Teaching particular languages

English

91-205 Awonusi, V. O. (U. of Lagos, Nigeria). Whose standard, which model? Towards the definition of a standard Nigerian spoken English for teaching, learning and testing in Nigerian schools. *ITL* (Louvain), **89-/-90** (1990), 91-106.

The adoption of RP as a model of teaching in non-native speaker English societies such as Nigeria seems to have come to stay. However, the accent of English that has emerged in Nigeria over the years is, some linguists feel, anything but RP (although some hold the view that there are a few RP speakers in Nigeria). We are, therefore, forced to ask the question: what is RP? Or better still: what are its defining characteristics, particularly in relation to non-native varieties of English? Consequently, we are motivated to search for and identify alternative local (standard) accents for teaching purposes. This paper attempts to identify the Nigerian standard accent of English that is appropriate for adoption as a model for teaching English pronunciation. It examines the problems associated with the identification of a standard form in the light of variables such as international intelligibility, local acceptability, a real and social variation, in native and non-native speaker communities alike. On the basis of sociolinguistic realities it recommends an accent for teaching, learning and testing in Nigerian schools.

91-206 Charles, Maggie. Responding to problems in written English using a student self-monitoring technique. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **44**, 4 (1990), 286-93.

This article presents the technique of self-monitoring, whereby students annotate their drafts with comments or queries on their problem areas, before handing their texts in to the teacher. The teacher responds in writing to these notes, thus giving direct and appropriate feedback on the points raised by the students. The use of this technique facilitates the teacher's understanding of the writer's problems and intentions, and allows students more control over the feedback they receive. It enables teacher and student to engage in a dialogue over the text even in circumstances where individual, face-to-face discussions are not possible.

91-207 Crewe, W. J. The illogic of logical connectives. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **44**, 4 (1990), 316-25.

The purpose of this article is to examine the effect of the misuse and overuse of logical connectives (*however, thus*, etc.) in ESL undergraduate writing. It also points to certain types of mechanical exercise commonly found in textbooks as a possible source of the problem. A case is made against the practice of using logical connectives as mere 'stylistic enhancers' – that is to say, words or expressions that may be sprinkled over a text in order to give it an 'educated' or 'academic' look. Rather, logical connectives should be seen as higher-level discourse units which organise chunks of text in relation to the direction of the argument. If the links are misused, the argument as a whole, not merely the sentence containing the connective, becomes difficult to process and may even appear illogical. Three suggestions are made to remedy the problem: firstly, limit the students' use of connectives to a small sub-set of relatively comprehensible ones; secondly, encourage the 'phrasal expansion' of the connectives so that the logical links become more apparent; and thirdly, make consideration of the logical progression of the argument an integral stage in the writing process.

91-208 El-Sayed, Ali (Qatar U.). Politeness formulas in English and Arabic: a contrastive study. *ITL* (Louvain), **89-/-90** (1990), 1-23.

To be familiar with the kinds of formulaic expressions used by speakers of a language as markers of politeness, is essential for the acquisition of communicative competence in language. Such expressions can present many pitfalls for the learner who is not fully aware of their conditions of use. A failure to grasp the often subtle differences between first-language and target-language formulas can lead to serious misunderstandings and misjudgements.

In this paper the author is not concerned with the full range of formulas, which would include

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idiomatic expressions, proverbs, clichés, and the formulas used in structuring conversational exchanges, but only with those formulas whose use is part of a society's protocol, and which are considered by members of that society to be markers of politeness. Ferguson labels such routines 'politeness formulas' and they include the fixed expressions conventionally used in many societies for such purposes as greeting, taking leave, thanking, apologising, congratulating, and expressing various kinds of wish.

An explicitly contrastive discussion of formulas in Arabic and English can be helpful both in improving the learner's productive and receptive performance and in developing a deeper understanding of the foreign culture.

91–209 Hirvela, Alan (Chinese U., Hong Kong). ESP and literature: a reassessment. *English for Specific Purposes* (Oxford), **9**, 3 (1990), 237–52.

The strength of any language teaching methodology rests in part on its ability to adapt to changing circumstances within the larger scene of which it is a member. One of the changes now taking place in ELT is the gradual re-emergence of literature in the form of a language teaching tool. In large measure, this change is a response to what Brumfit calls 'the trivialisation of language teaching' found in many communicative language teaching situations. This shifting in the pedagogical tide creates an excellent opportunity for a reappraisal of what literature may have to offer in the ESP context. The following paper argues in favour of that step. In the process, it advocates a new form of LSP (traditionally, Language for Special Purposes): Literature for Specific Purposes. This paper makes a case for a literary component in ESP using as a foundation a series of concepts developed by Widdowson. It also provides a brief demonstration of the LSP approach using a science fiction story in an EAP/EST context.

91–210 Hyland, Ken. Providing productive feedback. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **44**, 4 (1990), 279–85.

Many teachers find marking to be a tedious and unrewarding chore. While it is a crucial aspect of the classroom writing process, our diligent attention and careful comments only rarely seem to bring about improvements in subsequent work. To ensure that marking becomes an effective tool in our teaching programmes, then, we must persuade students to act on the feedback we provide. The alternative feedback methods suggested here offer explicit information about teacher expectations and encourage students to go back and reassess their work. 'Minimal marking' and taped commentary can therefore be considered as 'interactive' feedback styles.

91–211 Leung, Constant (SW Herts Language and Curriculum Support Service) **and Franson, Charlotte** (Brent Language Service). The multilingual classroom: the case for minority language pupils. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (Cleveden, Avon), **10**, 6 (1989), 461–72.

An overview of approaches adopted in education systems in other countries leads to consideration of current practice in the UK, where withdrawal and separate classes (now deemed to be both discriminatory and liable to lead to lower levels of attainment when pupils join mainstream classes) have been superseded by 'language support'. Minority language pupils are placed in mainstream classes and taught through the majority language while receiving assistance with English from 'language support' or 'bilingual' teachers – a procedure further justified on the grounds that English is best taught when used for real communication in a meaningful context-rich environment. However, in secondary, as opposed to primary, schools, a far higher level of linguistic control and accuracy is required of pupils while contextual clues are sharply reduced, particularly in academic or examination classes. Language support teacher and subject teacher have to collaborate in developing a systematic and coherent set of objectives and goals which are appropriate to the pupils' age and grade, together with teaching strategies which take into account the necessary demarcation of classroom responsibilities.

91-212 Reid, Euan. Culture and language: teaching ESL in England. *ELT Documents* (London), **182** (1990), 66–75.

The typical population of English inner-city schools is made up of pupils from many diverse cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Since the early '60s, the emphasis in ESL has shifted from separate language centres, withdrawal classes and disregard of the mother tongue to mixed mainstream classes with language support and collaborative teaching and the beginnings of recognition accorded to mother tongue teaching. With the growing awareness of the social, cultural and political implications of separate provision have come corresponding changes in the content of ESL teaching materials. Separate provision can no longer be represented as equal provision; cultural contact and exchange is at the heart of effective learning.

91-213 Vincent, Susan. Motivating the advanced learner in developing writing skills: a project. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **44**, 4 (1990), 272–8.

Advanced students of EFL often reach a plateau of achievement and see little need for improvement. The teachers needs to create a context for communication by finding out what is important to them, which then gives the students impetus and motivation for developing their writing skills in a meaningful way. University students in Poland on a five-year degree course were guided towards looking beyond the immediate academic context of their studies, to using their writing skills in the world where they would shortly be earning their living.

French

91-214 Adamson, Robin (U. of Dundee). Is there such a thing as communicative grammar? *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **2** (1990), 25–32.

Traditional literature courses at university level are not appropriate for the acquisition of foreign language skills required in post-graduate professional life. These skills have been identified as interpreting, report-preparation and delivery, interviewing, negotiating, discussing, debating, decision-making, translation of specialised texts into English. *En fin de compte*, aimed at final honours French students, was created to teach such skills. The textbook includes sections on communicative grammar, that is, grammar which involves meaningful stretches of language rather than simply single sentence structures. It also incorporates a range of possible ways of conveying a message, from which the student can choose and which will encourage the student to develop his/her own resources.

91-215 Billières, M. and Borrell, A. (U. of Toulouse–Le Mirail). Quelques problèmes soulevés par les différentes variétés d'accents dans les méthodes de français langue étrangère. [Some problems raised by different kinds of accent in the teaching of French as a foreign language.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **94** (1990), 17–40.

The authors of works on the methodology of teaching French to foreigners never define the phonetics norm of the recordings that work with pedagogical materials. This paper shows that phonetics and didactics of languages function together in an ambiguous way. It is demonstrated that the phonetics norm has been considerably modified since the '60s, which makes the task of authors, teachers and learners all the more difficult. In the last part, the authors question whether the use of regional or foreign accents in recordings is justified.

91–216 Challe, Odile (U. of Paris–Dauphine) **and Lehmann, Denis** (ENS de Fontenay–Saint Cloud). Le Français Fonctionnel entre l'alternative politique et le renouvellement méthodologique. [Functional French between political alternatives and methodological renewal.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number Aug/Sept (1990), 74–80.

'Functional French' was a term invented in the '70s by officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to counteract the decline of French abroad, whereas language teaching experts were more concerned to introduce reforms in teaching methodology which came to be known as the communicative approach. In 1979–81 government policy favoured a much higher cultural profile in target countries and so *Bureaux de Services Pédagogiques* became *Bureaux d'Action Linguistique*. However, the attempt to promote Functional French failed, owing to budgetary restrictions and indifference on the part of teachers, as well as the wide acceptance of the communicative approach.

91–217 Franklin, Carole E. M. (U. of Edinburgh). Teaching in the target language: problems and prospects. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **2** (1990), 20–4.

This article attempts to discover why teachers find it so difficult to employ French as the medium of instruction in Scottish secondary-school French language classrooms. Some 90% of respondents recognise the importance of teaching in the foreign language, but having divided classroom management tasks into three main categories of difficulty, they identify three principal impediments: (*a*) learners are often prepared for a public examination in which many questions are in English, (*b*) colleagues may not be happy with communicative methodology, and (*c*) mixed-ability classes. The categories of problem (or excuse) are further classified as the nature and reaction of the class, the teacher's confidence, and external factors.

What is needed is a teaching methodology which treats all pupils as equally capable of learning a foreign language. Although many see class size as an obstacle, the real issue is indiscipline (especially in mixed-ability classes). A plea is made for group and pair work, and the presence of a second teacher in the classroom. Co-operative teaching of this kind helps the teacher to maintain the use of the target language in the classroom. Few teachers with such experience would give it up so that class sizes could be permanently reduced.

91–218 Wilczynska, Weronika (U. of Poznan, Poland). Avez-vous vu la même chose que les français? Stéréotypes et documents authentiques vidéo. [Did you see the same thing as the French saw? Stereotypes and authentic video documents.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **236** (1990), 73–7.

Because foreign viewers will interpret an authentic video document according to their cultural presuppositions, it is a risky tool for teaching, especially as its impact is strengthened by its reception through several modalities or codes – sight, sound, language. For the same reason, however, it is ideal for studying the foreign milieu through the symbolic system which articulates it. Indeed, foreign language teaching should include acquisition of received ideas and opinions in the countries where the language is spoken. With such stereotypes internalised, the learner can read and listen more quickly and easily and discern the non-stereotypical accurately, for example the social scope of *tu* and *vous* in French. Stereotypes constitute a sort of customary law and to resist them, as many methodologists do, makes it difficult for the learner to adopt a foreign language persona. One cannot offer a list of such stereotypes since each has a highly personal affective colouring, but students should be able to recognise them in the video context when they occur, and then identify themselves with them or distance themselves from them. Better still for their education in cultural variety and tolerance, they might merely understand them. Thus video enables language teaching to play a broader educational role.

German

91-219 Britt, Christa W. and others. The demand for German language proficiency in German-owned companies in the United States. *Die Unterrichspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **22**, 2 (1989), 186–90.

This nation-wide survey of 1,400 German-owned companies in the U.S. asked questions about the importance of their employees having general and business German language proficiency (GLP). The 250 respondents answered that thousands of managers and other personnel regularly use German in their work, and that not enough applicants with GLP are presently available, resulting in preferential treatment of job applicants with GLP, salary premiums of up to 20%, and overseas assignments for them.

91-220 Höhne, Steffen. Kommunikationsberatung Deutsch als Fremdsprache. [Advisory Service – German as a Foreign Language.] *Sprache und Literatur* (Munich, Germany), **21**, 1 (1990), 84–95.

A Telephone Language Service was set up in 1987 by the Heine University in Düsseldorf to answer questions from the public about the correct rules of German usage. Extensive publicity at the outset ensured that the service now receives around 400 enquiries a month, 88% of which are from Germans, although the service was originally intended for foreigners. The majority of queries concern difficulties of transforming spoken into written language – spelling, punctuation and syntax. Other major areas of uncertainty involve word formation, derivation, treatment of foreign expressions, especially anglicisms, and forms of address. A minor role is played by language purists and amateur etymologists. Results of feedback from queries will be used to revise future language reference works and textbooks of German as a foreign language.

Russian

91-221 Andrews, Edna. Peirce's emotional interpretant: a key to bilingualism. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **28**, 3 (1990), 185–200.

One of the fundamental questions that linguists studying second-language acquisition and instructors of second languages face involves a definition of bilingualism. What is bilingualism and is it attainable by second-language learners? The author aims to analyse the problems involved in teaching Russian verbal aspect to English speakers and suggests an explanation and solution to the dilemma of achieving bilingualism by using one of two trichotomies of INTERPRETANTS given by C. S. Peirce.

In order to illustrate fully the connection between Peirce's second trichotomy of interpretants and principles of second-language acquisition and bilingualism, the triad of interpretants is defined in terms of linguistic sign systems. The notion of interpretant is examined in relation to specific linguistic issues, such as the teaching of Russian verbal aspect, as well as to theoretical linguistic principles as developed by Saussure and Jakobson. In particular, Jakobson's model of the six factors and functions of language is redefined in Peircean terms to make more explicit the semiotic interaction between the triad of interpretants and linguistic signs in general. Finally, conclusions are drawn concerning the practical steps required in achieving a more efficient learning environment for second-language (L2) learners and the attainment of bilingual ability.