Language learning and teaching – theory and practice

Theory and principles

96–136 Bushell, Anthony (U. of Wales, Bangor). Language learning and the 'weak' advanced student. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 38–9.

Growing student numbers, consequent upon linking university incomes to student enrolments, together with a less discriminating intake of language students onto degree courses, have led to an erosion of standards and to university language departments being confronted by a widening gap between their traditional expectations and the actual language skills of the newest generation of students. Changes in the syllabus for 'A' level, which has become the accepted university entrance qualification, and a shift in emphasis in language teaching and learning in the schools, have also played their part

Universities have found themselves obliged to offer remedial courses to new language students. For some, the solution lies in computer-assisted language learning (CALL). However, without increased funding to retain the favourable staff–student ratios essential to good language teaching, it is hard to see how a solution can be found. Unless it is, the British university language degree will inevitably be devalued.

96–137 Byram, Michael and others (U. of Durham). Defining and describing 'cultural awareness'. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 5–8.

In order to develop the suggestion of the Working Party on Modern Foreign Languages that programmes of study should contain more focus on 'cultural awareness', an investigation into language teachers' perception of 'cultural awareness' was set up. Data collected through questionnaires was analysed and described under three headings: the content of 'cultural awareness', the awareness of culture, and developing pupils' understanding of themselves and their own culture. Whilst the responses were found to be wide-ranging in nature, comments made by the subjects were grouped under categories such as references to ways of life or tradition and definition of culture in terms of art and literature.

Conclusions drawn by the survey include the following: firstly, there needs to be more consideration of the relationship between knowledge about culture and attitudes towards culture, and secondly, teaching for 'cultural awareness' could encourage learners to 'criticise' their own culture in the light of their awareness of another culture.

96–138 Germain, Claude (U. of Quebec, Montreal). Implications or applications versus relevancy of linguistics to second language teaching. *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal), **2** (1994), 39–48.

Twenty-five years after Spolsky's article on the relationship between academic disciplines and second language teaching, it is time to re-examine the issue. Firstly, if the goal assigned to applied or educational linguistics is to resolve practical problems, theoretical constructions are ill-fitted and inappropriate (concerning outcome, subject matter, problems and methods), inadequate where appropriate, and not unified where adequate. Secondly, five types of problems related to imported disciplines are mentioned (these include insecure theories). In calling for a scientific theory of language teaching, the author suggests that concepts of 'applications' and 'implications' should be replaced by the more fruitful concept of 'relevancy'.

96–139 Graddol, David and Swann, Joan Language and gender as applied linguistics. *Bulletin Suisse de Linguistique Appliquée* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland), **62** (1995), 75–88.

In this paper, the authors examine some ideas about language which are becoming popular amongst members of BAAL (British Association of Applied Linguistics), and which seem to be increasingly employed in analyses of data by applied linguists in Britain. These ideas belong broadly to a functional model of language, which owes much to the work of Michael Halliday, but they draw also on what is sometimes called a postmodern theory of language and society. The authors show briefly how the

field of 'language and gender' is becoming reconceptualised under the influence of such theory. They also illustrate some of the ways researchers have applied research findings in language and gender to the traditional, core activity of Applied Linguistics: namely education.

96–140 Hornsey, Alan (Inst. of Ed.). A language for living. *Languages Forum* (London), **1**, 4 (1995), 17–20.

The term 'language awareness' has been used to convey a variety of different concepts. Thus there is confusion surrounding the actual meaning of the term and this has not been clarified by its use in the National Curriculum. In fact, 'language awareness' should be taught as a practical life skill which enables learners to 'disembed' both their own and others' use of language. This skill should also be taught through modern languages as the double aim of acquiring 'language awareness' as well as a new foreign language would make learning a modern language a more useful and profound experience.

The teaching of 'language awareness' should begin as early as primary school and should be present not solely in the teaching of English but in all areas of the curriculum through secondary school. Specifically in modern languages, teachers should feel that they are able to discuss what has been taught with students in their mother tongue and also highlight patterns of language without being concerned that these practices are unfashionable.

96–141 Mohammed, Abdelmoneim M. (Sultan Qaboos U., Sultanate of Oman) Grammar instruction in language development: rationale and technique. *Language Awareness* (Clevedon, Avon), **4**, 1 (1995), 49–58.

The most widely documented purpose of grammar teaching is that it serves as feedback whereby the learners confirm or modify the rules which they discover by themselves from the language data made available to them. The confirmed or modified rules and the ready made ones which grammar instruction might add, can be used to monitor output, create new forms and process the language input for comprehension and possible acquisition. The teaching of grammar, then, supplements the learners' natural tendency to formulate and test hypotheses about the language. However, this goal may not be achieved when grammar rules and explanations are couched in metalinguistic terms and contain complicated linguistic analyses carried over from reference grammars. Based on the learners' conscious hypothesis-formation process, pedagogical grammar can be made less formal by keeping the analysis and metalanguage to the minimum.

96–142 Poole, Beate and Roberts, Tony (Inst. of Ed., U. of London). Primary school modern language teaching: some unanswered questions. *Languages Forum* (London), **1**, 4 (1995), 2–5.

In the light of increasing interest in the reintroduction of foreign language learning in primary school, some of the related issues are considered. As a result of the Burstall report on the NFER project *French from Eight* in the 1960s, which showed that children starting a foreign language at eight did not perform significantly better at 16 than those who had started later, language teaching at primary level has all but disappeared. Lessons to be learned from the past are discussed as well as questions on which any future scheme should be based.

In addition to the considerable doubt as to whether there is an optimum age at which to start learning a foreign language, potential benefits seem, if anything, to be more psychological than linguistic, though it is very difficult to evaluate the linguistic or affective benefits of an early start. Comparison with schemes in other countries is not appropriate, since English is the international lingua franca and thus an obvious first choice in non-English-speaking countries; however, which language should be taught to pupils in the UK poses a dilemma in terms of later usefulness. In view of the possibility of expansion in primary modern language teaching, a tentative framework is suggested in which cultural and linguistic awareness in several languages is deemed a more suitable aim than the acquisition of a specific language.

96–143 Thomas, Margaret (Boston Coll., MA). Medieval and modern views of universal grammar and the nature of second language learning. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, WI), **79**, 3 (1995), 345–55.

This paper examines the relationship between ideas of Universal Grammar (UG) and second language (L2) teaching and learning in medieval Europe, so as to bring light from the past to bear on 20th-century debate about the role of UG in L2 acquisition. Because the language used in the Middle Ages to speculate about UG was an L2 and because philosophers of language appropriated a meta-language from L2 literature, there was commerce between the activities of L2 teaching and learning and attempts to define UG. Influence also flowed from work addressing the nature of language into L2 pedagogy. In the 20th century, much L2 research has adopted the tools and goals of generative linguistics, but few of the fruits of such work have been incorporated back into linguistic theory. Thus the different contexts of the medieval and modern eras have shaped in different ways how UG has been investigated and how L2s have been studied.

96–144 Valdés, Guadalupe (Stanford U.). The teaching of minority languages as academic subjects: pedagogical and theoretical challenges. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, WI), **79**, 3 (1995), 299–328.

This article raises questions about the practice of teaching minority (ethnic/immigrant) languages as academic subjects in multilingual settings and points to directions in which the field of applied linguistics must move in order to develop adequate principles of language learning that can support such instruction. The article consists of three principal sections. Section one defines the term 'linguistic minority' and offers examples of linguistic minority populations. Section two describes the teaching of Spanish to bilingual Spanish-speaking students in the United States. It then illustrates the broad problems and questions encountered in teaching minority languages as school subjects by drawing on the discussion of the history, development, and current status of the teaching of Spanish to bilingual minorities in the US. Section three proposes a reconceptualisation of the language teaching focus within applied linguistics that takes into account the problems and challenges surrounding the teaching of minority languages.

Psychology of language learning

96–145 Allison, Desmond and others (U. of Hong Kong). Processes and their products: a comparison of task sequences and outcomes in EAP writing classes. *Hong Kong Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Hong Kong), **18** (1995), 13–32.

A recent study by the authors proposed a rationale for investigating the effects of mediating tasks upon a summary-writing activity for tertiary-level students using English as an educational medium. The tasks in the study involved a group discussion or a reading comprehension exercise, with a third condition providing for immediate access to the text and summary instructions with no mediating activity. A subsequent comparative analysis of the content of summaries written by students under these three conditions revealed substantial differences in the selection and weighting of summary topics according to task conditions.

The authors then undertook comparative studies of students' performance during the group discussions or on the reading comprehension exercise (the two mediating activities) and on their final written summaries. These comparisons focus on topic selection and relative prominence, and on lexical density as a measure of the texture of the spoken and written discourses. Students' own perceptions of the cognitive or affective impact of mediating tasks are also explored through self-report questionnaires completed at the time. Implications drawn for teaching and research include the importance of evaluating performance outcomes in relation to a number of specified goals and sets of criteria before assessing them as evidence of possible success or failure in terms of classroom language learning.

96–146   Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen (Indiana U.). A narrative perspective on the development of the tense/aspect system in second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, IN), **17**, 2 (1995), 263–91.

A number of studies on the acquisition of tense and aspect by learners of a second language point to the hypothesis that narrative structure influences the distribution of tense/aspect forms in interlanguage. However, the studies have reported conflicting profiles of tense/aspect use. This study suggests that much of the variation that has been previously reported stems from the level of proficiency of the learners. This cross-sectional study examines 37 written and oral narrative pairs produced in a film retell task by adult learners of English as a second language. The analysis approaches the texts from two perspectives, from the perspective of acquisition, taking narrative structure (specifically grounding) as an environment for acquisition of tense/aspect, and from the perspective of the narrative itself, characterising the foreground and background by the tense/aspect forms used. The study finds a developmental pattern in the distribution of tense/aspect morphology with respect to narrative structure. These results permit the assimilation of earlier findings into a developmental sequence in the acquisition of the tense/aspect system.

96–147   Berwick, Richard (U. of British Columbia). Toward a framework for background knowledge in second language education. *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal), **16**, 2 (1994), 65–81.

Second-language learners bring a rich background of linguistic and cultural resources, acquired in a first culture, to second language instructional settings. What are the characteristics of this background knowledge, how is it employed in various instructional tasks and to what extent does it comprise a resource for other learners during oral exchanges in second-language classrooms? This paper examines the relationship between learners' extant knowledge and various characteristics of task and task-based interaction that have received attention in the literature. It also extends several approaches to communication of knowledge in educational settings toward the outline of a framework for background knowledge in second-language education.

96–148   Carrell, Patricia L. and others (Georgia State U.). First and second language reading strategies: evidence from cloze. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **10**, 1 (1993) [publ. 1995], 953–65.

In a variety of different studies, cloze tests have been used to examine the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers' performance on the same task and across languages. In this study, in addition to using cloze tests to examine native and non-native speakers' performance both on the same task and across languages, cloze performance is examined as a window on native and non-native readers' strategies. The performances of native speakers of Chinese and of English on a random deletion cloze in their native language, and, in the case of the Chinese, also in English as a second language were closely examined for what they reveal about native and non-native readers' strategies and about reading in the two different languages. Results indicate that native and non-native speakers perform similarly on cloze in a given language (English) – that native and non-native speakers seem to use the same strategies on cloze in English – and that readers perform differently in different languages (Chinese and English). Chinese and English readers' responses tended to be similar in English, with differences due to whether the language was the readers' native or foreign language. However, Chinese readers' responses were not similar on the Chinese and English clozes.

96–149   de Groot, Annette M. B. and Comijs, Hannie. Translation recognition and translation production: comparing a new and an old tool in the study of bilingualism. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 3 (1995), 467–509.

This study explored the 'translation-recognition' task. Each trial in this task presents a word pair, one word in L1, the second in L2. The participant has to decide whether or not the words within a pair are translations of one another. Performance is compared with that in translation production, where on each trial the participant has to come up with the translation of the presented word. The results of two

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experiments, one for 40 adult Dutch learners of English and the second for 80 people from the same population, suggest that translation recognition and translation production generally respond to the same manipulations. An exception to this pattern emerges when cognates and non-cognates are focused on separately. With non-cognate materials translation production from L1 to L2 shows a larger role of semantic variables than both translation production from L2 to L1 and translation recognition. Whether within the recognition task cognates and non-cognates are presented mixed or blocked, and whether the non-translation pairs consist of perceptually similar or dissimilar words, or both, do not affect the actual translation–retrieval process.

96–150   DeKeyser, Robert M. (U. of Pittsburgh). Learning second language grammar rules: an experiment with a miniature linguistic system. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, IN), **17**, 3 (1995), 379–410.

This is a report on a computerised experiment with a miniature linguistic system, consisting of five morphological rules and a lexicon of 98 words. Two hypotheses derived from the literature in cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics were tested: that explicit-deductive learning would be better than implicit-inductive learning for straightforward ('categorical') rules; and that implicit-inductive learning would be better than explicit-deductive learning for fuzzy rules ('prototypicality patterns'). Implicit-inductive learning was implemented by pairing sentences with colour pictures; explicit-deductive learning was implemented by means of traditional grammar rule presentation, followed by picture–sentence pairing. The findings were in the expected direction for both hypotheses, but only the first one could be confirmed through statistically significant results.

96–151   Eckart, Helga (U. of Wales). Intensive language courses and the adult learner. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 31–4.

The results of a survey conducted to establish the characteristics and motivation of adult learners on intensive five-day foreign language (L2) summer-school courses at the University of Cardiff are discussed. The course – designed to encourage students to practise their conversation skills over the summer vacation – typically drew well-educated students, of whom 60% were women and of whom the average age was 45. Overall, it was found that 'pure interest in learning a foreign language' was the main motivating factor, particularly for those learning German, Spanish and Portuguese. French and Portuguese attracted the greatest number of students learning 'for holiday/travel reasons', but French, along with German, was also rated as potentially 'useful for future job'.

Students who expressed a preference for an intensive course of study cited the convenience and perceived efficiency of intensive summer courses as reasons for their choice. Overall, the survey shows wide variation in the characteristics and motivation of students learning a foreign language. This finding underlines the importance of varying teaching methods and approaches; the use of one tutor was particularly successful in this respect.

96–152   Elliott, A. Raymond (U. of Texas at Arlington). Field independence/dependence, hemispheric specialisation, and attitude in relation to pronunciation accuracy in Spanish as a foreign language. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, WI), **79**, 3 (1995), 356–71.

Sixty-six intermediate students studying Spanish at Indiana University were measured on 12 variables believed to be related to pronunciation accuracy. The students' pronunciation was rated by three judges. Variables that related most to pronunciation accuracy were: (*a*) attitude or individual concern for pronunciation; (*b*) subject's degree of field independence (FI) as measured by the Group Embedded Figures Test; and (*c*) subject's degree of right hemispheric specialisation (RT) in relation to accurate pronunciation on a free-speech exercise. Variables that proved to have little or no relationship to pronunciation were: (*a*) left/integrated hemispheric specialisation, (*b*) gender, (*c*) foreign travel, (*d*) other languages learned/spoken, (*e*) overall Grade Point Average (GPA), (*f*) GPA in Spanish, and (*g*) having Spanish-speaking relatives. The relationship between pronunciation accuracy and subjects' total number of years of formal instruction in Spanish approached significance; however, this relationship was lost in a multiple regression analysis when factors such as

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attitude and FI were taken into consideration. The results suggest that although FI and RT hemispheric specialisation relate to accurate target language pronunciation in certain tasks, attitude or concern for pronunciation accuracy proved to be the most significant factor. Finally, a classroom model of pronunciation instruction is posited, as well as implications for future research.

96–153 Flanigan, Beverly Olson (Ohio U.). Anaphora and relativisation in child second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, IN), **17**, 3 (1995), 331–51.

The focus of this study is the development of control over anaphoric reference and relativisation by children learning ESL in a pull-out classroom employing little overt grammar instruction. Twenty-three children aged 6.5–14 representing ESL proficiency levels 3–5 on the Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM) were given paper-and-pencil tests to determine comprehension of anaphoric (reflexive and pronominal) reference in English; in addition, they were tested on both comprehension and production of restrictive relative clause types (SS, SO, OO, and OS) in English. Scores were higher on reflexives than on pronominals, with length of residence significant in ambiguous references. Relative clause interpretation varied significantly with proficiency level, but production was not predictable from general proficiency except at BSM level 5, and then only on SO and SS relativisation. Transfer from the L1 was minimal. It is concluded that exposure and overall L2 proficiency, rather than age or L1 background, are the most significant factors in the development of these generally untaught and untested 'late-learned' rules.

96–154 Frantzen, Diana (Indiana U.). The effects of grammar supplementation on written accuracy in an intermediate Spanish content course. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, WI), **79**, 3 (1995), 329–44.

Two sections of an intermediate Spanish content course were supplemented with grammar (daily grammar review and error correction feedback on written work); two comparison group sections lacked the grammar component. Two written pre-/post-tests – one grammar-focused, one integrative (an essay) – showed that both groups exhibited significant improvement over the semester in overall grammatical accuracy on both instruments. The plus-grammar group significantly outperformed the non-grammar group on the grammar-focused instrument but not on the integrative one. A few between-group differences occurred on the essays, but there was no tendency for one group to outperform the other. The results suggest that a grammar review is a beneficial supplement to a content course when performance on grammar-focused tests is important, but that an intermediate level content course by itself can promote significant improvement in grammatical accuracy in writing in the target language.

96–155 Hongguang Ying (U. of Arizona). What sort of input is needed for intake? *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 3 (1995), 175–94.

Gass and Selinker's account of 'input' and 'intake' is analysed and the author makes four arguments: (1) without 'accessible input', 'frequency', 'prior knowledge', 'affect', 'attention' and 'negotiation' do not appear to be sufficient for 'comprehended input'; (2) 'prior knowledge' does not necessarily constitute the basis of comprehension in L2 learning; (3) 'comprehended input' does not have to be 'learner-controlled'; and (4) 'input' and 'intake' are not necessarily two fundamentally different phenomena. The author then proposes two concepts believed to be essential for 'input' to become 'intake'. First, the learner needs to be provided with 'accessible input', which refers to 'input in line with the learner's developmental stages or readiness'; and secondly, the learner needs to process and understand the 'input', hence 'processed input', which calls for the activation of learner's factors (e.g., attention, affect, prior knowledge), the help of external factors (e.g., input processing instruction, input enhancement), and the interaction of both factors (e.g., negotiation).

96–156 Huang, Gary Gang (National Center for Education Statistics). Self-reported biliteracy and self-esteem: a study of Mexican American 8th graders. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **16**, 3 (1995), 271–91.

The concept of proficient bilingualism or biliteracy (proficiency in reading and writing in both Spanish and English) has been used in research on linguistic and academic processes among Mexican American children, but rarely has it been used to examine non-cognitive outcomes in this population. Biliteracy – a quality that strengthens cultural identity and facilitates adaptation to the mainstream society – hypothetically contributes to the growth of self-esteem among Mexican Americans. Biliteracy is arguably more relevant to the development of self-concept among Mexican American children than Spanish proficiency or a general notion of bilingualism. Drawing on data from the 1988 National Education Longitudinal Survey, this article compares self-deprecation, self-confidence, and fatalistic belief among Mexican American 8th

graders who reported themselves as biliterate, English monoliterate, Spanish monoliterate, or oral bilingual. Controlling for the effects of sociodemographic background and school experience, ordinary least-square regression analysis generated supportive results. Mexican American children who identified themselves as biliterate had higher self-confidence than other groups (English or Spanish monoliterates and oral bilinguals). Logistic regression analysis found a strong interaction effect between self-identity and birthplace (United States or foreign) and parents' education. Among students born in the United States, parents' education was negatively related to biliterate identity. In contrast, parents' education was positively associated with biliterate identity among those who were foreign-born.

96–157 Jarvis, Lorna H. (Hope Coll., MI) **and others**. The effect of bilingualism on cognitive ability: a test of the level of bilingualism hypothesis. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **16**, 3 (1995), 293–308.

Does bilingualism facilitate the development of cognitive abilities, and if so, how? According to the level of bilingualism hypothesis, only in the early stages of second language acquisition does bilingualism foster cognitive ability. This hypothesis was tested on a sample of 3rd and 4th grade Mexican Spanish–English bilinguals with low English proficiency. Knowledge of Spanish and English in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax was measured. Non-verbal general intelligence was assessed with

the Raven Colored Progressive Matrices, and verbal intelligence was assessed with a subtest of the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery. No relationship was found between degree of bilingualism and non-verbal intelligence, contrary to the level of bilingualism hypothesis. The results suggest that the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development are not solely dependent on the level of second language proficiency.

96–158 Klein, Elaine C. (City U. of New York). Second versus third language acquisition: is there a difference? *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 3 (1995), 419–65.

Previous research has investigated whether knowing more than one language will help adult learners acquire additional languages, with mixed results. It is questionable whether such enhancement, when it does exist, involves both the acquisition of lexical items and the acquisition of syntactic constructions. This study examined the latter question with a Universal Grammar (UG) parameter-setting model of acquisition, testing matched groups of 17 Unilingual (Ul) versus 15 Multilingual (Ml) adolescent high-school students acquiring English as

a second versus third (or fourth) language, respectively. Participants were tested on their acquisition of: (*a*) specific verbs and their prepositional complements (lexical learning) and (*b*) preposition stranding (syntactic learning). The Mls outperformed the Uls in both types of acquisition, suggesting that qualities attributed to Mls, that is, heightened metalinguistic skills, enhanced lexical knowledge, and a less conservative learning procedure, all help to trigger the setting of UG parameters.

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96–159   Lakshmanan, Usha (Southern Illinois U.). Child second language acquisition of syntax. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, IN), **17**, 3 (1995), 301–29.

Recent advances in linguistic theory within the principles and parameters framework have exerted considerable influence on the field of second language acquisition. SLA researchers working within this framework of syntactic theory have investigated the extent to which developing second language grammars are constrained by principles of Universal Grammar (UG). Much of the UG-based SLA research in the 1980s focused on adult L2 acquisition, but the role of UG principles in child L2 acquisition remained largely unexplored. More recently, however, this state of affairs has begun to change as SLA researchers are becoming more and more interested in child second language syntactic development. Recent and current developments in UG-based child SLA research are reviewed here, and it is argued that child SLA has a valuable role to play in enabling us to arrive at a better understanding of the role of biological factors in language acquisition and in strengthening the links between SLA and linguistic theory. Specifically, the author discusses the findings of child SLA studies with respect to the following issues: the role of UG parameters in child SLA, the status of functional categories and their projections in child SLA, and the nature of the evidence available to and used by child L2 learners. The overall picture emerging from these studies suggests that child L2 developing grammars are indeed constrained by UG. While it is not fully clear at the present time whether the child L2 learners' knowledge is a result of direct access to UG or indirect access to UG (i.e., through the mediation of the L1), the evidence indicates that L1 transfer (at least in certain syntactic domains) cannot be entirely ruled out.

96–160   Laufer, Batia (U. of Haifa) **and Nation, Paul** (Victoria U. of Wellington). Vocabulary size and use: lexical richness in L2 written production. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **16**, 3 (1995), 307–22.

This article shows that if there is some control over genre then there will be a close correspondence between the vocabulary size of intermediate learners as reflected in their writing and a more direct measure of vocabulary size. The study proposes a new measure of lexical richness, the Lexical Frequency Profile, which looks at the proportion of high frequency general service and academic words in learners' writing. The study shows that it is possible to obtain a reliable measure of lexical richness which is stable across two pieces of writing by the same learners. It also discriminates between learners of different proficiency levels. For learners of English as a second language, the Lexical Frequency Profile is seen as a measure of how vocabulary size is reflected in use. In this study, it was found that the Lexical Frequency Profile correlates well with an independent measure of vocabulary size. This reliable and valid measure of lexical richness in writing will be useful for determining the factors that affect judgements of quality in writing and will be useful for examining how vocabulary growth is related to vocabulary use.

96–161   McQuillan, Jeff and Rodrigo, Victoria (U. of Southern California, Los Angeles). A reading 'Din in the head': evidence of involuntary mental rehearsal in second language readers. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 330–6.

The phenomenon of involuntary mental rehearsal of language, or the 'Din in the head', has been considered by researchers as an indicator of second language (L2) acquisition among acquirers. Previous studies have noted that the Din occurs primarily among beginning and intermediate L2 students after the reception of oral input that is comprehensible, but not after reading. It has been argued that this lack of a reported Din is due to the fact that such students typically do very little reading, and that acquirers who did read would experience a 'reading Din'. This study provides evidence for an L2 Din after reading from a survey of two classes of intermediate Spanish students: a 'Reading Only' group ($N = 20$), whose only source of L2 input was reading; and a 'Reading and Conversation' group ($N = 15$), who received both printed and oral input. Both groups reported a Din after L2 reading. The findings lend support to claims made by Krashen concerning the importance of comprehensible input in L2 acquisition. Implications for the use of reading in beginning and intermediate L2 classrooms are discussed.

96–162 Mantle-Bromley, Corinne (Colorado State U.). Positive attitudes and realistic beliefs: links to proficiency. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, WI), **79**, 3 (1995), 372–86.

Middle-school-aged students in 12 classes of a nine-week Foreign Language Exploratory programme participated in a study attempting to maintain and/or to improve students' attitudes toward French and Spanish speakers, replicating an earlier study of first-year Spanish students. Students in the treatment group participated in culture-related lessons that used attitude-change theory in their design. Analysis of covariance procedures showed that the experimental group's mean score on a modified version of the Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery was significantly greater than that of students in the control group (p < 0.05). In addition, using the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory, the study measured, in an exploratory fashion, students' beliefs about the language learning process. Results demonstrated that many young students enter their first language class with misconceptions about language learning that may hinder their progress and persistence in language study.

96–163 Nunan, David (U. of Hong Kong) **and Keobke, Ken** (City U. of Hong Kong). Task difficulty from the learner's perspective: perceptions and reality. *Hong Kong Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Hong Kong), **18** (1995), 1–12.

This paper explores the issue of task difficulty from the perspective of the learner. The aims of the investigation were twofold. In the first place, the authors wanted to investigate the relationship between student perception of task difficulty, and actual difficulty as measured by successful completion of a task. Secondly, they wanted to collect information on those factors identified by students themselves, as implicated in task difficulty. Subjects were 35 first year undergraduate students undertaking a Higher Diploma in Banking and Finance at City University of Hong Kong who estimated the difficulty of a series of tasks, completed the tasks in two classroom sessions, and then provided their views on the reasons for the difficulty of the tasks. Results of the investigation are presented, and their implications are discussed.

96–164 Pickard, Nigel (Humberside U.). Out-of-class language learning strategies: three case studies. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 35–7.

Languages are not learnt solely in the classroom, but also from newspapers, novels, tapes, the radio, and conversations with natives. The article comprises case studies of three German-speaking learners of English who demonstrated a variety of motivation and strategy use. The study focuses primarily on the strategies employed during the learners' schooldays, although their out-of-class strategy use at Humberside is also discussed. The first student revealed an active task approach, learning English from novels, radio broadcasts, theatre and Scottish dancing. Her positive attitude towards Britain was important. The second student read extensively in English, listened to the radio and watched television. He stressed the importance of visiting the country itself, though his attitude to Britain was not seen as significant. The third student listened to the radio, watched cable television, read magazines and spent time abroad. She was influenced more by personal motivation than by external influence. The three students demonstrated a wide range of strategies; does strategy use result from language proficiency or *vice versa*? British foreign-language learners unfortunately make little use of such strategies.

96–165 Polio, Charlene (Michigan State U.). Acquiring nothing? The use of zero pronouns by non-native speakers of Chinese and the implications for the acquisition of nominal reference. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, IN), **17**, 3 (1995), 353–77.

Some earlier SLA research suggests that zero pronouns should be easily acquired by second language learners, yet this has not been carefully examined because studies of nominal reference are usually limited to the acquisition of languages that do not have zero pronouns. This study examines how speakers of languages with zero pronouns (Japanese) and without them (English) use zero

pronouns when acquiring a language that has them (Mandarin Chinese). The findings show that second language learners do not use zero pronouns as often as native speakers and that their use increases with proficiency. When examined more closely, it can be seen that the speakers have no difficulty using zero pronouns when there is a syntactic or semantic restriction, but they do have difficulty at the discourse level. It is claimed that this underuse of zero pronouns corresponds with other research that shows that second language learners tend to avoid pronouns in favour of full noun phrases. Some explanations of these phenomena are postulated.

96–166 Reynolds, Dudley W. (Indiana U.). Repetition in non-native speaker writing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, IN), **17**, 2 (1995), 185–209.

This paper presents an empirical study of repetition in expository essays written by 24 non-native speakers (NNS) and 16 native speakers (NS) of English. Repetition is coded according to three categories: the degree of particular types of repetition, the interaction between instances of repetition, and the location of these interactions. Four quantitative measures devised for this study show no significant differences between the two groups. A qualitative comparison of three essays from each group, however, shows that the NNSs do not match their degree of repetition to the development of the argument structure of the text in the same way as the NSs. These examples from NNS texts show that when considering the significance of repetition the content of what is being repeated is as important as the quantity.

96–167 Robinson, Peter (U. of Queensland, Australia). Attention, memory, and the 'noticing' hypothesis. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 2 (1995), 283–331.

Schmidt claimed that consciousness, in the sense of awareness of the form of input at the level of 'noticing', is necessary to subsequent second language acquisition (SLA). This claim runs counter to Krashen's dual-system hypothesis that SLA largely results from an unconscious 'acquisition' system, the contribution of the conscious 'learning' system to SLA being limited and peripheral. Important to a theory of SLA that allows a central role to the act of noticing is a specification of the nature of the attentional mechanisms involved, and of their relationship to current models of the organisation of memory. With this in mind this paper reviews current research into the nature of attention and memory and proposes a model of the relationship between them during SLA that, it is argued, is complementary to Schmidt's noticing hypothesis and oppositional to the dual-system hypothesis of Krashen. In light of this model, it is argued that differential performance on implicit and explicit learning and memory experiments is caused by differences in the consciously regulated processing demands of training tasks and not by the activation of consciously and unconsciously accessed systems. The attentional demands of pedagogical tasks and individual differences in memory and attentional capacity both affect the extent of noticing, thereby directly influencing SLA.

96–168 Robison, Richard E. (Azusa Pacific U.). The aspect hypothesis revisited: a cross-sectional study of tense and aspect marking in interlanguage. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **16**, 3 (1995), 344–70.

This paper examines the aspect hypothesis, which asserts that verb inflections in early interlanguage systems function primarily as markers of lexical aspect independent of the target language. It clarifies how developing inflections, particularly tense markers, align with aspect categories and how this association varies across proficiency level. The study analysed English interviews with 26 Puerto Rican college students grouped into four proficiency levels. Nine operational tests were applied to 3,649 predicates to assess three dimensions of lexical aspect, which interact to form six aspectual categories. Chi-square tests indicate significant interdependence of morphology and aspect at each proficiency level; Ss link -s with states, -ing with activities, and PAST with punctual events, the latter spreading to all punctual or telic predicates among the highest-level learners. The association of inflections with tense increases with proficiency level; lower-level Ss associate -s and PAST primarily with lexical aspect, higher level Ss primarily with tense.

96–169   Service, Elisabet (U. of Helsinki) **and Kohonen, Viljo** (U. of Tampere). Is the relation between phonological memory and foreign language learning accounted for by vocabulary acquisition? *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **16**, 2 (1995), 155–72.

In an earlier study, Service found that phonological short-term memory, reflected in the ability to repeat English-sounding pseudowords, was a good predictor of learning English as a foreign language over a period of three school years. This study attempts to find out to what extent foreign vocabulary learning is the critical learning process related to pseudoword repetition accuracy. Regression analyses on repetition data and learning measures revealed significant correlations between pseudoword repetition and foreign language learning, even after a measure of general academic achievement had been partialed out. In a fixed-order multiple regression analysis – with predictors entered in the order of general academic achievement, foreign language vocabulary, and pseudoword repetition – no additional variance in any foreign language measure studied could be accounted for by pseudoword repetition in the third step. When vocabulary in the second step was replaced by performance in foreign language essay writing or the correct reproduction of dictated discourse – both highly related to overall foreign language performance – repetition significantly increased the proportion of accounted variance, especially for two foreign language vocabulary tasks and a listening comprehension task. Phonological memory may, therefore, be specifically related to foreign vocabulary learning.

96–170   Westhoff, Gerard J. Kognitive und metakognitive (Lern)Handlungen und ihr Effekt auf die Leseleistung in der Fremdsprache. [Cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies and their effect on reading performance.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **94**, 5 (1995), 489–504.

This article focuses on the following issues: (1) Are good readers better than poor readers because they have better decoding skills, or rather due to their superior use of context-driven prior knowledge? (2) Does strategy training result in enhanced reading comprehension skills? The results of two experiments conducted by the author shed some light on these issues. The first experiment suggests that good readers are indeed better decoders, but that their superior use of context-driven knowledge plays a greater role. The second experiment indicates that, although traditional teaching methods help to improve reading comprehension scores, strategy training produces even better results.

96–171   Sparks, Richard L. (Coll. of Mount St. Joseph) **and Ganschow, Leonore** (Miami U.). Parent perceptions in the screening of performance in foreign language courses. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 371–91.

Parents' perceptions are not commonly used to assist educators in understanding students' foreign language learning problems. Here, a questionnaire designed to measure parents' perceptions of their child's developmental and academic histories, classroom learning characteristics, and previous foreign language learning was administered to 79 parents of children enrolled in first-year high school foreign language courses. Students were differentiated into low risk, average risk, and high risk groups based on questionnaire results and were administered a battery of native language tests and a foreign language aptitude measure. Final foreign language course grades were also obtained. Results showed overall group differences favouring the low and average risk groups over the high risk group on most items on the questionnaire on all but one of the native language, foreign language aptitude and cognitive measures, and foreign language grades. Results suggest that parents' perceptions of their children's developmental and academic learning histories may provide helpful screening information to foreign language teachers.

96–172   Swain, Merrill and Lapkin, Sharon (Ontario Inst. for Studies in Ed.). Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: a step towards second language learning. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **16**, 3 (1995), 371–91.

This paper argues, and provides data to support the argument, that in producing an L2, learners will on occasion become aware of (i.e. notice) a linguistic problem. Noticing a problem can 'push' learners to modify their output. In doing so, learners may sometimes be forced into a more syntactic

processing mode than might occur in comprehension. Thus, output sets 'noticing' in train, triggering mental processes that lead to modified output. What goes on between the original output and its reprocessed form, it is suggested, is part of the process of second language learning.

96–173   Uzawa, Kozue (U. of British Columbia). Translation, L1 writing, and L2 writing of Japanese ESL learners. *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal), **16**, 2 (1994), 119–34.

While translation in L2 learning/teaching has been viewed negatively since the 1950s in North America, a re-evaluation of translation has begun. In the present study, 22 Japanese ESL learners' translation processes and writings were examined and contrasted with the same group's L1 and L2 writing performance. The data were analysed with attention given to three recent cognitive theories of language learning: Cummins' theories of cross-linguistic interdependence of cognitive academic skills; Schmidt's 'conscious attention'; and McLaughlin's 'restructuring'. Cross-linguistic interdependence among translation, L1 writing, and L2 writing was not evident. However, there was evidence that translation processes prompted conscious attention and restructuring, which are considered to be necessary for L2 learning.

96–174   Vandergrift, Laurens (U. of Ottawa). Language learning strategy research: development of definitions and theory. *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **17**, 1 (1995), 87–104.

Language learning strategies (LLSs) are receiving greater research attention as an important variable in language learning. This paper presents a synthesis of the current literature on LLS research; advances in methodology; refinements in differentiating LLSs; and the development of a comprehensive classifi-cation system. The author also examines some models of language learning in order to evaluate information-processing theory as a fruitful conceptual framework for explaining the role of LLSs in language learning.

96–175   Whalen, Karen (York U.) **and Ménard, Nathan** (U. of Montreal). L1 and L2 writers' strategic and linguistic knowledge: a model of multiple-level discourse processing. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 3 (1995), 381–418.

This study compared the cognitive processing of 12 anglophone second-year French undergraduate students who were prompted to write an argumentative text in both L1 (English) and L2 (French). The students' speaking aloud protocols and textual drafts provided the bases of collected data. In the first part of the study, the writers' planning, evaluation and revision strategies were (*a*) analysed in terms of the pragmatic, textual and linguistic manifestations of these processes and (*b*) compared for differences in processing behaviours between their L1 and L2 writing. In the second part, linguistic processing occurrences were measured to analyse their effect on more global processing behaviours at the pragmatic and textual levels. The linguistic constraints imposed by the writers' knowledge of the second language (French) point toward some significant differences in discourse level processing between L1 and L2 writing behaviours. However, the results reveal that the state of the writers' strategic knowledge and capacity for meaningful multiple-level discourse processing explain the constraining of linguistic processing on L2 written discourse production.

96–176   Zhang, Shuqiang (U. of Hawaii at Manoa). Semantic differentiation in the acquisition of English as a second language. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 2 (1995), 225–49.

The mental organisations of two sets of fuzzy lexical items by 70 native speakers (NSs) of English and 185 learners of English as a second language (ESL) were analysed. They provided pair-wise comparisons of a set of degree adverbs and a set of frequency terms, respectively. Their judgements were subjected to unidimensional scaling and circular triad analysis, which indicated that: (*a*) despite their apparent familiarity with the items, ESL learners' semantic organisations deviated from the NSs' model; (*b*) the location and extent of semantic mismatch can be identified at different levels of ESL proficiency; (*c*) consistent approximation to the target model improves as ESL proficiency improves; (*d*) the structural stability of an individual's private semantic model is not readily generalisable between sets of

lexical items or levels of proficiency; and (*e*) consensus among ESL learners improves as proficiency increases. The findings suggest that a discernible approximative pattern exists in the acquisition of ESL semantics, with the differentiation of certain words acquired before the differentiation of others.

Research methods

96–177 Chalhoub-Deville, Micheline (U. of Minnesota). A contextualised approach to describing oral language proficiency. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 2 (1995), 251–81.

Although both raters and elicitation tasks are principal factors influencing the study of learners' second language (L2) oral proficiency, the effect of each has always been investigated separately; consequently, any possible relationship between them remains unexplored. In investigating the L2 oral proficiency construct, this study incorporated a variety of tasks and diverse rater groups. The tasks encompassed an interview, a narration and a read-aloud. The rater groups, all NSs of Arabic, included 15 teachers in the US, three non-teaching raters residing in the US, and 36 non-teaching raters living in Lebanon. Using multidimensional scaling analyses, dimensions underlying raters' holistic ratings of six learners' L2 oral proficiency were derived on each of the three tasks. In addition, the salience of the derived dimensions was specified for each of the three rater groups. The results showed that the nature of the L2 oral construct is not constant. Different weighted dimensions emerged when investigating the various tasks and rater groups. It was concluded that proficiency researchers should not employ generic dimensions; dimensions should be empirically derived according to the specific elicitation task and audience.

96–178 Coleman, James A. (U. of Portsmouth). Developing a questionnaire to investigate the advanced language learner. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 20–5.

The European Language Proficiency Survey is the largest ever survey of advanced language learners and its results will help map out research and policy agendas for the next millennium. The questionnaire for the pilot study, administered to foreign language (FL) learners in Britain, Germany and Austria, is described and revisions for a subsequent version discussed.

Results from the pilot study, against a background of personal information – biographical details to determine language and learning background, and qualifications and proficiency – suggest that motives for studying languages are mixed. There is a slight shift towards an integrative orientation (i.e., positive feelings towards the target community) and away from an instrumental one (in which the language is learned for practical purposes) in the final year. Those with an integrative orientation are found to have rather higher proficiency than their fellow students. The most controversial finding was that the year abroad rarely has a positive effect on students' perceptions of their hosts; the issue of inadequate preparation for this year will thus be an important one for follow-up research. The pilot study was also useful in ascertaining those questions deemed to be unreliable or uninformative for the purposes of the main survey.

96–179 Davis, Kathryn A. (U. of Hawaii at Manoa). Qualitative theory and methods in applied linguistics research. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **29**, 3 (1995), 427–53.

The separate, if sometimes complementary, role played in applied linguistics by sociolinguistics has meant that social and cultural aspects of language acquisition have been viewed as distinct and distant from the mental processes of that acquisition, and thus less important theoretically. There is currently great confusion among second language acquisition (SLA) researchers about what constitutes a mentalist-based, socially situated, quantitative or qualitative study. Much of the difficulty in incorporating qualitative studies into SLA is the result of the particular research traditions of those in the field, and the fact that incoming students are apprenticed to the discourse of one particular field. The predominance of psychological traditions has led to a narrow view of what constitutes a qualitative

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study: open-ended interviews and naturalistic data. This has created the largely unconscious but common view that quantitative (or statistical) studies produce 'hard', replicable data whereas qualitative studies do not, and are therefore less rigorous.

Qualitative researchers interested in language issues view acquisition not only as a mental individualistic process, but as embedded in a sociocultural context. The immediate and local meanings of actions, as defined from the actors' point of view, are central to their holistic, semiotic, *emic* (insider's) approach. This contrasts with *etic* (outsider's), discrete, mental-process approaches. It is a common fallacy that qualitative researchers have no preconceptions or theories about the area under investigation. Researchers may draw upon a number of grand theories (materialist, ideational, nature/nurture, etc.), but these tend to remain implicit in interpretive qualitative research, with its

goal of developing theory through the process of collecting and analysing data. This generates so-called middle-range (or grounded) theories, such as the home/school difference theory and the perceived labour market theory, which can then provide a model for subsequent studies. Methodological issues in this area of research have been widely discussed; the ethical dilemmas of the researcher in the field and the need to inform and protect research subjects are now well recognised. A cyclical process of data collection and analysis is the hallmark of interpretive qualitative research, which requires the establishment of research credibility through prolonged engagement and persistent observation over a period of a year or more. Collaborative effort is therefore often needed to avoid placing unreasonable demands on single researchers.

96–180 Lazaraton, Anne (Pennsylvania State U.). Qualitative research in applied linguistics: a progress report. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **29**, 3 (1995), 455–72.

This article describes the status of qualitative research in applied linguistics and ESOL. It identifies trends by reporting on an informal survey of published journal articles, highlighting relevant published qualitative studies and research methods texts, and relating the views of research methodologists

working within and outside the qualitative tradition. Several of the unresolved, persistent issues raised are progress toward a definition of qualitative research, the role of quantification in qualitative research, and the generalisability of qualitative research.

96–181 Rifkin, Benjamin and Roberts, Felicia D. (U. of Wisconsin-Madison). Error gravity: a critical review of research design. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 3 (1995), 511–37.

This paper examines error gravity research design and its theoretical assumptions. Based on an analysis of 28 error gravity investigations (1977–95), several aspects of error gravity research design are studied (including, e.g., the authenticity of language sample), and theoretical constructs (such as the definition of 'error'). The study demonstrates that

investigators have only skimmed the surface of the process of error evaluation, which is undoubtedly shaped by extralinguistic factors. It is concluded that researchers should reconceptualise error gravity research and should reassess earlier studies to confirm or disaffirm their stated outcomes.

96–182 Rose, Kenneth R. (Hong Kong Baptist U.) **and Ono, Reiko** (Kobe Kaisei Coll.). Eliciting speech act data in Japanese: the effect of questionnaire type. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI), **45**, 2 (1995), 191–223.

Speech act theory has greatly influenced both the study and teaching of language use; however, given its philosophical roots, it has been short on empirical support. In recent years numerous speech act studies have been conducted. In these studies, though, there has been little discussion of research methodology, specifically data collection techniques. This paper reports the results of a study which addresses methodological validation in speech act research. The authors administered discourse-completion tests

(DCTs) and multiple-choice questionnaires (MCQs), designed to elicit requests, to two groups of 36 Japanese female undergraduates. As with the earlier study, there were significant differences in most situations (11 of 12), with those completing the MCQ choosing to opt out or hint more frequently than those completing the DCT. These results seem to indicate some serious problems with DCTs, which need to be addressed if they are to be used in speech act studies.

Contrastive/error analysis

96–183 Abbas, Ali K. (Al-Mustansiriyah U., Baghdad, Iraq). Contrastive analysis: is it a living fossil? *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 3 (1995), 195–215.

This paper reopens long-standing discussions and controversies about the validity and utility of contrastive analysis for language teaching. In the past few years the pendulum has swung away from contrastive analysis (CA) in favour of error analysis as being more realistic. This study investigates an area where contrastive analysis has more chance of being practicable, i.e. adverbial use in English and Arabic.

The results of the CA reaffirm that the adverbial in both languages constitutes a linguistic area where a world of personal variation is discernible. Where there is a selection of position, many factors contribute – order relation, realisation, type of modification and sentence structure being one set; intonation, euphony and homonymous interpretation being another. There are sizeable similarities in the two languages concerning this particular linguistic area. The dissimilarities revealed by the CA were derived from the different construction of the sentences in the two languages, the co-occurrence restrictions imposed on the adverbial or the limitations other sentence constituents exhibit

It is concluded that learners of both languages have access to more than one place to accommodate the adverbial concerned in the sentence. In view of this sort of positional freedom, native speakers would not consider many marginally acceptable positions as 'erroneous'.

96–184 Lindemann, Beate. Zum Fehlerbegriff in einer Lernsprachenanalyse. [The concept of error in an analysis of learner language.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig, Germany), **32**, 2 (1995), 91–6.

Traditional contrastive analysis, dating from 1945, proved incapable of predicting learner difficulties and errors, and researchers transferred their interest to the explanation of errors not attributable to mother tongue interference. Error came to be viewed as a natural and necessary part of the learning process and as an indicator of active learning. Error is traditionally defined as a deviation from a norm, caused by a variety of factors such as stress, inattentiveness or lack of knowledge. Evidence from observing foreign language learners, however, shows that non-deviation from the norms of the target language is no guarantee of absence of error. One Norwegian learner of German, for example, produced a grammatically correct sentence, but when asked to provide a commentary, revealed that the apparently correct response was in fact the result of two serious misapprehensions. Errors are useful development indicators in individual learner language, but must be seen as only one of many aspects of learner behaviour. Learners develop hypotheses about the systems of the target language on the basis of input and of short- and long-term assumptions. Teachers cannot do justice to learners unless they assess the thought processes underlying errors in the context of learners' whole production. Such understanding is only possible if teachers and researchers are prepared to come down to the learner's level and to make time for extended observation of learner behaviour.

Testing

96–185 Cumming, Alister (Ontario Inst. for Studies in Ed.). Changing definitions of language proficiency: functions of language assessment in educational programmes for recent immigrant learners of English in Canada. *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **17**, 1 (1995), 35–48.

This article reviews the functions of holistic, performance-based approaches to student assessment and curriculum policy recently adopted in four situations for ESL education in Canada, suggesting that such assessment practices appear to provide educationally relevant frameworks for student evaluation and curriculum policies, but in practice they mainly serve purposes of placing students into programmes, and are not capable of monitoring either learners' achievement or the nature, effectiveness or equity of these curricula. Considerable systematic research is needed to improve these evaluation systems and their present uses.

96–186   Grotjahn, Rüdiger. Zweitsprachliches Leseverstehen: Grundlagen und Problem der Evaluation. [Second language reading comprehension: basic principles and problems of evaluation.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **94**, 5 (1995), 533–55.

The main purpose of this paper is to point out problems that must be taken into account in any attempt to evaluate L2 reading comprehension. To this end, the first part of the article begins with a brief overview of some current conceptions of reading comprehension, followed by a discussion of the relationship between L1 and L2 in reading an L2 in terms of the linguistic threshold and the linguistic interdependence hypotheses; then some important characteristics of the L2 reading process are listed. The second part starts with a description of some general problems involved in the evaluation of reading comprehension, after which standard multiple-choice reading tests are criticised at some length. The article concludes with a brief discussion of possible alternatives to multiple-choice tests, including the methods of immediate recall, the Cloze procedure and the C-Test.

96–187   Lennon, Paul (U. Kassel, Germany). Assessing short-term change in advanced oral proficiency: problems of reliability and validity in four case studies. *ITL* (Louvain, Belgium), **109**, 10 (1995), 75–109.

This paper presents four case studies to demonstrate developments in oral proficiency made by advanced learners of English during two months in England. The data base consists of picture story oral narratives. Performance shortly after arrival in Britain is compared with that at the end of two months.

Assessment was by: (i) subjective reactions of a panel of experienced native-speaker EFL teachers and (ii) quantitative analysis of transcriptions of recordings. An attempt is made to apply Vorster's components of proficiency developed for use with child mother tongue speakers. The main findings were as follows: (1) There was considerable dissension among teachers, so that the reliability of subjective teacher assessment in such cases must be seriously questioned. (2) Results on the objective quantitative measures were very chequered, suggesting that the variables chosen did not, in many cases, function well to identify developments over so short a period. (3) Nevertheless, there were clear trends towards improvements in productivity and modality (co-verbs). (4) There were signs of individual differences among subjects in the route of development.

96–188   Thompson, Irene (George Washington U.). A study of interrater reliability of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview in five European languages: data from ESL, French, German, Russian and Spanish. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 407–22.

The widespread use of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) throughout the government, the academic community, and increasingly the business world, calls for an extensive programme of research concerning theoretical and practical issues associated with the assessment of speaking proficiency in general, and the use of the OPI in particular.

This study, based on 795 double-rated oral proficiency interviews, was designed to consider the following questions: (1) What is the interrater reliability of ACTFL-certified testers in five European languages: ESL, French, German, Russian and Spanish? (2) What is the relationship between interviewer-assigned ratings and second ratings based on audio replay of the interviews? (3) Does interrater reliability vary as a function of proficiency level? (4) Do different languages exhibit different patterns of interrater agreement across levels? (5) Are interrater disagreements confined mostly to the same main proficiency level? With regard to the above questions, results show: (1) Interrater reliability for all languages in this study was significant both when Pearson's r and Cohen's modified kappa were used. (2) When second-raters disagreed with interviewer-assigned ratings, they were three times as likely to assign scores that were lower rather than higher. (3) Some levels of performance are harder to rate than others. (4) The five languages exhibited different patterns of interrater agreement across levels. (5) Crossing of major borders was very frequent, and was dependent on the proficiency level. As a result of these findings, several practical steps are suggested in order to improve interrater reliability.

Curriculum planning

96–189 Coste, Daniel (ENS de Fontenay/Saint Cloud (CREDIF)). Curriculum et pluralité. [Curriculum and plurality.] *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **98** (1995), 68–84.

Any reflection about the curriculum today can only come under the umbrella of plurality: plurality of languages and cultures and the creation of a plurilingual and pluricultural competence; plurality of learning objectives and the impact of this plurality on curricular choices themselves; plurality of ways of displaying languages and plurality of paths and resources available with which to learn them; plurality of effective trajectories made by social actors in terms of their language biographies; plurality of imaginable combinations of language learning and other types of learning.

From this necessary awareness of different kinds of plurality, three consequences can be seen to follow. First, the notion of curriculum must be expanded and complexified so that it can integrate plurality instead of dissolving in it or bursting. Next, we must decide what is the proper role of scholarisation in the circuit of language learning experiences which characterise every individual life path. Then, it would be useful to clarify, within what would be a general frame of reference for the teaching/learning of languages, notions like partial competence, multiple and differentiated competence and the curricular scene, while putting in place thoroughly modular methods of organising language training.

96–190 Harris, Vee (Goldsmiths Coll., U. of London). Differentiation – not as easy as it seems. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 13–15.

The issue of differentiation in the modern language (ML) classroom is examined in the light of demands made by the National Curriculum. A major assumption underlying differentiation is that we know what makes a task easy or difficult. Yet examination of the National Curriculum Non-Statutory Guidance for any criteria reveals the lack of a coherent theoretical framework [examples with discussion]. There is a clear need to set out criteria, both general and skill-specific, and to acknowledge the complex relationship between them. There are some signs that this has been recognised – the notion of 'support', for example – but more research

evidence, in ML and beyond, is needed to refine and develop this.

Other important consideration relate to the interaction between learner and task, where level of interest is crucial, and development of greater pupil autonomy, which has obvious implications for classroom organisation. It is also stressed that the social and psychological implications of pupils working on different tasks is not as unproblematic as often assumed, and that there is a need for a clear statement of classroom options and their implications.

96–191 Holec, Henri (U. Nancy II/CRAPEL). Curriculum et itinéraire d'apprentissage autodirigé. [Curriculum and route for self-directed learning.] *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **98** (1995), 34–43.

A curriculum, as a way of organising learning, defines both a learning path leading to a qualification and the aims and resources which help the student to achieve it. In order to discuss whether it can validly be imported into the world of self-directed learning, we should consider what type of learning is implied: it is pre-organised, prescribed learning the contents of which leave no place for initiative on the part of the learner. A curriculum is therefore incompatible with self-directed learning.

Self-directed studies geared to a qualification are built up dynamically from multiple routes and their actual form is subject to individual variation. They include independent qualifications based on individual programmes of study, via routes which are not pre-arranged or prescribed, with resources which can be adapted by their users. Under these conditions, the method of organisation is quite different to that which is represented by the curriculum, a method which is here called 'cursus' and which self-directed learning should retain.

96–192 Morgan, Carol (U. of Bath). Problems of definition. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 9–12.

Problems in responding to National Curriculum requirements for teaching the L2 culture are addressed in this article. Firstly, there are problems of definition of 'culture', further confused by a shift in emphasis in successive versions of the guidelines of the National Curriculum itself. There is also a

problem of accommodation of cultural awareness in assessment procedures.

Some key phrases extracted from National Curriculum documentation might indicate a progression through different stages of cultural learning and serve as a framework by which current practice may be assessed. The phrases relate to: focusing on knowledge, values, comparison and relativity, and adding the dimensions of cultural diversity, understanding of stereotyping and the need for contact. A survey of ways in which culture is covered in textbooks finds that only two of these stages are touched on in any substantial way. Some attempt is made to compare English culture with that of the target language, but only rarely is any effort made to deal with stereotypes. Areas that are poorly treated in textbooks will need to be augmented by classroom practice and some suggestions are outlined here as to what resources are available to teachers who need to do this. The question of which language should be used in the teaching of cultural awareness has yet to be solved.

Course design

96–193   Atkinson, David and others (U. of Sunderland). Languages for all: the crucial role of the first few weeks. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 26–9.

Language courses for university students of other subjects are considered here. The paper looks at the types of learner participation in such schemes and ways in which their needs can be met, especially in the early stages. These sorts of courses have inherent problems (linguistically low-level students, very heterogeneous groups, low contact hours, teaching by a variety of part-time staff) which often lead to a high drop-out rate. The approach suggested aims to support students' initial learning by the development of various kinds of awareness and strategies. It is a structured approach, covering six main types of content: administrative (course structure, course requirements, assessment), interpersonal/motivational (learning of names, development of a non-competitive environment, confidence building), strategic (development of learning strategies), linguistic/metalinguistic (types of syllabus, operational language, linguistic terminology), methodological (types of activity, proportions of target language and first language) and cultural.

Teacher training

96–194   Goatly, Andrew. Directness, indirectness and deference in the language of classroom management: advice for teacher trainees? *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 3 (1995), 267–84.

This article considers the pragmatic and pedagogic issues involved in the trainee teacher's choice of direct and indirect management directives. It first sketches in background theory and research findings on directives, using Searle, Leech, Ervin-Tripp, Fraser, Rintell and Walters, House, and Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper. In the light of this pragmatic theory, the curriculum philosophy to which pragmatic factors are related, and pedagogic considerations, it proceeds to analyse transcripts of classroom management requests made by three TEFL teacher trainees during teaching practices in Portugal. It recommends, for both pedagogic and pragmatic reasons, the use of the more direct forms. It analyses the peculiar circumstances of teaching practice showing that the tendency to use more indirect and deferential forms arises from the failure to take into account the cost-benefit scale, a failure also observable in the past recommendations of teacher educators such as Willis. A final section widens the perspective by suggesting the contexts in which indirect requests can be appropriately used and/or modelled by the teacher.

96–195   Grundy, Peter (U. of Durham). 'Is it a joke?' – The language awareness component of CTEFLA courses. *Teacher Trainer* (Canterbury), **9**, 2 (1995), 3–7.

The language component of pre-service CTEFLA courses is discussed. A case is made against teaching morphology and syntax since it is difficult to agree on what level of description to use, student teachers often confuse descriptive with pedagogic grammars and in any case language learners do not learn

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languages by generating sentences from grammar rules. Pragmatics may be of more use in raising trainee awareness of how language is used.

The article follows the fundamental structure of a joke-telling routine which is an activity type with recognisable pragmatic conventions. It also includes discussion of two snippets of conversation and, via the structure and discussion, the reader gets a glimpse of how pragmatic analysis could be carried out.

96–196 Hunston, Susan (Cobuild Ltd, Birmingham). Grammar in teacher education: the role of a corpus. *Language Awareness* (Clevedon, Avon), **4**, 1 (1995), 15–31.

This paper argues for the use of computer-stored corpora in courses in grammar awareness for teachers of mother-tongue English. The ability to do grammar should be seen as a set of skills rather than as a body of knowledge; corpora provide excellent data for doing grammar. Some of the observations that can be made using a corpus are presented, and the skills needed to make such observations are discussed. Examples are given of the adjectives *ridiculous* and *sacrosanct*, the adverb *presumably*, and variations on the phrase *two bricks short of a load*. Finally, the paper discusses some possible questions that arise when comparing methodologies associated with using a corpus with those associated with using individual texts as data for a grammar awareness course.

96–197 Issa-Sayegh, Danièle (U. of Toronto). Évolution du rôle de l'enseignant de FLS et sa formation. [Evolution of the role of the teacher of French as a second language and his/her training.] *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal), **16**, 2 (1994), 95–104.

French language classes at the University of Toronto are usually taught by postgraduate researchers, who have no previous training, limited enthusiasm for language teaching and limited understanding of the needs and culture of their learners (the latter often from ethnic minorities). Some in-service training is now given, but only five hours of this, a quite inadequate amount, is devoted to pedagogy. There is a teacher assessment procedure, and a written practical guide to teaching is available, but a much more extensive taught course is needed. This would include lectures on teaching and learning languages, an action-research project with material writing and classroom observation, discussion with peers, keeping teacher journals and writing these up as articles. A list of the kinds of knowledge that teachers need is given, but the principle of autonomy is paramount – not dictating to teachers, but giving them the means to evaluate their own actions.

96–198 Kennedy, Judith (U. of Warwick). Getting to the heart of the matter – the marginal teacher. *Teacher Trainer* (Canterbury), **9**, 1 (1995), 10–14.

This article describes the work done by teacher trainers with marginal teachers at a centre for English language teacher education. These are not hopeless teachers who should be dismissed. They are teachers, perhaps sucked into the profession because of increased demand, who operate consistently at the margins of effectiveness. Areas currently under investigation by the team are the identification of marginal teacher trainees, the personal characteristics of marginals, their classroom behaviour and the development of appropriate strategies to help them. The article concentrates on the last two areas.

Data on classroom behaviour was collected from detailed entries in secret supervisor diaries on each trainee. From the entries, a detailed list of 320 critical decision points (CDPs) was made. The diaries were then destroyed.

The development of training exercises to help with the CDPs is described. Examples given include critiquing exercises involving analysis and judgement of a real-life classroom event, using teaching practice to reinforce graduated teaching routines and using decisive incident mazes for discussion. The focus is not only on what marginals do wrong but also on trying to understand the behaviour of marginals in all respects in order to offer appropriate support.

96–199 Koop, Marie-Christine Weidmann (U. of North Texas). Taking French teachers to France: organizing a summer immersion program supported by grants. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 424–36.

This article describes the various steps that were taken to organise and implement a five-week French summer institute for secondary teachers of French, involving a three-week stay in France and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the French Cultural Services. After outlining the

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reasons that led to the conception of the project, the author explains the objectives behind the programme, the course content, and the administration of the Institute. Also described are budget considerations, participants' progress, the evaluation process, the video project developed by the participants, and the follow-up to the Institute.

96–200 Nemni, Monique (U. of Quebec at Montreal). How LING came to be a four-letter word and what it did to language teaching. *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal), **16**, 2 (1994), 49–63.

Linguistics has virtually disappeared from many teacher-training courses in Canada, and is widely felt to have nothing to offer teachers. Seeking reasons for this, the author suggests that the older structuralist-behaviourist theories, though based on a naive 'scientific' optimism, were closer to teachers' concerns: they helped to describe language, and provided a framework for understanding errors. Newer theories – transformational-generative grammar (TG) and its successors – are much less applicable: they are abstract and inaccessible, their concern with universals does not help in teaching particular languages, and they are in permanent revolution, whilst language teaching needs stability.

A recent movement in Francophone countries has been to reject the label and approach of 'applied linguistics' and to advocate a new discipline, which Galisson calls '*didactologie*' and this article calls 'Language Teaching and Learning' (LTL). This draws on other disciplines besides linguistics, and particularly emphasises culture and cultural competence. LTL is more under the influence of TG than it admits, however, hence its disbelief in mother-tongue influence (also a product of wishful thinking about the needs of immigrant learners) and its rejection of error correction and explicit grammar teaching, all of which, the author claims, ignores classroom evidence and everyday teacher experience. LTL also fails to see that the ideas it borrows from education, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, etc., are often very controversial within these disciplines. But some recent books show a welcome renewed focus on language accuracy and the linguistic dimension of LTL.

96–201 Shields, Carolyn and Janopoulos, Michael (U. of N. Iowa, USA). a flexible and practical practicum. *Teacher Trainer* (Canterbury), **9**, 3 (1995), 11–16.

Although North American TESOL educators agree that the practicum is an important part of a master's degree programme for TESOL, most practica either lack a comprehensive set of goals or operate under a set of assumptions that have not been clearly articulated. The authors describe the student and organisational characteristics of their MATESOL programme and detail the data gathered from questionnaires administered to three groups of practicum students before and after their practicum. The questionnaires were designed to elicit student expectations, attitudes to and perceptions of the practicum as well as recommendations for its improvement.

A substantial majority of students underwent a shift in response from pre- to post-practicum responses. Specific skills were initially seen as the most important characteristic of good FL teaching whilst later more general traits of awareness were cited. Students came away from the practicum experience changed and, many said, enriched. It is important to include a practicum in an MATESOL course and to make it flexible enough to be able to apply what is learned from student feedback before students leave the course.

96–202 Wringe, Colin (Keele U.). 'Formation autonome'... : the first year. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 16–19.

Throughout Project *Formation autonome* ... , which is organised by the Federation Internationale des Professeurs des Langues Vivante, teachers of modern languages from nine EU countries were enabled to enhance their professional competence by means of 14-day visits to schools in other countries in the EU. Participants were supplied with learning support packs covering (*a*) classroom discourse, (*b*) the foreign culture, (*c*) the school culture and (*d*) foreign language pedagogy. They undertook to submit a written report on their experience, making use of two of these.

The main languages taught by participants proved to be English, French and German and the final reports reached a high standard. The 37 teachers who replied to the evaluation questionnaire expressed themselves very satisfied with the programme. Further projects are planned which will include the national associations of the new EU countries: Austria, Finland and Sweden.

Teaching methods

96–203 Amer, Aly Anwar and Khouzam, Naguib (Sultan Qaboos U., Oman). The effect of EFL students' reading styles on their reading comprehension performance. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **10**, 1 (1993) [publ. 1995], 967–78.

Kirby's theory of reading was used to investigate differences between English as a Foreign Language students at two levels of reading comprehension performance (i.e., meaning memorisation and meaning generation) with respect to their reading styles. Forty-eight English-major senior students at Sultan Qaboos University participated in the study. After reading two texts, students performed three tasks for each text. The first, writing a summary, aimed at measuring meaning generation; the second, description of strategies used in reading, aimed at identifying reading styles; the third, answering the Sentence Verification Technique Test, aimed at measuring meaning memorisation. Results revealed the presence of the global and analytic reading styles and the absence of the synthetic style. The levels of students' performance on meaning memorisation and generation were low. No significant differences were found between the two styles with regard to meaning memorisation. There were slightly significant differences in favour of the global style with reference to meaning generation.

96–204 Atkinson, Dwight (Auburn U.) **and Ramanathan, Vai** (U. of Alabama). Cultures of writing: an ethnographic comparison of L1 and L2 university writing/language programs. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **29**, 3 (1995), 539–68.

Non-native-speaking (NNS) undergraduates at US universities frequently proceed from ESL or English for academic purposes writing classes directly into freshman composition. Although this sequence of events may be an effective means of getting students into the academic writing mainstream, there have been some suggestions to the contrary. Taking an ethnographic approach, this study describes the contrasting cultural norms of academic writing and academic writing instruction at a large US university. It then compares these differing viewpoints in order to identify difficulties that NNSs might experience in proceeding from the former programme to the latter.

96–205 Buick, Anna. An approach to teaching the reading skill for academic study. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **10**, 1 (1993) [publ. 1995], 979–88.

A university pre-sessional study skills course must strongly reflect the imminence of the academic year if it is to be effective, especially in the closing phase of a skills training course. While students are so diverse in their academic interests, levels of expertise in their field and competence as language users, it might seem that any attempt to ensure effective skills-training for all is doomed to failure at the outset. This paper, however, suggests a way in which the difficulty might be overcome in the teaching of the reading skill. Specification that underpin the approach and the principles on which the reading course is based are discussed. The approach in operation is then described in the context of two groups of reading students. The study concludes with an evaluation of the approach, and puts forward some considerations for any repeated implementation of the course.

96–206 Dobson, James J. (U. of Georgia). Reformulation as a measure of student expression in classroom interaction. *Language Awareness* (Clevedon, Avon), **4**, 1 (1995), 33–47.

This study investigates teacher reformulation of student talk. The purpose of the study is to investigate the manner in which teachers affect the meaning and expression of students. The sociolinguistic design identifies reformulations in terms of linguistic form, semantic function, opportunity to confirm and the hard and soft quality of the reformulation process. An ethnomethodological method for establishing corroboration was adopted which allowed the teacher-subjects the opportunity to review and evaluate the adequacy of the study's method of analysis and findings. The findings indicate that reformulation is a significant language device used by teachers to control classroom dialogue, teacher talk marks the official knowledge of classroom dialogue, and teachers disproportionately perform the language functions most commonly associated with higher-order cognitive processing.

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96–207 Finkbeiner, Claudia. Überlegungen zur Textarbeit in einem lernaktiven Fremdsprachenunterricht. [A discussion of reading comprehension in the framework of learner strategies in foreign language teaching.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **94**, 4 (1995), 372–87.

In this paper, the role of learning strategies is discussed in the context of learning and instruction. The discrepancy between several statements in the discussion of 'strategies' and 'techniques' is first discussed. Both cognitive and affective factors are important. Not only learning strategies have to be considered: individual differences, conceptual knowledge and attitudes seem to interact with strategies to produce strategy choice. In conclusion, a new strategy-based methodology is called for and suggestions for language-learning activities in reading comprehension are made.

96–208 Gardner, David (U. of Hong Kong). Student-produced video documentary provides a real reason for using the target language. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 54–6.

This report describes a project undertaken as a component in an EAP course for first-year university students, with the aim of using video to give them an opportunity to use the target language in the real world, as an alternative to the more usual essays and oral presentations.

The project was organised so as to meet the students' need to acquire a range of skills relevant to their studies, such as note-taking, functioning in a group and in a seminar setting, as well as becoming more analytical and critical in their approach to information. The need for good organisation is stressed, as is the importance of the project being a substantial one, so that students are fully motivated and involved. It is concluded that students not only improved their academic skills but also became more confident in their oral work. This sort of project can have wider applications, to other courses, learning levels and languages.

96–209 Hall, Christopher (U. of Leicester). Translation as a language teaching tool. *Language Forum* (Norwich), **1**, 2 (1993), 89–102.

With the shift from grammatical correctness to communicative skills, translation all but disappeared from British schools in the 1980s, but it is still very much alive at universities, where it is used not only for language teaching, but also for the training of translators, for student skills development, in literary studies and as a way of comparing two languages. Translation, however, has severe limitations as a language teaching tool. Claims that translation classes improve students' reading comprehension in the foreign language (FL) are debatable.

It is claimed that translation courses improve students' English, but undergraduates' main challenge in writing English is to organise complex ideas into a coherent text, a skill better practised through writing essays and seminar papers. Translation is a highly sophisticated activity which requires a good command of both languages concerned, and as such comes into its own only with advanced and relatively mature students. At less advanced levels, the very act of translating encourages interference from the source language to the target language and thus encourages errors. The danger of a teaching method based solely or largely on translation is that the cognitive element of language learning predominates to the exclusion of the development of essential language skills, producing graduates who know a great deal about the FL but are unable to use it. Translation may have remained so central to university courses because it is a traditional and convenient method of examining FL competence, but examination format should be dictated by considerations of fairness and appropriateness rather than convenience.

96–210 Herron, Carol A. (Emory U., CA) **and others**. A comparison study of two advance organisers for introducing beginning foreign language students to video. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, WI), **79**, 3 (1995), 387–95.

This research compared student retention of information in foreign language videos in two advance organiser conditions. The subjects were 39 English-speaking college students enrolled in two sections of an introductory French course. In the Description Only advance organiser condition, the teacher read aloud six sentences that summarised major scenes in the upcoming video. In the Description + Pictures advance organiser condition, the teacher presented the identical six-sentence

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description of major scenes in the video. The difference between conditions was that in the Description + Pictures condition, when the teacher read one of the six sentences aloud, she also showed a picture related in context to the sentence but not a pictorial translation of it. Student performance with 12 videos introduced in each of these two ways was tested. Results indicated that the visual support in the Description + Pictures condition significantly improved comprehension of the videos. The investigators interpreted these results as indicating that extensive listening is facilitated by the richness of context that visual organisers provide.

96–211 Johnston, Jerome and Milne, Lynda (U. of Michigan). Scaffolding second language communicative discourse with teacher-controlled multimedia. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 315–29.

Providing examples of authentic target-language discourse is a challenge for teachers of first- and second-level foreign language courses. The *Teacher's Partner* is a multimedia tool that assists the teacher by presenting communicative exchanges among native speakers. Compared to videotape, this computer-mediated videodisk permits more precise control over video segmentation – essential for the limited language decoding skills of novice learners. The computer also provides contextualised textual and graphical resources, including a hypertext transcript that will reveal word and phrase definitions and selective grammatical explanations in the target language.

The use of the *Teacher's Partner* influenced the nature of classroom discourse in a French 1 and French 2 class. Year-long research analysing classroom interaction patterns showed increased use of communicative discourse by a teacher and students in those class periods when the *Teacher's Partner* was used by the teacher (an increase of 39 percent in French 1 and 55 percent in French 2). Reflections by the teacher provide a rationale for how this tool scaffolded teacher-student discourse. The challenge of integrating advanced technology into classroom settings is discussed.

96–212 Lee, James F. (U. of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign). Using task-based activities to restructure class discussions. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 437–46.

An approach to task-based instruction is presented which relies on the familiar instructional technique of the class discussion as the point of departure. After proposing that communication be viewed as the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning rather than simply as questions and answers, classroom practices are developed that reflect all three dimensions of communication. Specifically, four discussion questions are transformed into task-based activities, each of which is analysed according to the following criteria: (*a*) identify a desired outcome; what information are students supposed to extract from the interaction? (*b*) Break down the topic into subtopics; what are the relevant subcomponents of the topic? (*c*) Create and sequence concrete tasks for learners to do: lists, charts, tables; what tasks can the learners carry out to explore the subcomponents? (*d*) Build in linguistic support: lexical, grammatical; what linguistic support do the learners need?

96–213 Nagata, Noriko (U. of San Francisco) **and Swisher, M. Virginia** (U. of Pittsburgh). A study of consciousness-raising by computer: the effect of metalinguistic feedback on second language teaching. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 337–47.

The computer can serve as a consciousness-raiser by highlighting and correcting students' errors and giving explanatory feedback. In the past, computer feedback was limited to simple error messages that did not tell the learner much more than that he or she was wrong and should try again. Natural language processing, however, allows the computer to parse student responses grammatically and to provide feedback that is more detailed and informative than was formerly possible. The study investigates the effectiveness of two types of computer feedback: one is traditional computer feedback that indicates only missing or unexpected words in the learner's response; and the other is intelligent computer feedback that provides further information about the nature of the errors in the form of metalinguistic rules. The study found that intelligent computer feedback is more effective than traditional computer feedback for improving the learners' grammatical proficiency in the use of complex structures of the target language. The study supports the value of metalinguistic instruction by computer

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96–214   Ott, Jürgen H. Hören – Verstehen – Begreifen: eine interkulturelle Analyse einer HV-Sequenz. [Listen – understand – comprehend: a cross-cultural analysis of a listening–understanding sequence.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **94**, 5 (1995), 514–32.

Listening comprehension should not be taken as an easy skill; on the contrary, it can be considered the most difficult cognitive activity (complex cognitive operations with regard to processing time). This is especially the case when the listening text contains foreign cultural patterns which are not part of the learner's schema or script structure. The bottom-up processes are partially or totally blocked, and parts of the inherent schemata are 'injected' by top-down processes. The result is incomplete and/or distorted comprehension which very often goes unnoticed because of superficial evaluation procedures. The author describes one case of a listening comprehension exercise which went wrong. He tries to determine the reasons for the failure and subsequently makes some suggestions for improving listening comprehension methodology.

96–215   Roberts, Tony (Inst. of Ed., U. of London). Developing listening skills in a foreign language. *Languages Forum* (London), **1**, 4 (1995), 7–10.

Too little attention is given to the development of listening strategies, compared to that given the other language-learning skills; ways in which the balance might be redressed are discussed.

The active nature of listening is stressed. Listeners look for clues as they try to restructure the meaning of the speaker. In an acquisition-poor situation, it may be inappropriate to expect learners to transfer L1 strategies in listening to L2. While contextual clues are important for children still learning their mother tongue, these are likely to be lacking in a classroom situation, so encouragement to listen for linguistic clues (which would come at a later stage in the L1 acquisition process) could be more effective. Long-term listening skills need to be consciously developed in the target language; ways in which this might be achieved are indicated here. One implication of the approach outlined is that materials should be graded, based on Rivers' three stages of identification, recognition and selection.

96–216   Williams, Eddie (Reading U.). First and second language reading proficiency of Year 3, 4 and 6 children in Malawi and Zambia. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **10**, 1 (1993) [publ. 1995], 915–29.
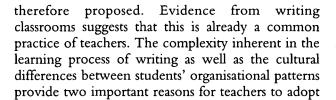
This paper reports on an investigation into L1 and L2 reading proficiency in two sub-Saharan African countries, Malawi and Zambia. In Malawi, Chichewa (the L1 in the schools investigated) is the medium of instruction for the first four years, with English as a subject. In Zambia, English is used as the medium of instruction from day one, with the L1 (Nyanja in the schools tested) taught as a subject. Modified cloze tests in English and L1 were administered to over 450 pupils in each country. The results yielded large and statistically significant differences in favour of Malawi for reading proficiency in L1. The results of the English reading tests showed no significant difference between Malawian and Zambian pupils. Furthermore, in both countries the English results are low, suggesting that the majority of pupils cannot learn through English, as they are meant to be doing. The fact that Malawians outperform Zambians in the L1, while Zambians do not outperform Malawians in the L2 is attributed to the predominant 'look and say' methodology in both countries. Whereas repetition in L1 is meaningful and can lead to learning, repetition in a language which is not understood is unlikely to do so.

96–217   Yan Yonglin (Northwest Normal U., Lanzhou, People's Republic of China). Trends in the teaching of writing. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 71–4.

While the shift from the traditional product approach to the process approach in the second language (L2) writing classroom has produced undoubted benefits, the process approach is not without its own weaknesses, as a variety of researchers have pointed out, among them a failure to prepare the student well for writing examinations, and an ineffectiveness in the face of different writers and separate tasks. A policy of eclecticism – merging the process approach with other techniques – is

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therefore proposed. Evidence from writing classrooms suggests that this is already a common practice of teachers. The complexity inherent in the learning process of writing as well as the cultural differences between students' organisational patterns provide two important reasons for teachers to adopt eclecticism. In doing so, abandoned ideas and techniques may be reinterpreted and re-evaluated. Eclecticism on this basis is not doing what one likes, but making well-informed choices and adjusting one's methods for optimal results.