Teaching particular languages

ENGLISH

84–426 Anderson, Janet I. (Iowa State U.) **The difficulties of English syllable structure for Chinese ESL learners.** *Language Learning and Communication* (New York), **2**, 1 (1983), 53–62.

The complexities of English syllable structure present problems for ESL learners, particularly those whose native language syllable structure is simpler. They tend to simplify the English syllable either by consonant deletion or epenthesis (inserting a vowel to break up consonant clusters). There may be a universal preference among second-language learners for the open syllable. Types of simplification errors made by Chinese ESL learners were investigated. The greatest number of simplifications in the speech samples examined were found in post-vocalic position in word-medial sequences, word-final consonant clusters and word boundary sequences. The simplification strategy most often used was consonant deletion, and the consonants most often deleted were /rltd/. Other consonants deleted, but somewhat less frequently, were /szfvθð/. Although epenthesis was not a dominant strategy, it was used more frequently in word boundary sequences than in other types of clusters and sequences. The type of cluster least vulnerable to deletion was the initial cluster. Also, errors involving the deletion of whole syllables were relatively infrequent.

From the point of view of teaching, the problem which merits the most attention is the deletion g/r/ and /l/ in post-vocalic position, since these sounds occur frequently in English and their deletion affects intelligibility. [Methods of teaching them are suggested.]

84–427 Carver, David. Some propositions about ESP. *ESP Journal* (Washington, DC), **2**, 2 (1983), 131–7.

This paper attempts to characterise specific purpose English by contrasting it with some possible forms of English for nonspecific purposes. All uses of English are specific in their nature, and all teaching of English as a foreign language should be addressed to specific purposes. Three approaches towards this end are discussed: the use of simulated purposes within the classroom, the use of real purposes external to the classroom, and the use of relevant literature. An ESP course should be characterised by the use of authentic materials, an orientation to purposeful activities on the part of the learners, and self-access organisation of the learning. Three approaches to appropriate methodology are discussed – the approach through register, through discourse, and through study skills.

84–428 Holmes, Janet (Victoria U. of Wellington, New Zealand). Expressing doubt and certainly in English. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **13**, 2 (1982), 9–28.

Learning to express and interpret epistemic modality (degrees of certainty) is not an easy task for learners of English as a second language. The paper discusses three sources of potential difficulty: the problem of establishing the precise degree of certainty expressed by particular linguistic forms; the range of linguistic devices available for signalling this aspect of meaning; and the interaction of different types of meaning in different contexts. Some suggestions are provided which may assist second-language learners wishing to develop competence in expressing and interpreting degrees of certainty and conviction in English.

84–429 Kana, Marit (Cenderawasih U., Jayapura, Indonesia). Saying 'no' in English: a sociolinguistic lesson on refusals. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **13**, 2 (1982), 29–50.

This paper is a first step towards a sociolinguistically based language course. It consists of a lesson on English refusals of invitations and requests. Designed primarily for speakers of Bahasa Indonesia, it could easily by adapted for speakers of other languages. Part One is an outline of the hypothetical course of which this lesson would be a part. The lesson itself makes up Part Two.

The course would be designed for advanced students of English who have attained a 2 or 2 + rating on the U.S. Foreign Service Institute rating scale. The teacher should be a native English speaker with some knowledge of linguistics and the Indonesian language and culture. Each lesson in the syllabus would centre on a particular sociolinguistic skill, such as refusals, naming and addressing people, body language, silence, speaking to strangers, etc.

The lesson on refusals is built around a taped dialogue, which is listened to, discussed, memorised and practised. Attention is focused on both the content and the style of refusals. Once the dialogue has been mastered, the students are required to alter a few of the refusal components in prescribed ways, then to construct refusals from a given detailed situation and, finally, they produce their own refusals in real-life situations.

84–430 Mead, Richard and Henderson, Willie. Conditional form and meaning in economics text. *ESP Journal* (Washington, DC), **2**, 2 (1983), 139–60.

The paper analyses economics text and examines the range of meanings conveyed by the simple conditional form (*if* + noun phrase + verb phrase [verb present/modal + verb] + ...) and the expression of conditional meaning. The data come from a well-known introductory textbook. The author of the book claims the status of a science for his subject and argues that scientific predictions in economics have a recognisable form: *if* + noun phrase + verb phrase [verb present] + *then* + noun phrase + verb phrase [verb future], as in '*if* you do this *then* such and such will follow'. But examples from his own work belie this. It is shown firstly, that economics predictions are expressed by a range of conditional and nonconditional forms.

Secondly, these same conditional forms (including that expressing a prediction) are used to realise a number of functions. These functions are classified and discussed. It is concluded that the relationships between economic concepts and their verbal expressions cannot be precisely correlated. Both teachers of English for economics and teachers of economics need to recognise this lack of correlation as a source of difficulty for their students.

84–431 Real, Willi. Methodische Konzeptionen der englischen Fachdidaktik und ihr Einfluss auf die Gestaltung von Lehrwerken. [Methodological concepts in the theory of English language teaching and their influence on the design of course books.] *Englisch* (Berlin, FRG), **18**, 3 (1983), 82–92.

At least four or five approaches or methods can be distinguished in the discussion of teaching English in the past 30 years: (1) the direct method, (2) the audiolingual method, (3) the audiovisual method, (4) the method of so-called enlightened monolingualism and (5) the communicative approach. This study considers the effects that this has had on the design of individual English coursebooks used in schools in the Federal Republic of Germany. It concludes that all coursebooks are designed in a pluralistic manner nowadays. Each book is the result of the theoretical premises it derives from, be they linguistic or from the psychology of learning. Secondly, developments in language teaching are like the swing of a pendulum from one extreme to another: after the theoretical polarisation there follows a practical compromise situation. Progress in language teaching is, in the end, a process of subsumption of various approaches and progressive differentiation. This is reflected in the coursebooks on the market. Finally, we find at least three controversies resolved in coursebooks: (1) whether the structural or the situational approach is to be preferred – the two are combined; (2) whether grammar should be taught imitatively or cognitively – the pragmatic choice of 'signalling' grammar is the outcome; (3) whether vocabulary should be taught monolingually or bilingually – abstract nouns, structure words and idioms are translated.

84–432 Strevens, Peter and Johnson, Edward. SEASPEAK: a project in applied linguistics, language engineering, and eventually ESP for sailors. *ESP Journal* (Washington, DC), **2**, 2 (1983), 123–9.

SEASPEAK is the International Maritime English, a restricted, regularised sublanguage for use in ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication. This paper describes the conditions which created the need for SEASPEAK and the project by which the sublanguage is being developed and tested. The result of the project will be a reference manual of recommended language and procedures of communication. Once the language engineering has been completed, ESP programmes for the teaching of seafaring English will be devised.

84–433   Vielau, Axel. Sinn und Unsinn der neuen phonetischen Umschrift. [Sense and nonsense in the new system of phonetic transcription.] *Praxis des neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund, FRG), **30**, 3 (1983), 289–95.

The differences between the phonetic transcription of Jones in the 12th edition of the *English pronouncing dictionary* (*EPD*) and that of Gimson in the 13th and 14th editions are compared. It is shown that Gimson differentiates more and that, in general, his system is more complex. However, the Gimson system seems to have taken firm hold since it has been adopted by the *Advanced learner's dictionary* and the *Dictionary of contemporary English* in their latest editions.

Nevertheless, as a more economical system, the Jones system is better suited to classroom use in German schools. Although the Gimson system is now officially accepted, a simpler system ought to be sought for use with school learners of English.

84–434   Williams, Ray (U. of Aston in Birmingham). Teaching the recognition of cohesive ties in reading a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Birmingham), **1**, 1 (1983), 35–52.

In recent years there has been a welcome re-orientation, in teaching reading, to greater emphasis being given to texture, i.e. the essential characteristics of text. Within this re-orientation, cohesion is gradually being given greater attention. This article outlines the system of cohesive relations in English, describes problematic instances in the recognition of cohesive ties, suggests appropriate teaching materials, and recommends associated classroom procedures. The materials and procedures described should have relevance to teaching the recognition of textual cohesive ties in any foreign language.

FRENCH

84–435   Borgomano, Laure (U. of Bari, Italy). 'Laisse-moi rire! Fais-moi parler!' Le dessin humoristique en classe de langue. ['Let me laugh! Make me talk!' The place of humorous drawings in the language classroom.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **178** (1983), 37–44.

A seminar was held in Bari (Southern Italy) in 1981 for Italian secondary-school teachers of French on making use of pictures and visual material not intended for language teaching, the nature of visual codes and visual language and what constitutes humour. The materials used and the working hypotheses formulated were tested on secondary and university classes in the region. Cultural differences made interpreting the humorous drawings difficult, and since humour arises from unexpected reversals of underlying assumptions, the students proved unable to supply alternative captions to the the drawings when asked. Nevertheless drawings and pictures, used in their own right and not as mere adjuncts to words, can make a valuable contribution to stimulating language use and linguistic creativity.

84–436   Galisson, Robert (U. of Paris III.) Image et usage du dictionnaire chez les étudiants en langue de niveau avancé. [The dictionary as perceived and used by advanced language students.] *Études de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris), **49** (1983), 5–88.

Two groups of advanced students of French replied to a questionnaire on dictionaries. One group in Paris consisted of 48 students from 19 countries with an average age of $27\frac{1}{2}$, and one in Middlebury (USA) of 48 students, all-American, with an average age of $28\frac{1}{2}$. Students were asked how many dictionaries they owned and what type, when and where these were purchased and the reason for their choice, where they kept their dictionary, how often they consulted a dictionary and why, and whether they were satisfied with, and had confidence in, their dictionaries.

The Middlebury group owned more dictionaries than the Paris group and used them more often: they had more money; they were not in France surrounded by living French; and their approach to learning French was more bookish. The Paris group, which included a greater number of future interpreters and translators, owned proportionally more monolingual dictionaries than the Middlebury group who were mainly teachers. But the Parisians also favoured the bilingual pocket dictionary (for reassurance).

All who replied owned at least one dictionary, some several. Most declared themselves satisfied with their dictionary. But in spite of the prestige accorded the dictionary, symbol of student autonomy, they showed a lack of sophistication in its use and an ignorance of lexical terminology. Future teachers should be taught about dictionaries, how they are made and how to use them. There is a place for a dictionary better suited to learners' needs. A further questionnaire on the use of the dictionary is planned. [Questionnaire.]

84–437   Pruvost, Jean. Le dictionnaire analogique: Boissière et ses successeurs. [The analogical dictionary: Boissière and his successors.] *Français Moderne* (Paris), **13** (1983), 193–204.

The origins of the analogical dictionary can be traced back to antiquity. However, in the seventeenth century alphabetical order prevailed, its convenience for consultation generally recognised. Henceforth the primary function of a dictionary would be to define the words it recorded. Analogical dictionaries were relegated to second place but attempts continued to be made to reconcile the two systems.

Boissière's *Dictionnaire analogique de la langue française* (1862) set a new pattern, followed by subsequent analogical dictionaries, whereby words were classified semantically in categories, grouped in subsets around certain key words. It does not however replace the alphabetical dictionary. Recent works of this type all derive from Boissière but differ as regards: the number of key words used and the principles of their selection; the areas of language covered – some are specialised, some include familiar language; whether or not they also comprise an alphabetical section (as Boissière did). Boissière in his choice of key words showed himself to be a structuralist ahead of his time.

GERMAN

84–438   Arnold, Herbert. Fremdsprache Deutsch und Deutschkunde in den Vereinigten Staaten. [German as a foreign language and German studies in the United States.] *Linguistische Berichte* (Wiesbaden, FRG), **84** (1983), 73–85.

During the past ten years, German as a foreign language and German studies have become much less popular in the USA [statistical details]. German cannot have the same political and social importance as English in the USA, for it is not the national language. Higher education is expensive in the USA and a potential student has to give very careful consideration to whether a particular subject is worth studying and what it can offer him in real terms.

Historical and economic reasons are given for the relative unpopularity of foreign languages in general and German in particular as courses of study (the two World Wars are mentioned as one of the major setbacks for German in the past). The trend towards decentralisation in education today and the prominence of private colleges and universities prevents the institution of a uniform language-teaching system in the USA.

A large number of language teachers' organisations are concerned with the decline in the popularity of German and the general recommendation is that the subject should be of a more all-embracing nature, not simply confined to literature, thus becoming more interdisciplinary. The introduction of this new-style German should be at all levels.

84–439   Sakayan, Dora and Tessier, Christine. Deutsche Gesprächsformeln in Mikrodialogen. [German conversational formulae in microdialogues.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **3** (1983), 9–13.

A discussion of stereotypical phrases, sentence stems and sentences which are used as prefabricated units and which play a decisive role in spoken discourse in German. These 'prefabs' can be used to signal functions such as requests for a thing, information, advice or permission to do something. They interact with variable elements which they often precede. Examples of microdialogues are presented which show how certain syntactic structures may be initiated or introduced by the conversational formulae. Many common grammatical structures can be usefully practised in the environment of the conversational formulae. It is claimed that knowledge of such formulae may further students' ability to perform appropriately in various face-to-face situations in German.

RUSSIAN

84–440   Heron, Patrica A. (U. of Aston in Birmingham). Understanding Russian texts: a short-course procedure using the integrated dictionary search method. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Birmingham), **1**, 2 (1983), 99–110.

Traditional methods of teaching a reading knowledge of Russian rely heavily on outmoded notions of word classes being regarded as a reflection of reality. Consequently,

such methods concentrate almost exclusively on the construction of inflectional paradigms, ignoring problems of morphological ambiguity. Syntax is relegated to a minor role. An alternative approach is illustrated, which exploits the notion of 'syntactic valency' (i.e. the ability or non-ability of a word class to combine with another word class). A special grammar-cum-dictionary is used in a rule-governed manner to produce semi-automatically a sentence-for-sentence analysis of scientific and technical Russian texts.

84-441   Infantova, G. G. О принципах отбора синтаксических явлений в целях обучения иноязычной разговорной речи. [On the choice of syntactic phenomena in teaching colloquial foreign language.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **3** (1983), 59–64.

The teaching of conversational language to foreign learners (specifically, of conversational Russian) is seen as posing special problems of choice. Quantitative data are used to show the different distributions of complex sentence types in different styles of Russian. Elliptical and fused syntactic constructions seem to pose distinct difficulties to a traditional grammatical framework.

A variety of such elliptical constructions are presented, in an attempt to show that they can be organised so as to make apparent their structural regularity, and hence appear comprehensible to students of Russian. The author's strong opinion is that it is wrong to characterise typically colloquial constructions as 'incorrect' Russian, although there may be features of it which cannot sensibly be taught to foreign learners.

84-442   Ivanov, V. V. К вопросу о разработке лингвистических основ обучения русскому языку. [Towards the elaboration of linguistic bases for the teaching of Russian.] *Русский язык в национальной щколе* (Moscow), **3** (1982), 11–17.

Study of the grammar and syntax of the Russian language is highly developed from the point of view of the native speaker of Russian. Within the Soviet Union there remains the question of the interaction between the Russian language and the various national languages. This interaction is bidirectional, with changes taking place, particularly at the lexical level, in both Russian and the national languages. It may be questioned whether changes in Russian which refer to speakers of only one or two of the national languages should be considered to increase the lexical stock of literary Russian, but whatever the case this stock is constantly changing under influence from national languages as well as, for example, technological change. Other problems and possibilities arise when one views, for example, grammatical and phonetic aspects. The possible distinction between enrichment and interference must be considered in all these cases. This has implications for the teaching and learning of Russian across the Soviet Union.

84–443   Shanskiy, N. M. (Moscow). Методика преподавания русского языка: достижения ц проблемы. [Russian language teaching methodology: achievements and problems.] *Русский язык в национальной школе* (Moscow), **6** (1982), 4–8.

Progress has been made in the description of the Russian language, in its organisation for teaching purposes at various levels, and in the production of complexes of teaching materials, bearing in mind the goal of communicative effectiveness. As far as the teaching of Russian to non-Russian nationalities within the Soviet Union is concerned, much remains to be done, and research and development programmes are concentrating upon comparative linguistic studies of Russian and the other national languages. These studies, together with continuing attention to the dynamic nature of the Russian language itself, will be the basis for the development of appropriate methods and materials. Other areas selected for study include pupil motivation, the role of the various national cultures, the place of Russian in relation to other subjects and the out-of-school activities of pupils. All the above must also be viewed in relation to the broad aims of general education.

84–444   Tuman, W. V. (Hollins Coll., Va.). A functional-notional syllabus for the teaching of Russian language. *Russian Language Journal* (Michigan), **36**, 123/4 (1982), 31–43.

Following questioning of the value of the traditional structural/grammatical approach to course design, the functional-notional approach expounded by Trim in the Council of Europe Project and by Wilkins is applied to the elementary stages of Russian and recommended as a basis at least for modification of what are seen as normally adopted teaching strategies in college first-stage Russian courses.

SPANISH

84–445   Chesterfield, Ray (Juárez and Associates) **and others.** The influence of teachers and peers on second language acquisition in bilingual preschool programmes. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **17**, 3 (1983), 401–19.

The interactional patterns of 11 Spanish-speaking preschool children enrolled in two different bilingual programmes were observed over the course of one year. The programmes were characterised by a majority of Spanish-speaking children in the classrooms at one site and of English-speaking children in the classrooms at the second preschool. Consistent with the linguistic composition of the classes, teaching staffs were generally found to use a predominance of Spanish or English respectively in their classrooms. For all classrooms, language choices of individual children were examined. In classrooms where English-speaking children predominated, greater language proficiency was found to be more consistently related to the use of English with peers than with teachers. In classrooms where Spanish-speaking students were prevalent, on the other hand, interactions with the teachers in English were more consistently related to greater English language proficiency. Implications for the teaching of young children in a dual-language environment are discussed.

84–446 DiLaura, S. J. (Sanford Sch., Hockessin, DE). Teaching without grammar: Title XII experience at the University of Delaware. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York) **16**, 5 (1983), 339–42.

Speaking proficiency became an urgent goal for scientific personnel at the University of Delaware preparing themselves to engage in various projects of technology transfer with countries of Latin America. Funds from the University's Title XII programme were set aside to establish the needed instruction in the target language. The course of instruction employed the principles of the Strategic Interaction (SI) approach. Rather than follow a syllabus of sequence structures, this approach is built around the use of 'scenarios' which require students to work through communication problems. The success of the course indicates that SI methods may be especially well suited for all short-term courses aimed towards training professionals to gain working knowledge in specific fields.

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