Teaching particular languages

English

Would it be reasonable for an EFL teacher to recommend his or her students to acquire a Nigerian or Indian accent? It does not seem advisable, since a Briton or American cannot always achieve satisfactory communication with a member of what Kachru terms the 'Outer Circle' of the English language. It is argued that Received Pronunciation (RP) is the best model in EFL teaching because of its long descriptive tradition and because it remains neutrally acceptable and universally understood; that RP is the accent expected of foreign learners by most Britons. RP is not better than other accents of English, nor is it representative of the whole English nation, but that a foreigner should always try to sound genuine, and a phonological medley resulting from a haphazard mixture of pronunciations is not acceptable. In the author's view, when handling grammatical and lexical phenomena, Standard English is as much a model of reference for foreigners as RP is for pronunciation; non-indigenous minority groups living in Britain today have a right to use: (1) a language other than English; (2) Standard English; (3) a mixture of the two. The author concludes, however, that it is the successful handling of Standard English which is the key to good social integration; dissemination of the standard, and its use as a medium of education, cannot however be accomplished by stigmatising and ignoring non-standard varieties. Similarly, advocating the use of RP is not to be equated with phonetic prescription.

Some linguists believe that dialects will always be changing, and Quirk claims teachers study dialect variety with their pupils, calling such study 'liberation linguistics'. Other linguists believe English dialects have a 'common core', which Quirk identifies with the 'Standard', but Kachru calls it 'deficit linguistics', because in focusing on uniformity of the Standard, it disables all other dialects and people by making them appear incorrect or deficient. One aim of the Bullock Report (1975) and of language awareness courses in British schools is to educate without stigma – a difficult policy to carry out when the deficit network prevails. Teachers should not make overly hasty judgements about the language performance of learners, because their language behaviour which at first sight appears to be flawed may in fact be a manifestation of a new, as yet unrecognised variety of English. It is the duty of schools to enable all pupils to become fully literate through their own dialect, which has the potential for standardisation. In the face of the prevailing deficit theory and increasing political pressure, teachers have been trying to remove barriers and stigma by extending regional dialect uses, but with the lack of textbooks and theory, confusion and mistrust have resulted. Quirk has two practical concerns about language variation: (1) it will set up barriers to communication; (2) we won't be able to break down barriers to career progression and social mobility. The move towards standardisation in Britain has led to the loss of many unique differences in dialect pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. It could be argued that readers prepared to read only one dialect are only partially literate. Variation should become the basis for action against social and communication barriers: one way to remove 'deficit' and stigma and break down barriers is to codify regional dialects, extend their uses, and prepare people to meet variation.

92-311 Herbst, Thomas. Pro-Nunciation: Zur Bedeutung einer guten Aussprache in der Fremdsprache. [Pronunciation: the case for a good accent in speaking a foreign language.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **91,** 1 (1992), 2–18.

This article pleads for more emphasis to be placed on pronunciation in the teaching of advanced learners than is the case at present. This is for three reasons: (*a*) the importance of a good pronunciation with respect to the interactional function of language; (*b*) pronunciation errors as potential triggers for the perception of grammatical or lexical errors by listeners (where the findings of experiments carried out in the context of research on film dubbing are reported on) and (*c*) the fact that future teachers of English function as models for generations of students. As far as particular pronunciation difficulties are concerned, the listener-oriented approach advocates the teaching of those phonetic features that are important from a perceptual point of view.

92-312 Rigg, Pat. Whole language in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington DC), **25,** 3 (1991), 521–42.

The key aspects of the 'whole language' approach, which began as a holistic way to teach reading and has become a movement for change, are respect for each student as a member of a culture and as a creator of knowledge, and respect for each teacher as a professional. The major purpose of language is seen as the creation and communication of meaning. 'Real' is a byword in whole language classes: real books (as opposed to textbooks) and real activities immediately relevant to the students' interests, lives and communities. Speaking, writing, listening and reading are mutually supportive and not artificially separated. Whole language has become a large-scale movement in Australia, Canada and the United States. Its greatest impact has been in elementary schools and with L1 students. Whole language advocates believe it also has a place in ESOL contexts, as L2 classes too should offer a language-nurturing environment. L2, like L1, develops through interaction with peers rather than through imitation of a teacher's model or through formal study. The holistic ESOL class develops a strong sense of community in the class and school, and uses a variety of collaborative learning activities. In elementary classes where many of the children speak English as an additional language, there are two whole language approaches: (1) integrating L1 and L2 students in a multicultural class, with ESL assistance where required; (2) offering academic instruction in the students' home language, with ESL taught more implicitly than explicitly. Secondary L2 teachers are now increasingly finding students from whole language elementary schools in their classes, pushing for meaningful, relevant activities and materials. The term 'whole language' is still seldom used for adults learning English language and literacy, although 'participatory' learning is a term increasingly used by educators in this field who believe that student choice, student input into curriculum, and self-evaluation are vital. Whole language research is observational, not experimental. With both L1 and L2 populations, it has moved from an interest in literacy development to a concern with larger contexts and an increasingly ethnographic focus.

92-313 Taylor, David S. Who speaks English to whom? The question of teaching English pronunciation for global communication. *System* (Oxford), **19,** 4 (1991), 425–35.

Now that English is a means of global communication, what should be the aim of pronunciation teaching? The tacit assumption has always been that we should aim to make learners 'intelligible'. But to whom should they be intelligible? In an era of global communication where a substantial and ever-increasing proportion of English transactions take place between non-native speakers, it becomes very difficult to specify precise targets. Are there, then, any criteria for universal intelligibility? Most of the work done to date has assumed that intelligibility means intelligibility to a native speaker. This in turn assumes that there is a role for a native-speaker model of pronunciation. However, if English no longer belongs to the native speaker and the native speaker is no longer involved in many English transactions, perhaps this is no longer appropriate. In this situation we may also need to teach native speakers to understand non-native speakers. However, we must not forget that

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the aim of teaching and learning pronunciation is not only to help learners to be understood but also to help them to understand. Non-native speakers will continue to have to understand native speakers.

This article discusses the implications for the teaching and learning of pronunciation and for the study of phonetics and phonology.

French

92-314 Carette-Ivanisevic, Emmanuelle. Une expérience d'enseignement de FLE en entreprise: bilan et perspectives. [An experiment in teaching French as a foreign language in a company: an evaluation.] *Mélanges Pedagogiques* (Nancy, France), (1990), 49–64.

The author reports on the on-site training in FSL of British, American and Canadian employees of a company setting up in France. Having first organised traditional, teacher-driven lessons, the author was confronted with the problem of decreasing attendance. An analysis of possible causes led the author to reorganise the training into a more learner-centred and flexible system. Both systems are described and discussed as regards their effects on learners' participation and on the teachers' role and work. Whatever the training system adopted, employees cannot learn the target language unless a few basic conditions are satisfied.

92-315 Martel, Angéline (Quebec Télé-U.). Tendances sociolinguistiques et statistiques de l'enseignement du français langue seconde au Québec: 1985–1990. [Sociolinguistic tendencies and statistics concerning the teaching of French as a second language in Quebec, 1985–90.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **13,** 1 (1991), 73–88.

This article examines French-as-a-second-language teaching/learning programmes in Quebec. It adopts an orientation based on the sociolinguistic theory of contact with the second language and describes three types of programmes: (1) school programmes comprising preschool, elementary and secondary levels; (2) adult immigrants; and (3) college and university. It presents statistics to indicate that enrolments in French-as-a-second-language programmes increased between 1985 and 1990, particularly in immersion, 'accueil' and immigrant programmes. On a sociolinguistic level, it is shown that these programmes belong to the 'constant contact with the majority language' type of programme.

92-316 Porcher, Louis (U. de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris III). Omniprésence et diversité des auto-apprentissages. [Ubiquity and diversity of self-tuition.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number Feb/Mar (1992), 6–14.

Many aspects of modern life – the motor car, the increased demand for languages in employment, easier travel, foreign holidays, improved technology (TV, videos, cassettes), pressure of time, the commercial marketing mentality – have all contributed to the growth in self-tuition packages. Learners often have very specific requirements and they also appreciate the flexibility which self-tuition affords. They may begin with independent learning and transfer to a more institutional setting, or vice versa. Self-tuition certainly poses a challenge to more conventional institutionalised forms of language study but is unlikely to supplant these provided that they become aware of and responsive to learners' needs.

92–317 Sandstede, Marie-Corentine. Ist der Übergang vom gesprochenen zum geschriebenen Wort ein Problem bei der Fremdsprachenfrüherziehung? [Is the transition from the spoken to the written word a problem for young foreign-language learners?] *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, Germany), **26,** 5 (1992), 18–21.

The author teaches French as L2 in Lower Saxony. The age of the children, as well as their general level of knowledge, their reasons for learning a language, and the parents' influence, are taken into consideration. L2 writing should be avoided in play-groups and in primary schools. In Phase 1 (3–4 weeks), the teacher encourages those with some knowledge of French to aid those with none. She introduces words which beginners will know, such as *brie, camembert, mon chéri, merci*. The oral phase (week 1) introduces materials to do with France, including advertisements and products. Games and songs are introduced in weeks 2–4. As little German as possible is spoken. Texts are mastered, distributed in written form and read aloud by teacher and pupils. The alphabet is taught and pronunciation developed. After four weeks the pupils' fears have disappeared and they begin to read even unknown words correctly. They read texts, but continue to do supplementary exercises and games. After four months they read texts in which the grammar is introduced. Early pen-friendships and visits are encouraged.

92–318 Sapin-Lignières, Bertrand (Télé-Aliança – Brazil). France Prix ou le supermarché du français. [France Prix or the French supermarket.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number Feb/March (1992), 34–40.

French is slowly disappearing in Brazil, and often the *Alliances françaises* are the only remaining bastions of French language and culture. An important reason is the almost total disappearance of French from the secondary curriculum.

Learning and teaching methods must replace those of the sixteenth century, just as supermarkets have changed shopping habits. The learner must be autonomous. Attempts are being made to teach French by television through *Télé-Aliança*. Existing teachers are to be used as monitors. Pupils would work together, preferably in groups of three, and between 20 and 40 groups may work simultaneously in a single room, aided by a monitor. Brazilian pupils attend school for half the day only, so could learn French during the other half. The costs to the school would be minimal.

The method insists on two hours a week: a 12-week module would represent a Brazilian semester. Each lesson consists of a text with a translation into Portuguese, a page of explanations, and eight pages of exercises. Memorisation and exploitation of the text follow, and oral work is recorded and sent away for correction along with the written exercises.

92–319 Zarate, Geneviève (CREDIF/ENS Fontenay/St. Cloud). L'autonomie aux frontières de l'altérité. [Autonomy at the frontiers of otherness.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number Feb/March (1992), 86–93.

Language teachers in the nature of things stand in between languages and cultures. The significance of the discovery of a foreign culture and the experience of immersion in the foreign context, described by a group of Czechoslovak teachers of French, relates more to the choice made by individuals, to family history or to the search for identity, than simply to linguistic competence. It should not be forgotten that the experience of living and working in a foreign country has different implications for women and men.

The role of the school in preparing students for the experience of abroad is necessarily a somewhat limited one, but it can provide some introduction to the culture of the target language and an initiation into the significance, physical and symbolic, of frontiers.

German

92–320 Leisen, Josef. Über Sprachprobleme im deutschsprachigen Fachunterricht am Beispiel des Physikunterrichts. [Language problems in German-medium subject-teaching: the example of physics.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, Germany), **22,** 3 (1991), 143–51.

The teaching of physics to schoolchildren for whom the medium of instruction, German, is a foreign language, raises many problems. The children not only have to learn a new language but a new way of thinking, a scientific 'world-picture' different from their everyday, common-sense picture, and this is difficult even for native speakers. Subject competence and language competence cannot both improve at the same time and in the natural sciences, unlike other subjects, the problems are greatest at the lowest levels. [List of features of scientific language.]

The first task is to convince pupils that their problems are essentially problems of physics and not of German. They should be encouraged to speak for themselves, and discouraged from hiding behind parroted technical terms which may give a false impression of understanding. There should be separate and identifiable parts of lessons devoted to language problems, but these should involve communicative tasks relevant to the subject, so that it is still visibly a physics lesson, not a German lesson. There should be a planned progression in the language used, and language help should be provided: word-lists, flow-charts, diagrams, etc. Language errors should be tolerated during cognitively challenging tasks, but normally dealt with later. Methods should be frequently varied to suit all learner types.

92–321 Luchtenberg, Sigrid. Die Textsorte Plakatwerbung. Lernproblem und Lernanreiz für ausländische Deutschlerner und-lernerinnen. [Posters as text: the problems they raise for the foreign learner of German, and the uses to which they may be put. *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, Germany), **22,** 3 (1991), 160–7.

Poster advertisements are an up-to-date, accessible source of uncontrolled language acquisition, though they contain many linguistic difficulties, being sensitive to nuance, usage, cultural behaviour and values, and new vocabulary. The article considers the problems of understanding poster language and how to learn from it. The author discusses the deviation of poster language from the standard language, through colloquial usage, technical language, young people's idioms, dialect, and the use of non-German words. It is argued that many phrases can be understood only with some background knowledge [examples]. Suggestions are offered for the use of advertisements in the teaching of particles such as *doch, mal, denn, ja.* Learning can be stimulated through the use of advertisements; the author suggests ways of removing learning difficulties and allowing posters to be used in an intercultural learning situation.

92–322 Rovea, Jean (Coll. of Beurnonville, Troyes). Un parcours d'obstacles, mais pas un champ de mines. [An obstacle race, but not a minefield.] *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **85,** 3 (1991), 21–35.

This article discusses how to teach grammar to a French-speaking student learning German. The particular area of grammar under discussion is the German noun group, including the most complex forms. The ability to understand and express this group is the suggested aim for the student. The difficulties encountered by a French speaker, such as the correct choice of case, are listed. The level of achievement to be expected from students is considered, and a knowledge and understanding of the system of declension is suggested as desirable at the end of the third year.

Ways in which to achieve the desired competence are examined in detail. Texts which have already been studied can be re-examined to identify particular cases and to answer certain questions. Other analytical exercises are also suggested.

From the beginning, students should be taught to identify in the texts being studied particular grammatical groups, such as the verb, or the subject. Rules are suggested, such as that a German noun group changes its form according to its function. The order of teaching the various forms is also suggested and by progressing in this way, most students can understand these particular grammatical aspects.

Italian

92–323 Brunet, Jacqueline (U. of Franche-Comté). Un itinéraire grammatical. [A grammatical guide.] *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **85,** 3 (1991), 11–16.

The author describes the need for a knowledge of grammar, and then explores various aspects of it, in connection with the teaching of Italian. In recent years, students' level of knowledge of grammar has markedly deteriorated, as has their knowledge (both lexical and grammatical) of their native tongue; likewise their knowledge of the foreign language they study has declined, as has their ability to analyse language. The author describes ways in which texts can be used to improve these short-comings at university level, whereby the students are asked to comment upon various grammatical features; subsequently, more theoretical ideas are broached and compared with past linguistic usage. In the third year begins a more analytical and theoretical approach, which is illustrated by a detailed analysis of the use of the words *di* and *che*. In the fourth year, grammar is examined in detail from a historical viewpoint.

92–324 Musumeci, Diane (U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). 'Ciao, professoressa!' A study of forms of address in Italian and its implications for the language classroom. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **68,** 4 (1991), 434–56.

A description of an investigation into the socio-linguistic features that govern contemporary use of *tu* and *Lei* is followed by a discussion of the implications of the results for the teaching of Italian as a second language. Although earlier studies had indicated that *tu* might replace *Lei* as the prevailing form of address, the study described here showed that this is not so. Young Italians seem to prefer reciprocal [*tu/tu* or *Lei/Lei*] relationships to non-reciprocal ones [*tu/Lei, Lei/tu*]. The context of a situation seems to be the most influential factor on usage, though age may also govern in some situations. Non-reciprocal use distinguishes power/gender roles in certain well-defined contexts [academia, service]; but *Lei* can also be used to distance the speaker (whereas *tu* expresses solidarity/intimacy).

As for the language classroom, the subjects, teachers of Italian, agreed not only that *tu* was more appropriate in the classroom context, but also that people in Italy would in any case use *tu* to foreigners, who would not be expected to be able to use *Lei*. Various ways in which *Lei* can be shown and practised are mentioned, but the general feeling (supported by interviews with Italians who are not language teachers) was that the development of appropriate social skills is more important than 'correct' linguistic features.

92–325 Nuessel, Frank and Cicogna, Caterina (U. of Louisville, Toronto). The integration of songs and music into the Italian curriculum. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **68,** 4 (1991), 473–86.

This paper aims to provide a theoretical background and rationale for an activity that has long been accepted as a successful and useful part of the language teaching curriculum. In an introductory look at what constitutes music and songs, it is argued that a song can be seen as a type of literary text and that an expanded concept of a song as a text consisting of several codes (linguistic, literary, cultural, musical) allows for teaching materials with a wide range of applications. Research has shown similarities between language and music, and songs combine the communicative aspect of language with the entertainment aspect of music. With judicious selection, they can be an excellent source of 'input' within the theoretical framework of Krashen's 'input hypothesis'.

With the warning that, in order to be used effectively, a song must be very carefully integrated into the language teaching process, a number of procedures are given for the introduction of a song. Activities are then suggested for the sequenced practice of the skills of comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, and of certain aspects of culture and civilisation. Several ways of evaluating songs are also indicated. [Although the paper relates to the teaching of Italian, there is a large number of references to work on the topic in several other languages.]

Russian

92-326 Robin, Richard (George Washington U.). Authentic Russian video: where are we going? Where do we go? *Slavic and East European Journal* (Madison, Wis), **35,** 3 (1991), 403-10.

There are currently three areas of development in authentic Russian video for educational purposes: pedagogy, the changing face of Soviet video, and copyright law. Regarding pedagogy, there exists considerable agreement concerning the merits and methods of using video, although there are different emphases. Two approaches are used – either the use of authentic television and film to enable students to watch and try to understand, or video as a vehicle for other skills, such as determining intonation patterns.

The changing face of Soviet video has brought about greater problems for the teacher. As the old clichés disappear and new broadcasts appear, exercise writers have to work harder to provide background information. Advertising material has radically changed and often needs more support material to enable the student to understand. Faster rates of speech can pose problems, which can often be overcome by choosing topics familiar to students.

Copyright law poses considerable problems. The Fair Use Guidelines allow two single uses of a recorded, off-the-air segment within 10 consecutive school days, and then stipulate its destruction within 45 calendar days. This is the only legal guideline and it places considerable restriction on video use.

92-327 Thompson, Irene. (The George Washington U.). The proficiency movement: where do we go from here? *Slavic and East European Journal* (Madison, Wis), **35,** 3 (1991), 375-89.

This paper examines proficiency-related developments in the teaching and testing of Russian during the decade of the eighties. It suggests that the organisation of language teaching in America mitigates against the acquisition of usable skills by imposing severe limitations on the time allotted to the study of foreign languages as well as by adopting a non-use orientation. As a result, the introduction of proficiency concepts into Russian language teaching and testing can have an impact only on how time is spent in the classroom but cannot solve the problem of insufficient time.