

## Teaching particular languages

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### ENGLISH

**82-188 Harper, Wilmer M. and others.** A performance evaluation of an alternative approach to English language training. *System* (Oxford), **9**, 1 (1981), 23-8.

For many international students working toward advanced degrees in the United States, English is neither the first language nor the language of academic instruction in their home country. This paper evaluates a programme designed to permit international students with English deficiencies to begin their graduate training while simultaneously taking an intensive course in English as a second language. It is found that there is no significant difference in the performance of students in this programme and other international students who begin their training with a capability in English.

**82-189 Horsella, V. M. (U. of Chile).** A contrastive approach to reading difficulties of less proficient students of English for Science and Technology. *EST/ESP Chile* (Santiago), **8** (1980), 8-16.

Ways of making the lexical and syntactical tasks as nearly automatic as possible are suggested for less proficient university students of English for Science and Technology in Chile. Non-cognate vocabulary items (i.e. those for which there are no equivalents in the native language) will constitute the main difficulty. 'Authentic' academic writing will often be easier to understand than an adaptation in 'simple' English because of its greater ratio of Latin and Greek cognate words. Visual representations are helpful for teaching non-cognate items but many scientific terms are abstract or do not lend themselves to this method. Crossword puzzles, partial pictograms and text interspersed with symbols are recommended methods, also marking statements 'true/false', and modified versions of the cloze test with non-random deletions, word-association, glossary making, and demanding instant recall of equivalents from L1 and L2 and vice versa.

For syntax, students need training in finding how the elements in the sentences interact and what specific notions they convey. Simple grammatical explanations are useful in helping students in preparatory subtasks like locating and focusing on verbs, etc. Word-formation techniques are useful in the decoding task. Basic information questions from the teacher can focus attention on particular elements which carry the information needed. Some overt grammar teaching is also necessary for understanding word order and its role in conveying meaning. Contrastive analysis can help students to identify similarities between the native and target languages and teachers to analyse areas where there is no fit and where materials need to be provided. Systematic teaching and constant reading practice to acquire confidence are essential.

**82-190 Judd, Elliott L.** (U. of Illinois at Chicago Circle). Language policy, curriculum development, and TESOL instruction: a search for compatibility. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **15**, 1 (1981), 59–66.

Language policy has a direct impact on TESOL and should therefore be considered as a crucial factor in planning for ESOL programmes. Provided here is specific information on how an ESOL curriculum might be planned which is more compatible with the existing language policy in various countries around the world. Classification is divided into four major categories, based on the status of the English language: English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), English as an additional language (EAL), and English as a language of wider communication (ELWC). Each of the four classes is described and compared and suggestions are offered about which types of ESOL curricula and methodologies are most applicable to each category. A framework is offered for future analysis.

**82-191 Di Pietro, Robert J.** (U. of Delaware). Discourse and real-life roles in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **15**, 1 (1981), 27–33.

This article proposes a taxonomy for role-types. Roles function in either long-term or short-term interactions and are thus either [–episodic] or [+episodic]. Three types of roles are established and illustrated via dialogue: social, emotive and maturational. Through a multidimensional model of discourse, interactional exercises can be developed to lead ESL/EFL students to play roles in simulated natural settings while acquiring knowledge of the grammatical structure of English.

**82-192 St Clair, Robert N. and Eiseman, James** (U. of Louisville). The politics of teaching English as a foreign language. *ITL* (Louvain), **51** (1981), 21–36.

Language teaching cannot avoid being affected by politics, since language is an instrument of political socialisation or oppression. In certain countries, schooling is an instrument of the power structure (as opposed to education, which is concerned with cognitive growth). The relationship between language education and immigration policy is discussed with reference to colonisation in India, the Philippines, Vietnam and the treatment of the American Indians. Textbooks for immigrants in the USA show non-threatening models of how immigrants should behave and work. They often present an image of cultural pluralism and liberalism, but this is merely another form of political socialisation. A policy of assimilation has been dominant in the USA since the ‘melting-pot’ hypothesis. The current resurgence of cultural pluralism is linked to the rise of political power among minorities. It has led to changes in textbooks for foreign students: they now show blacks and women and emphasise some non-traditional values, but the picture which is presented of the USA is still highly positive, showing that political socialisation remains the primary function of ESL teaching.

**82–193 Taylor, Harvey M.** (Beijing English Language Centre, China). Learning to listen to English. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **15**, 1 (1981), 41–50.

A listening programme must adapt to the role which ESL/EFL listening will play in the career of each student. This article considers various materials and methods for preparing students to comprehend spoken English in different career contexts in English-speaking countries. Five states of listening development are delineated for career contexts to illustrate the different listening comprehension proficiency levels needed for different careers: (1) stream of sound (zero comprehension of content), (2) word recognition within the stream (minimal comprehension), (3) phrase/formula recognition (marginal comprehension), (4) clause/sentence recognition (minimally functional comprehension), and (5) extended speech recognition (general comprehension). Types of listening tasks are analysed according to their usefulness in developing ESL/EFL listening abilities appropriate for each of these stages.

**82–194 Turner, John F.** Grading the present progressive. *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), **80**, 3 (1981), 194–202.

German introductory English textbooks emphasise the use of the present progressive. The prevailing treatment of this grammatical problem is questioned and an alternative approach suggested which should help to avoid the common pitfall of overuse. The changes suggested include: (1) revising the gradation of the present progressive to delay its presentation until more useful verb forms have been established; (2) grading interrogative constructions for presentation only after the corresponding affirmative structures have been established (to avoid interference); (3) making the contexts of presentation reflect those of actual usage more closely, and (4) placing less value on simplified rules and ‘distinctive’ uses for the present progressive until the learner can view the tense in a wider context.

## FRENCH

**82–195 Chaurand, Jacques and Lerat, Pierre.** Français fondamental et français d’aujourd’hui. [‘Français fondamental’ and French today.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **159** (1981), 20–5

Unlike Basic English (an artificial language based on English) *français fondamental* represented an attempt to reduce the language for teaching purposes to its essentials: the most frequent lexemes and the basic grammatical structures.

Now, 25 years later, *français fondamental* seems to be partly a recognised historical monument and partly a method of teaching French as a foreign language which is no longer entirely suited to the task. Undoubtedly some updating is necessary, especially as regards vocabulary, but any refashioning of *français fondamental* should remain true to its well-tried underlying principles.

**82-196 Cholakian, Patricia Francis** (Hamilton Coll.). Commercial French: an opportunity for innovative classroom techniques. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **54**, 5 (1981), 666-71.

A one-semester course is described which aimed to teach not the traditional, office-centred 'commercial French' but skills which would be useful to someone dealing with French speakers in a business situation. The teacher first conducted an informal survey to determine which skills potential employers would consider most useful: respondents agreed that overall skill in comprehending and communicating is more important than mastery of technical vocabulary or commercial procedures. No formal grammar text was used but Cresson's *Introduction au français commercial* was used as a reference book. One lesson was assigned per week, and class units and projects were tied to a theme. The main activities were studying articles from periodicals and presentations by small teams of students grouped at random. Projects included: buying and selling, travelling, banking procedures, credit, job hunting, and advertising. Other projects included recording a series of dialogues on themes of current interest, and viewing documentary films.

**82-197 Debyser, Francis** (BELC). De meilleurs dictionnaires bilingues? [Better bilingual dictionaries?] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **159** (1981), 37-42.

Three recent Italian-French dictionaries published in Italy in the 1970s were compared with the 1980 edition of a work first published before the turn of the century. In every case the Italian-French section was longer than the French-Italian section and the entries for Italian words were fuller than those for French words – the opposite of what the Italian user needs. All the dictionaries exhibited inconsistencies in their treatment of specialised terms, words of foreign origin, and untranslatable words. The information pages, a feature of the newer dictionaries, were not always helpful. The more recent dictionaries to some extent compensated for their deficiencies in semantic analysis and stylistics by providing more examples. Modern dictionary makers appear to be taking only limited advantage of the findings of current linguistic research.

**82-198 Gross, Gaston and Ibrahim, Amr.** Dictionnaires du français langue étrangère. [Dictionaries of French as a foreign language.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **159** (1981), 26-31.

A dictionary for the foreign learner differs from a dictionary intended for the mother-tongue user in that nothing can be taken for granted: no construction is self-evident and the student is frequently in search of relatively commonplace terms. More examples are required. Consequently the monolingual foreign-language dictionary contains fewer entries than a mother-tongue dictionary of comparable size.

A foreign-language dictionary should aim to exemplify the specific character of the target language. [Two well known and long established dictionaries of French as a foreign language with different approaches are compared in order to assess their helpfulness to the learner – also a recent work, the illustrated two-volume *Dictionnaire du français langue étrangère* which presents a number of original features, in particular the grammatical commentaries.]

**82-199 Marchessou, François** (U. of Poitiers). Vidéo et enseignement du français à l'université. [Video and the teaching of French at university.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **158** (1981), 72-4.

Interest in video as a teaching aid is growing, equipment is being installed in establishments of higher education and collections of tapes formed. Yet no methodology exists so far. The most suitable time to use video may be when students have got beyond beginners' audio-visual courses and are ready for authentic documents. At the University of Poitiers short extracts from various francophone sources serve as a basis for lexical and syntactic study, leading to free expression. Video is flexible technically, allowing replay in a language laboratory or on individual cassettes, increasingly with the possibility of subtitles. It also offers opportunities for the study of language in context, individual and group learning, and creative games. The new technical advance should not arouse unrealistic expectations, but can lead to a fruitful global approach.

**82-200 de Margerie, Charles** (ENS de Saint-Cloud). La publicité et l'enseignement du français langue étrangère. [The place of advertising in the teaching of French as a foreign language.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **163** (1981), 47-50, 67-8.

Advertisements first began to be used in the teaching of French as a foreign language in 1974/5 when the trend was towards the incorporation of authentic documents into courses. However, a survey of courses published between 1970 and 1980 suggests that, with a few exceptions, only limited use is being made of advertising; and only in courses for adults who are past the elementary stage. Some teachers seem to use advertising not out of conviction, but because it is the thing to do. Teaching and advertising have much in common: both seek to convince and explain and be remembered. Further research is needed into the contribution that advertising can make to teaching.

**82-201 Michel, Xavier and van Deth, Jean-Pierre**. Des chiffres et des hommes. Une enquête mondiale. [Numbers and men. A world survey.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **161** (1981), 10-31.

The first results of a survey of teachers of French throughout the world are presented. Ninety-six countries outside France, representing 80 per cent of the world population, were covered in the survey, with some omissions, e.g. USSR, Canada. Information is given on the number of French teachers, absolutely and compared with other foreign-language teachers, their age, sex, nationality, length of training and social status. Figures are given not by countries, but with reference to French-speaking and non-French-speaking zones and to continents. English is the first foreign language in 51 countries, French in 30. Despite some decline, French is still widely taught in Europe and America, it is making progress in Latin America, Asia, and the Gulf states, but losing some of its former prestige in Syria, Vietnam and Egypt. Two-thirds of the teachers are women, three-quarters teach in secondary schools, most are under 40.

**82–202 Moore, Victoria** (U. of Paris IV). *L'anglophone et l'apprentissage du passé en français*. [Introducing the French past tenses to English speakers.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **160** (1981), 39–44.

The formal resemblance between the French *passé composé* and the English present perfect causes difficulties for English speakers and occasions misleading analogies between the two systems, and the meaning and use of these tenses. To avoid confusion, English speakers should first be introduced to the *imparfait* – which has the additional advantage of being simpler in form and easier to manipulate. Once use of this tense has been consolidated the *passé composé* may be taught. It is unrealistic to expect students to refrain from making any comparison between their mother tongue and the target language, but careful presentation and teaching in context through examples can help develop linguistic awareness of the real differences between the two languages and prevent bad habits being formed.

**82–203 Vergnaud, J.** (U. of Limoges). *La genèse de la nomenclature de 1910 et ses enseignements*. [The establishment of the 1910 nomenclature and its lessons.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **47** (1980), 48–75. **Mitterand, H.** (U. de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III). *La nomenclature grammaticale (version 1975)*. [Grammatical nomenclature (1975 version).] *Ibid.* 90–99. **Vergnaud, J.** *Éléments de problématique pour une nomenclature, aujourd'hui* [Problems of nomenclature today.] *Ibid.* 109–14.

This century has seen two attempts on the part of French government departments to establish a grammatical terminology to be used in the teaching of French in French secondary schools. The first was in 1910, the second in 1975. These articles review the terminologies advocated, discussing their content, the theories of grammar implicit in them, their educational implications, the interplay of linguistic and pedagogical factors in their establishment, and the historical background against which they were conceived. General problems of establishing grammatical nomenclatures for use in schools are also discussed. [Appendix containing 1910 nomenclature in Vergnaud, 'La genèse...']

## GERMAN

**82–204 James, Charles J.** (U. of Illinois). *The language of death in German newspapers*. *Die Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **1** (1981), 53–8.

Both individually and collectively obituaries take up a lot of space in German newspapers. German families feel that a public expression of grief is called for and that the deceased should have a substantial epitaph. A sample is analysed of 670 death notices which appeared in a West German local newspaper in the latter half of the 1970s. The format of these notices is highly formalised [examples] and the language is predictable, but the permutations of words and phrases are extremely varied.

Euphemisms for death and the deceased abound. [List of verbs recurring most frequently.] The viewpoint from which the death is described is either that of the deceased, the deceased's family or the agent of death.

The information given could be used in German language classes: students could create death notices to help reinforce vocabulary. They could form brief sentences describing a person and the feelings expressed by those who miss him/her.

**82–205 Smith, Clyde R.** Contextualising pattern drills: the 'German circle games'. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), 14, 3 (1981), 203–8.

Organising the foreign-language class into small groups provides the learners with more opportunities to speak the target language, a measure of autonomy, and a more relaxed atmosphere. A way to give group activity structure and direction is through games which combine rigorous grammar with theatrical techniques. The 'German circle games' turn grammatical exercises into meaningful communicative activity by introducing pantomime, props, and pictures as a means of providing contexts. Students, working independently in small groups, drill specific grammatical features while communicating real information. This contextualisation of pattern drills, in which sight, touch, and movement enhance the meaning of linguistic forms, makes both grammar and vocabulary more memorable.