

retrospective protocol data. Students identified and elaborated as reader-friendly four textual elements, which they believed had enabled them to formulate a more acceptable overall gist of a text, thus making them 'better' readers. However, they did not apply the reader-friendliness features to their texts, although they perceived an increased ability to detect their textual problems. The interview data suggested that, with evolving rhetorical consciousness, these L2 students had become more aware of the nature of written discourse. As readers, they effectively used devices that make texts reader-friendly to get the gist of a text read, and, as writers, they were able to explain why they saw school sponsored writing as a distinct genre.

## Language testing

**00-355 Al-Musawi, N. M. and Al-Ansari, S. H.** (U. of Bahrain; *Email: salansari@arts.uob.bh*). Test of English as a Foreign Language and First Certificate of English tests as predictors of academic success for undergraduate students at the University of Bahrain. *System* (Oxford, UK), **27**, 3 (1999), 389-99.

The purpose of this study is to examine the multivariate relationships of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the First Certificate of English (FCE), and to determine whether the 86 participating students' total score on the TOEFL or their overall score on the FCE tends to be a better predictor of their success at the University as measured by the overall grade-point average (GPA). The multivariate prediction of the GPA from the scores on the FCE is very accurate. Regression analysis revealed that the FCE cloze, and sentence transformation subscores are the only test scores that contributed to the prediction of both students' GPA, and their GPA in English courses. The TOEFL section scores did not contribute enough to be maintained in the linear prediction model. Results indicate that the FCE is a better test instrument than the TOEFL, particularly when English is being taught as a foreign language. Since the TOEFL test did not appear to be an effective predictor of students' academic achievement at university level, it is concluded that using it as a test instrument in any of the major language courses taught at the university within an EFL context should be reconsidered.

**00-356 Fulcher, Glenn** (U. of Surrey, UK). Computerising an English language placement test. *ELT Journal* (Oxford, UK), **53**, 4 (1999), 289-99.

This article is primarily concerned with the delivery of an English language placement test over the Internet, using the World Wide Web. This is a computer-based test, used for placing students into 'upper intermediate' or 'advanced' classes on summer and pre-session courses at a UK university. The article describes a pilot study

to investigate potential bias against students who lack computer familiarity or have negative attitudes towards technology, and assesses the usefulness of the test as a placement instrument by comparing the accuracy of placement with a pencil-and-paper form of the test. The article focuses upon the process of considering (and discounting) rival hypotheses to explain the meaning of test scores in the validation process.

**00-357 Jennings, Martha** (Carleton U., Ontario, Canada; *Email: marthaj@cyberus.ca*), **Fox, Janna, Graves, Barbara and Shohamy, Elana**. The test-takers' choice: an investigation of the effect of topic on language-test performance. *Language Testing* (London, UK), **16**, 4 (1999), 426-56.

A fundamental issue in validating topic-based tests of language proficiency is the effect of the topic on the test takers' performance. Topic-based test developers must ensure that test takers are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in terms of their test results when presented with a given test topic. The present authors have termed this threat a 'topic effect'; they argue that it may constitute a source of construct-irrelevant variance, and that investigating its possibility is a critical step in establishing the validity of all topic-based tests. This research investigates the potential presence of a topic effect for the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment using the mechanism of choice, the principal aim being to determine if test-takers given a choice of topic perform significantly differently from those not. English as Second Language university applicants ( $n = 254$ ) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: no choice of topic or choice among five topics. Overall Proficiency Level, Reading, Lecture and Essay scores were compared for the two conditions. Ordinal level data were analysed using the Mann Whitney U, Chi-Square and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. While the scores for the choice groups were usually higher than the scores for the no-choice groups, the differences were not statistically significant; it was felt, however, that the scores warranted closer examination. For the topic where the difference between the groups was largest, a textual analysis of the essays looked for instances of the use of information not provided in the test—again, no difference was found. The results provide support for the validity of inferences drawn from this test. Because choice is an essential element of the research design, a second focus of the study is to explore the advantages and disadvantages of the use of choice in language testing settings from the perspective of both the tester and the test-taker; and the potential value of choice as a testing feature is discussed.

**00-358 Powers, Donald E., Schedl, Mary A., Wilson Leung, Susan** (Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, USA) and **Butler, Frances A.** Validating the revised Test of Spoken English against a criterion of communicative success. *Language Testing* (London, UK), **16**, 4 (1999), 399-425.

This article reports how a communicative competence orientation was taken to study the validity of test-score inferences derived from the revised Test of Spoken English (TSE) (a measure of the oral language proficiency of non-native speakers of English). A sample of undergraduate students, primarily native speakers of English, provided a variety of reactions to, and judgements of, the test responses of a sample of TSE examinees, whose scores, previously determined by official TSE raters, spanned the full range of TSE score levels. Undergraduate students were selected as 'evaluators' because they are likely to interact with TSE examinees, many of whom become teaching assistants. Student evaluations were captured by devising and administering a secondary listening test to assess students' understanding of TSE examinees' speech, as represented by their taped responses to tasks on the TSE. The objective was to determine the degree to which official TSE scores are predictive of listeners' ability to understand the messages conveyed by TSE examinees. Analyses revealed a strong association between TSE score levels and the judgements, reactions and understanding of listeners. This finding applied to all TSE tasks and to nearly all of the several different kinds of evaluations made by listeners. It is suggested that the evidence gathered here—along with other information—should help the TSE programme meet professional standards for test validation. The procedures may also prove useful in future test-development efforts as a way of determining the difficulty of speaking (and possibly writing) tasks.

## Teacher education

**00-359 Brutt-Griffler, Janina** (U. of Cincinnati, USA) and **Samimy, Keiko K.** Revisiting the colonial in the postcolonial: critical praxis for nonnative-English-speaking teachers in a TESOL programme. *TESOL Quarterly* (Alexandria, VA, USA), **33**, 3 (1999), 413–31.

Although historically much teaching of English has been done by nonnative-English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), the present authors contend that research on their concerns as English educators has been neglected. This article takes as its central focus the narrative of NNESTs in the context of critical praxis. It discusses a graduate seminar offered for perhaps the first time in a TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages) programme for NNESTs. The article presents the process of interrogating the nativeness paradigm among NNESTs themselves via their own experiences and self-representation. It discusses the validity of conceptual tools designed to overcome disempowering discourses that may exist in TESOL programmes, and centres on the construction of identity among NNESTs that neither prescribes a limited role for them in the profession nor specifies definite boundaries to their capacities therein. The study suggests that the process of empowerment of NNESTs is neither linear

nor simple but can nevertheless be generated within and by teachers engaged in critical praxis. It also demonstrates that many of the participants found a new relationship with their contexts, analysed the causes of their powerlessness, and generated a new sense of agency as teachers and scholars in the field.

**00-360 Pomphrey, Cathy and Moger, Ros** (U. of North London, UK). Cross-subject dialogue about language: attitudes and perceptions of PGCE students of English and modern languages. *Language Awareness* (Clevedon, UK), **8**, 3/4 (1999), 223–36.

This paper reports the initial findings of a small, local study of student teachers' attitudes and perceptions in the area of knowledge about language. It is part of an attempt to generate cross-subject dialogue about language between student teachers training to teach either English or modern languages in the mainstream curriculum in England and Wales in order to provide greater consistency and communication in the school curriculum. The study identifies some causes of tension in this dialogue. A key finding is a high level of anxiety among student teachers of English concerning their explicit knowledge of language structure, which inhibited their participation in the dialogue. The anxiety was not so apparent among student teachers of modern languages and seemed to be related to the difficulty of making implicit knowledge about language explicit when the language was closely related to the student's personal and social identity. The paper considers the causes of this anxiety and how to develop better communication between the two curriculum areas. One important suggestion is to rethink the direction of language transfer. Insights gained from the study of additional languages can be used for the contemplation of the first language structure rather than the reverse.

**00-361 Tyrwhitt-Drake, Hugh** (U. of Hong Kong). Responding to grammar questions on the Internet: providing correction through the corpus. *ELT Journal* (Oxford, UK), **53**, 4 (1999), 281–8.

This article considers an interactive messaging system that was set up on the Internet to enable Hong Kong teachers of English to discuss language-related issues as part of the *TeleNex* (Teachers of English Language Education Nexus) teacher support network. The Language Corner is restricted to serving English language teachers and trainee English teachers in Hong Kong, who send in questions and contribute to discussions. TELEC (Teachers of English Language Education Centre) staff members also contribute to the Language Corner, generally by responding to questions. This article describes how grammatical explanations based on the analysis of corpus data are routinely used to answer teachers' queries. It also shows how the provision of accurate answers sometimes entails a need for explicit correction. It is argued that correction has an important role not only linguistically and pedagogically, but also in maintaining the quality of the interaction, and thus ensuring the long-term future of the site.