Teaching particular languages

English

94–68 Geranpayeh, Ardeshir (U. of Edinburgh). Functional controlled writing. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* (Edinburgh), **4** (1993), 40–53.

This study reports the results of two experiments involving a focus on the rhetorical functions of generalisation and classification in the teaching of the writing skill to EFL learners in Iran. The main research question is whether the teaching of language functions is relevant in the development of writing ability in university EFL learners. The results suggest that teaching language functions has a positive effect on the development of this ability.

94–69 Heath, Shirley Brice (Stanford U.). Inner city life through drama: imagining the language classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **27, 2** (1993), 177–92).

Both language learning theorists and practitioners of teaching English as a second language or dialect have argued that role playing moves language learners beyond their usual performance in ordinary classroom presentations. This paper tells the story of how inner city youth organisations use dramas that young people write, cast, and direct to enable them to retain their first language or dialect while gaining standard English and preparing for job entry. The story ends with implications for the language classroom.

94–70 Jung, Udo O. H. Phasengerechter Medieneinsatz im Englischunterricht. [Appropriate use of media in English teaching.] *Der Fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, Germany), **25, 4** (1991) [publ. 1992], 4–10.

The traditional division of media into the categories auditory, visual and audiovisual is not helpful to the FL learner. Teachers should distinguish between *process* media (radio and television), where the information is lost if not understood at the point of transmission, and *product* media (video, audiotapes), where the information can be replayed at will. Process media should certainly not be withheld from learners, as they are an important part of the target culture. Beginning with product media and practising a variety of skills at appropriate phases in the course enables learners to take the qualitative leap to using 'live' material. FL departments should have the right to disrupt the school timetable periodically for live radio or television links such as the one set up recently between Germany and Canada. To avoid accusations of elitism, such activities can be expanded into nationwide phone-in discussions. Product media should not be abandoned: language learning videos have a place earlier in the course, and pupils can be weaned onto television later. Subtitles in the target language on video can greatly reduce misunderstanding and incomprehension, and can gradually be phased out. Computer-assisted language learning still enjoys great novelty value with pupils. Software packages not originally developed for language learning, such as concordance programs, can prove useful. Word processing activities tend to produce text reminiscent of informal spoken language, so-called 'talky writing'. There is potential for involving pupils in telecommunications, for example the TELEBOX electronic mail system of the German Bundespost, and thereby helping them to bridge the gap between classroom language learning and everyday life. Interactive video and videodiscs are extremely flexible, but still very expensive.

94–71 Mohammed, Abdul-Moneim M. (U. of Salford). Towards a learner-centred technique of teaching grammar. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **7** (1993), 59–63.

Writers of pedagogical grammars and teachers providing explanations often use too much meta-language. This may not help production: most Sudanese school and university students say things such as 'present perfect, relative clauses, conditionals...' but cannot identify these features in a text. We should therefore devise simpler explanations, drawing on psycholinguist research on how learners formulate rules for themselves. If learners say, for example, 'The boy sitting', they

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can be told 'Use "is" after words like "boy", "cat", "Ali", because words like "sitting", "jumping", "reading" have "ing".' Teachers can also say 'this word' or 'this part', pointing at or underlining the word or other element. A teacher may not need more than five grammatical terms: verb, noun, pronoun, subject and object.

94–72 Trammell, Robert L. (Florida Atlantic U.). English ambisyllabic consonants and half-closed syllables in language teaching. *Language Learning* (Madison, Wis), **43**, 2 (1993), 195–238.

This article examines some of the articulatory, theoretical, instrumental, and psycholinguistic evidence concerning the validity of the notion of ambisyllabicity in English. Applications of the concept, including the notion of syllables being 'half-closed' by ambisyllabic consonants, are then considered in TESL and in teaching foreign languages to native speakers of English as well as in studies of syllable structure transference between first and second languages. In addition to being an important aspect of correct pronunciation at the allophonic level, native-like syllabification with ambisyllabic consonants is seen as a crucial element in imitating correct word-stress, which in turn is required for native-like rhythm and accent assignment in intonation patterns at the phrase level. Basic information on the variability of English syllabification and ambisyllabification is compared to popular misconceptions about English syllabification, as revealed in hyphenation practices and dictionary pronunciation guides. A set of rules are presented for obligatory and optional ambisyllabification along with suggestions for their use with ESL and English foreign language students.

French

94–73 Alvarez Matas, I. and others (U. of Oviedo, Spain.) De la lecture à l'écriture: pragmatique et classe de langue. [From reading to writing: pragmatics and the language class.] *Dialogues et Cultures* (Paris), **37** (1993), 161–78.

Most students, largely because of the way they have been taught, see reading and writing as separate activities, whereas psycholinguistic studies show that the two are inseparably intertwined. The two projects described aimed at bridging the gap in the work of university students of French by progressing from a text analysis dealing with specific elements to the production of written work. A method of teaching argumentation is described in detail, which started by analysing the structure of the language of advertising (including a lengthy discussion of the connectors *mais* and *alors*) and ended up with the students writing their own advertisements. The result was a very successful transfer of elements studied to the written texts, as well as a high degree of student motivation.

The second project described shows how students were encouraged to use in their writing techniques that they came across in their reading, by working from a very detailed analysis of a text towards a piece of writing in such a way that students come to see reading and writing as being at each end of a continuum.

94–74 Cawthorn, Ian (St. John's RC Sch. for the Hearing Impaired, Boston Spa) **and Chambers, Gary** (U. of Leeds). The special needs of the deaf foreign language learner. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **7** (1993), 47–9.

There are special benefits for deaf pupils learning a foreign language: it allows them some respite from the same sounds which bombard them lesson after lesson, and stimulates interest by providing access to different sounds. Deaf pupils are above all being trained to listen, and learning a foreign language encourages them to listen with particular care. The school where experimental teaching was conducted is an aural school, with no signing, so only pupils with some useful residual hearing and confident use of spoken and written English learned a foreign langauge (French). Pupils used a group-aid, an amplification system operating up to eight high-powered headsets. They completed GCSE courses in two years; the examination boards helpfully allowed 25% extra time on all tests, and modified some to accommodate the deaf candidates. Those teaching foreign languages to the hearing impaired must be aware of the fatigue factor, and realise also that pupils need to see lip movements, but that over-articulation distorts lip patterns and shouting distorts sounds picked up by hearing aids. Visual

aids and transcripts are of great benefit. Deaf pupils would not fare well in the mainstream classroom, where unrelenting background noise is too distracting. What might be gained socially from integration would almost inevitably be at the cost of level and quality of achievement. The potential of interactive video for deaf pupils is huge, but costs are prohibitive. A group of PGCE students has developed a video package for deaf learners of French and German providing face-on views of speakers, written support on screen including target language subtitles and English phonetics, and written back-up materials. It is also suitable for slow learners or pupils with special educational needs, and can be sent to interested schools.

94–75 Chartrand, Suzanne-G. (U. of Montreal). Pistes didactiques pour la compréhension et pour la production de discours argumentatifs écrits. [Teaching paths for the comprehension and production of written argumentative discourse.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **15,** 1 (1993), 9–21.

Having noted, on one hand, the social importance of argumentative discourse and, on the other, the enormous gaps in the teaching of it in the French class, the author developed a theoretical model for the teaching of argumentative discourse that can generate rigorous and effective teaching practices, as illustrated in this article, which proposes teaching paths for the comprehension and production of written argumentative discourses. In comprehension, these paths are arranged well around the location of the communicational and enunciative components of discourse, of its enunciative strategy, of its prototypical superstructure and of its discursive strategy. In production, once certain preliminary conditions to the production of significant texts are stated, the activities aim to sensitise the pupils to the prototypical superstructure and the mastering of certain linguistic mechanisms.

94–76 Knepfler, Laurent (IUT de Strasbourg-Sud). Le document authentique. [Authentic materials.] *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **87,** 2 (1993), 45–50.

In post-secondary language teaching the objective is to prepare students to use their linguistic abilities in a professional situation. Large quantities of authentic documents can be used from manuals, newspapers, radio and television. This article considers how best to use them. The top priority is the comprehension of a written text without needing to look up every unknown word. The author gives the students a text at least one A4 page long with questions in French or the foreign language as a guide to the contents. Students underline the text which corresponds to each question, formulate a response, and produce a summary of the text with the help of the questions. Students work at their own level and relatively independently. Translation is discouraged. The author gives examples of ways of teaching reading comprehension as well as using radio broadcasts. The exercises can also be used in secondary schools. French may be used throughout, though not exclusively.

94–77 Krechel, Hans-Ludwig. Spracharbeit im Anfangsunterricht Erdkunde bilingual. [Language work in beginners' bilingual geography classes.] *Der Fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, Germany), **27,** 9 (1993), 11–15.

This article addresses problems encountered in geography classes for mixed groups of German and francophone children, taught bilingually, in Class 7 (age 12 upwards) of certain grammar schools in North Rhine Westphalia, Germany, where German students are often unable to understand French material. A preliminary language course is advocated in which the language elements needed, largely vocabulary but also some grammar [lists included], are pre-taught. Words should be taught first individually (through crosswords etc.), then by cloze exercises and other controlled activities, before more open-ended tasks are attempted. Authentic French texts are rarely directly usable, so the teacher must simplify them or use simplified material from German publishers. Teaching should not be entirely in French, and German learners should receive close guidance from the teacher and help from Francophone classmates.

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94–78 Masny, Diana and others. Le jardin à temps plein et le développement des habiletés langagières: l'expérience des écoles françaises d'Ottawa-Carleton. [Full-time kindergarten and the development of language skills: the experience of French schools in Ottawa-Carleton.] *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **49,** 4 (1993), 832–48.

The present study, conducted within the context of French language education in a minority setting, examined the impact of full-time kindergarten on the development of specific aspects of language competence in French. The language variables measured were prereading ability, receptive vocabulary and decontextualised use of oral language. Secondly, the effect of full-day kindergarten on language development was assessed by comparing grade one subjects who had attended full-day kindergarten with those who had attended half-day kindergarten. Sixty-four full-day and sixty-five half-day subjects from four linguistic groups were selected: (1) native speakers of French from middle-income homes, (2) Francophones considered to be at risk, (3) English-dominant speakers and (4) ethnic minority children. The full-day subjects (64) were tested in mid-year of kindergarten and then one year later in grade one. The half-day subjects (65) were assessed once in grade one. In the results, vocabulary development was significantly inter-correlated with certain prereading skills, and with specific measures of oral language. Then, for full-day kindergarten subjects, significant differences on all language measures were found between the first session and the second session one year later. No significant differences on language measures were found between groups in full-day and half-day programmes; however, a further analysis revealed sociolinguistic differences on measures of prereading ability and on receptive vocabulary. These findings are discussed in relation to socio-economic and sociocultural differences in a language minority setting.

94–79 Poth, J. (Consultant, UNESCO). La pédagogie convergente dans l'enseignement des langues maternelles africaines et du français. Pourquoi? Comment? [Converging pedagogy in the teaching of African mother tongues and of French. Why and how?] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **105** (1992), 319–38.

The search for links between the methodology of teaching African mother tongues and French can be justified on pedagogical, didactic, economic, psychological and cultural policy grounds. Despite this much-repeated statement, effective applications of this methodological necessity have been rare. In the vast majority of cases, the teaching of a mother tongue as well as that of an international language is still effected without any intradisciplinary concern. A few limited operations of a still experimental nature have, however, been tried out, for example in Togo, concerning convergence of learning in spelling and reading which coordinated the national language with French, without doing violence to linguistic attributes between one language and another.

German

94–80 Myers, Michael (Montana State U.). Tools for the classroom: production and use of slides for language and culture classes. *Die Unterrichtspraxis: Teaching German* (Philadelphia, Pa), **26,** 1 (1993), 75–9.

Although slides can enhance presentation, interest and discussion, they are often expensive and time-consuming to produce. Elaborate equipment for making slides oneself is generally too costly for academic departments to buy. This article offers a way of producing quality slides cheaply and quickly. It recommends the procuring of a close-up lens, an inexpensive tripod, a portable desk-lamp with adjustable arms, an indoor floodlight, tungsten ASA 160 slide film, and grey construction paper, setting the f-stop to its maximum setting. Slides cost $0.30 to $0·70 each and take just one or two days to produce. Slides can visually footnote a lecture, are a viable departure point for discussion, enrich teaching, and increase student participation and interest.

Italian

94–81 Mason, Keith (U. of Virginia). Pronunciation coverage in first-year Italian textbooks. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **70,** 2 (1993), 153–67.

Six recently published first-year Italian textbooks were examined and the way pronunciation was treated was analysed: amount of information; type of information; exercises suggested; explanations provided; and location, e.g. introduction, appendix or in the text – this last being judged the most pedagogically effective.

The books varied considerably in the amount of space they accorded to pronunciation, but all focused on articulatory explanations, perceptual information, sound-to-letter correspondences and Italian–English contrastive analysis. It is concluded that it is necessary to rethink how pronunciation should be presented. In particular, more attention needs to be given to intonation in order to help learners to achieve oral proficiency.

Russian

94–82 Boyle, Eloise M. (Ohio U.). Beyond memorisation: teaching Russian (and other languages') vocabulary. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **26,** 2 (1993), 226–32.

As foreign language instruction becomes more proficiency-oriented, the majority of theorists favour placing vocabulary into a meaningful context. Nonetheless, the presentation and learning of vocabulary remains problematic, principally because acquiring vocabulary, which must involve its repetition, often is boring. Ensuring daily practice of new and already learned lexical items need not be a chore dreaded by both teacher and students, but can develop into one of the most eagerly awaited parts of each new lesson. Effective classroom techniques go far in aiding learners in their own search for efficient acquisition strategies, helping to render them more independent of the instructor, more able to work on their own. This article presents a number of methods, including context-related activities, board games and filler exercises, developed and tested in the Russian classroom, designed for stimulating vocabulary learning and retention.