; (7) they encourage group dynamics; (8) they stress the role of auditory awareness; (9) they stress aural memory; (10) develop cognition; (11) emphasise body co-ordination; (12) create affective situations; (13) allow for lateral extension, and (14) use repetition and question-and-answer techniques.

Some ways in which these goals are realised at different levels are demonstrated by means of classroom examples of teaching speech rhythms.

86–65 Maley, Alan (British Council, Madras). A roomful of human beings. *Cahiers de l'APLIUT* (Sèvres), 14 (1984), 29–43.

Seven reasons are given for using drama techniques: they can provide a context for acquisition in Krashen's sense, be highly motivating, and foster fluency, bi-sociation in Koestler's sense, authenticity and range of output, and co-operative learning. Practical needs include open space, teacher control but also teacher willingness to withdraw, language presentation and warm-up exercises. Five sample activities are described.

86–66 Richards, Jack C. The status of methods in language teaching. *Anglo-American Studies* (Salamanca, Spain), 4, 2 (1984), 135–56.

Language teaching methods can be analysed in terms of approach, design and procedure. Approach is used to mean underlying theory about the nature of language, learning processes and conditions necessary for learning. Design includes choice of content-subject matter, linguistic matter, target learning behaviour – types of teaching and learning activities, and roles of learner, teacher and materials. Procedure is moment-to-moment techniques, practices and behaviours. [Sample analysis of various approaches.]

Any language teaching method can be described in these terms, but few are explicit in all dimensions. A useful teacher training exercise is to examine theoretical writing, textbooks, course designs, tests and lesson protocols to tease out underlying assumptions. The success and survival of a method have little to do with objective proof of its worth, for rigorous evaluation is extremely rare, but rather with its incorporation in textbooks and its espousal by experts, professional organisations and governments.

86–67 Sidwell, Duncan (Leicestershire Education Authority). Sequencing communicative language teaching. *British Journal of Language Teaching*, 22, 3 (1984), 141–9.

The learner must be led from a stage of dependence on the teacher to independence in utterance. The three main phases for this process are (1) presentation, (2) pre-communicative activity and (3) communicative activity. In phase (1), the teacher is dominant. Phase (2) should contain the elements of choice (on the part of the

speaker) and uncertainty (on the part of the learner), but at the same time the field of content must be restricted so as not to overburden learners with unknowns [examples]. Phase (3) shows the learner whether he can perform the communicative and linguistic goals set. The activities of this phase relate in content and to some degree in form to the activities of the preceding phase [examples]. Students should act autonomously.

86–68 Simonsen, Sofus E. (North Carolina State U.). Student approach and reaction to CAI: an analysis of evaluations and logs. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), 2, 4 (1985), 35–9.

Despite arguments against the use of drills-and-practice and computer games in computer-assisted instruction, surveys of student evaluation of the usefulness of computers in second language learning indicate a positive attitude to the new technology. Computers were felt to be more effective than the language laboratory, and should provide an integral course component.

These findings were based on evaluation data obtained following the use of CAI software – CALIS (Computer Augmented Language Instructional System). This program is constantly up-dated, but at the time of the evaluation experiment it had little corrective feedback, was rigid, and at times very slow. Other software evaluation surveys suggest that students encountered difficulties such as lack of access, technical problems, ambiguous instructions, rejection of correct answers.

In an attempt to discover how students work in CAI, various materials were developed such as forms of completion exercise and transformational drills, translation, and vocabulary practice in order to measure skills such as typing. But are the benefits of CAI commensurate with the time invested?

Generally, the response is positive. Linguistic patterns which are structurally and contextually correct are acquired, and this is not always the case in a conventional pedagogical situation. CAI is very useful for elementary students for whom it is a requirement to learn a second language. It is also useful for large numbers of students, and for weaker ones. It is, however, not enough by itself, and preparation and corrective feedback which encourage production as well as reception that CAI can provide must be accompanied by similar preparatory and corrective tutorial instruction.

86–69 Slade, D. M. and Gardner, R. J. (Adult Migrant Education Service, Sydney, NSW). Interactional skills in casual conversation. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), 73/5 (1985), 269–86.

This article emphasises the need to incorporate a pragmatic component in the teaching of communicative skills; knowledge of grammatical and functional features of a language is not of itself sufficient. The project, carried out for the Adult Migrant Education Service in Sydney, involved analysis of authentic informal conversation in order to discover what strategies are used, and, on the basis of the findings, to develop materials which would demonstrate some of the essential features of conversation. One of the major problems identified was the inability of learners to transfer linguistic knowledge from the classroom to real-life situations.

Conversation involves receptive and productive skills, the use of incomplete sentences, constant negotiation of meanings, contextualisation, sequencing of discourse components, and a limited range of syntax and lexis. The authors suggest that this has implications for teaching methodology. Students must be made aware of the role of the strategies involved in coping with conversation. These include the use of appropriate opening and closing markers, participation markers, turn-taking signals, the formulae of conversation control (referring back, changing direction, reintroduction of a topic and so on), the awareness of unsuccessful conversation interaction, and the use of mitigation and politeness strategies. The aims should be to develop awareness of these features in conversation – especially in unpredictable situations, to encourage the use of discourse strategies, and to provide knowledge of the resources available in the target language to fulfil communicative needs.

86–70 Swaffar, Janet K. Reading authentic texts in a foreign language: a cognitive model. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **69**, 1 (1985), 15–34.

The teaching of reading should be based on authentic texts, defined as those whose primary intent is to communicate meaning. Selection and grading of these should not rely mainly on linguistic complexity but should start with global factors such as the familiarity of text type and simplicity and predictability of development. Texts should also be chosen to fit students' interests.

Students should first preview (skim) texts to identify subject matter and focus (intent). They should be taught to identify arrangements of information (lists and descriptions, comparison and contrast, causation) and levels of treatment (idea, institution, problem, event), and to make predictions and establish logic patterns for information detail before beginning to read. Only after this global phase should meaning be studied and input language reproduced and re-used. [Examples from a beginner's German course.]

86–71 Swan, Michael. A critical look at the communicative approach. *ELT Journal* (London), **39**, 1 (1985), 2–12 (Pt I) and **39**, 2 (1985), 76–87 (Pt II).

Theoretical and practical weaknesses in the communicative approach are highlighted, such as the proliferation of nebulous jargon, unrigorous generalisation, and the assumption that it is a language learning panacea. The approach is a source of incoherent, provocative intuitions which are often actually irrelevant to real teaching situations. Though there are some positive aspects, the pendulum of pedagogic fashion has swung too far; communicative doctrine is as dogmatic as the wrongly maligned structuralist perspective it seeks to replace.

Usage vs. use and other topical polarities are said to be false, unhelpful distinctions, as meaning and communication are dependent upon such extra-linguistic elements as common sense and knowledge of the world. Students transfer strategies, skills and functional ability from their mother tongue. The communicative approach is thus criticised for its purported *tabula rasa* view of foreign language learners, in which it is assumed that they bring nothing to the language learning process. Notional/functional syllabuses can involve the simultaneous teaching of diverse structural items,

54 *Language learning and teaching*

which is contrary to good teaching. What is needed is a pragmatic fusion of functional, situational, lexical, structural, authentic and contrived elements into a workable whole. Commonsense rather than cant is the way forward.

86–72 Taeschner, Traute and others (U. of Rome). *Imparare le lingue straniere in terza elementare: verifica di un metodo*. [A method of teaching foreign languages in elementary school.] *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), **16**, 2/3 (1984), 135–60.

When teaching a foreign language to young children the problem is to find a context in which the language will be meaningful to them and to create sufficient motivation. Games and role-play are important here.

Children in the third year of elementary school were asked to imagine themselves as primitive men as yet incapable of speech, using gestures and uttering strange cries. The sounds of the target language were first presented in this way. In the next lesson the first words were introduced. Situations derived from the theme formed the basis of subsequent games and lessons. The method enhanced group feeling, diminished the fear of making mistakes, encouraged the children to express themselves freely in the target language without translating from Italian, and related to other subjects they studied in school.

Texts and interviews conducted with the children in the experimental class (23 learning English and 22 German) showed that compared with a control group of 23 taught in the traditional way, the experimental group had more positive attitudes towards learning languages and conversed more freely.

86–73 Tardif, Claudette (U. of Alberta). *La formation des enseignants en situation d'immersion*. [Training for immersion teaching.] *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **41**, 2 (1984), 365–75.

Immersion French programmes have greatly expanded in Alberta in recent years. Immersion has been defined as the procedure whereby the second language is not taught directly but by means of ordinary school subjects which are taught in the second language. The language taught must be primarily oral in the beginning stages, learner-centred, related to the child's interests, and regarded as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

The task of immersion teachers is particularly difficult. In order to fulfil their key role they must have, in addition to the basic knowledge, skills and training all teachers require, complete command of written and spoken French, familiarity with French-Canadian culture, insight into the nature of language bilingualism and how second languages are learned; undertake comparative studies of English and French; and be able to teach communicative as well as linguistic competence.

86–74 Terrell, T. D. *The natural approach to language teaching: an update*. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **41**, 3 (1985), 461–79.

In this extension of an earlier article, the author argues that language acquisition is improved if beginning students are allowed to experience three stages of acquisition:

comprehension (preproduction), early speech production, and speech emergence. The *comprehension stage* allows the development of crucial comprehension strategies which begin the acquisition process. In the early speech stage the student is encouraged to produce words and short phrases which have been acquired in the first stage. In the speech emergence stage, activities are designed to encourage the production of phrases and sentences. Four basic types of communication activities are suggested for this stage.

86–75 Thornton, B. and others (English Language Development Centre, State of Qatar). Making computers more accessible to the foreign language teacher. *System* (Oxford), 12, 3 (1984), 273–85.

The article describes an attempt to bring together the disciplines of language teaching and computer expertise. EXTOL is a flexible computer language, developed by the authors at Essex University, which offers teachers a lesson-writing facility. At the same time it affords an introduction to more advanced programming. However, there is no need to learn complicated programming techniques to be able to write lessons.

The EXTOL system is a simple command language created to increase student motivation and interest. Emphasis is placed on interactive, communicative skills, in which contexts are provided for exercises, and in which the computer asks questions. A scoring system provides an additional incentive. [An appendix gives an illustration of exercises constructed using EXTOL, and details of the program itself.]

86–76 Zamel, Vivian (U. of Massachusetts at Boston). Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 19, 1 (1985), 79–101.

Because writing teachers invest so much time responding to student writing and because these responses reveal the assumptions teachers hold about writing, L1 writing researchers have investigated how composition teachers respond to their students' texts. These investigations have revealed that teachers respond to most writing as if it were a final draft, thus reinforcing an extremely constricted notion of composing. Their comments often reflect the application of a single ideal standard rather than criteria that take into account how composing constraints can affect writing performance. Furthermore, teachers' marks and comments usually take the form of abstract and vague prescriptions and directives that students find difficult to interpret.

A study was undertaken to examine ESL teachers' responses to student writing. The findings suggest that ESL composition teachers make similar types of comments and are even more concerned with language-specific errors and problems. The marks and comments are often confusing, arbitrary, and inaccessible. In addition, ESL teachers, like their native-language counterparts, rarely seem to expect students to revise the text beyond the surface level.

Such responses to texts give students a very limited and limiting notion of writing, for they fail to provide students with the understanding that writing involves producing a text that evolves over time. Teachers therefore need to develop more appropriate responses for commenting on student writing. They need to facilitate revision by responding to writing as work in progress rather than judging it as a finished product.