

# Language learning and teaching

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## **THEORY AND PRINCIPLES** See also abstracts 81–404.

**81–356 Bock, Hans Manfred.** Zum Vergleich im Fremdsprachenunterricht – Fragen und Perspektiven aus sozialwissenschaftlicher Sicht. [Comparative studies as incorporated into foreign-language teaching; questions and perspectives from the social scientific viewpoint.] *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart), 56 (1980), 261–71.

Although the comparison between the country where the foreign language is being studied and the country where that language is spoken provides an inescapable dimension in foreign-language teaching and is an essential element in its politico-educational justification, a detailed didactic base for such comparative study does not exist. The store of knowledge and the methods of research of the relevant social sciences could and should be taken as a starting point for an up-to-date study of comparative perspectives in foreign-language teaching.

**81–357 Ellis, R.** The role of input in language acquisition: some implications for second-language teaching. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 2, 1 (1980), 70–82.

An approach to second-language teaching which gives emphasis to the provision of communication with a native speaker, who organises the input to give prominence to specific discourse features, may offer greater chances of success than more traditional structural approaches. In order to illustrate the kind of facilitative interaction which such an approach would entail, two conversations are offered for discursive analysis; one involves a mother and her 21-month-old child and the other a teacher and a group of six-year-old Asian children learning English as a second language.

Implications for language teaching are that: (1) teaching materials should take account of the adjustments which occur when native speakers talk to learners with limited linguistic competence; (2) the focus should be shifted from language as form to language as a network of interpersonal meaning (behavioural rather than linguistic learning targets); (3) rapid learning could be facilitated by providing an input enriched by discourse features such as instructions, occurring naturally in activities (e.g. cooking, model-making).

**81–358 Moys, Alan.** How diverse is diversified? *Times Higher Education Supplement* (London), 415 (17 Oct. 1980), 23–4.

Modern linguists talk about diversifying foreign-language teaching, but there is no central policy to effect their recommendations that languages

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other than French should be available to a larger proportion of students, and that a 'survival level' in several languages might be more useful for the majority of learners. The importance of French is unlikely to be reduced in favour of growth in German, Spanish, Italian or Russian unless these languages are given first, or equal first, language status in some schools. A recent Schools Council exploratory study of some such schools confirms that individual schools make their own choice of first language according to their staff's interests. Other languages were not intrinsically more or less feasible but were as likely to have good results if organisation and commitment were good. An eight-form entry is essential where joint first-language provision is made, or numbers are too small to be workable. It may be unrealistic to think of extending the range of 'school languages'. To ensure variety, curricula should be co-ordinated on a local basis, with a national policy on teaching resources, and supply and training of teachers. The absence of such a policy is demoralising and unproductive.

**81-359 Politzer, Robert L.** Foreign-language teaching and bilingual education: research implications. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **13**, 4 (1980), 291-7.

Research findings suggest that primary-school children exposed to bilingual immersion-type programmes which lack a second-language speaking peer-group tend to develop a pidginised version of the second language. Formal foreign-language teaching may therefore be needed even in bilingual immersion programmes for primary-school children. Even in exposure to a peer group, second-language teaching can make at least a short-term difference in improving grammatical use and correctness. Data from a study recently undertaken at Stanford University show that certain types of language-teaching behaviours (e.g. modelling, using visual aids, etc.) relate significantly to pupil achievement as measured by comprehension and production tests. A plea is made for (1) foreign-language teaching research undertaken by foreign-language specialists using behavioural categories related directly to the foreign-language curriculum, (2) a combination of functional and formal approaches (e.g. bilingual education and second-language teaching) to achieve second- or foreign-language proficiency.

**81-360 Riley, Philip.** When communication breaks down: levels of coherence in discourse. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **1**, 3 (1980), 201-16.

This is one of a number of articles based on the work of a CRAPEL research team (see also abstracts 76-295, 77-292, 81-346) which investigates the pedagogical applications of discourse analysis. A way of describing degrees of 'discursality' is proposed, which distinguishes

between interaction, illocution, content and realisation, as an aid to describing and understanding communicative error or failure. [Discussion of terminology – interactive/non-interactive, turns, roles, acts.]

There are some rules of performance which are based on the physical nature of the activity and the medium in question, rather than on some underlying linguistic competence. A passage of classroom interaction is analysed in which most of the signals which realise Address are non-verbal. Interactive acts must be distinguished from the illocutionary values which messages may have: each interactive slot has at least one illocutionary filler. Degrees of interactive coherency can be described 'Realisation' is the set of message-bearing elements in a situation. 'Content' is 'prepositional content' which has to be distinguished from the illocutionary value of an utterance. Communicative breakdowns, such as misunderstandings, can be described using this terminology.

**81–361 Schilder, Hanno.** Stationen der neusprachlichen Medien- didaktik seit 1945. Versuch einer Ortsbestimmung. [Stages in the development of the use of media in modern-language teaching since 1945.] *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), 29, 4 (1980), 330–48.

The limitations, obligations and prospects of modern-language media conceptions are discussed against the background of their development since 1945. International research in linguistics and learning theory has influenced the development of teaching materials, but the integration of general and foreign-language media didactics has followed only on a point-by-point basis. Teacher education, problems of equipping the schools, the media consciousness of pupils and teachers, and recent considerations about problems of language acquisition provide together an orientating frame for future attempts to forge a media conception for modern-language teaching.

**81–362 Schmall, Patrick.** Motivations for the choice of French and English as foreign languages. *York Papers in Linguistics* (York), 9 (1980), 201–6.

The prominence of English and French as international languages is a direct result of the political or economic predominance of the countries which speak those languages. Hence a country's decision to teach a foreign language implies an ideological decision – economic, sociological and psychological. France devotes very considerable resources to promoting French abroad. Results of a survey carried out by FIPF (*Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Français*) in its member countries are briefly reported: it covered (a) teachers – young males in less developed countries; females of various ages in developed countries; (b) training – the needs of learners are rarely mentioned; (c) methods – usually formal and authoritarian.

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French is seen as the language of culture, English of science. The image of French is of a difficult and exacting language. In developing countries, English tends to be the language imposed by the political establishment, whereas French is the language of the intelligentsia, particularly of the opposition. French is often chosen as the second foreign language after Russian in East European countries. French may well thus become the language to transmit a European model for international economic development in opposition to the American and Soviet models. English is chosen for socio-economic, and French for ideological reasons.

**81–363 van Dijk, Teun A.** Discourse studies and education. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 2, 1 (1980), 1–26.

Texts should be analysed at various levels, especially the semantic. Conditions of local and global coherence of texts are specified, the latter being made explicit in terms of semantic macrostructures, which define the notion of 'theme' or 'topic'. Similarly, stylistic and rhetorical analysis should take place at the discourse level. Schematic superstructures define conventional and categorical 'formal' parts of a discourse type, e.g. a story. A discourse is a sequence of speech acts, which also need to be locally and globally coherent; pragmatic macrostructures are postulated. A discourse, either as a monologue or dialogue, not only has various structures, but may also have several kinds of functions. Besides the speech act function of utterances, turns, moves and interactions can be distinguished. Discourses also require an analysis of their various contexts, such as the socio-cultural context and cognitive context.

Classroom interaction, reading, understanding and language use should respect the cognitive aspects of discourse comprehension and learning from discourse, which in turn depends on the various structures of discourse. Pupils and students should be systematically confronted with different discourse types which are relevant in their personal and social contexts. They should learn to use and understand these, paying attention, at first intuitively and later more explicitly, to a number of crucial properties of these texts and their typical pragmatic and social contexts. In discourse analysis they should learn to make this understanding and use more explicit, e.g. by making distinctions between levels of discourse, and by linking textual structures with contextual structures.

**PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING** See also abstracts 81–381, –388, –393, –409

**81–364 Cohen, Andrew D. and Aphek, Edna.** Retention of second-language vocabulary over time: investigating the role of mnemonic associations. *System* (Oxford), **8**, 3 (1980), 221–35.

In this study 26 learners of Hebrew as a second language were trained to generate associations of their own choosing to new vocabulary items, and their use of these and new associations during recall tasks was examined over a period of a month. In order to illustrate the nature of the data that were recorded and analysed, a description of vocabulary learning behaviour across words and across tasks is provided for two sample students. Likewise, a description is also provided of how two words 'behaved' across students. Findings for the student group as a whole were as follows: students reported using previously formed associations most frequently in order to recall words in subsequent tasks, and their performance was better when using this retrieval strategy than when they used a new association, no longer used as an association, or used no association at all. There was also a generally high success rate across all four tasks for recall of words that were learned through association. Since a subgroup of students who learned some words without association recalled these words as well as words that they did find associations for, the question was left open as to the type of learner who benefits from learning vocabulary through association.

**81–365 Godfrey, Ruth L.** On the contribution of morpheme acquisition studies to second language acquisition research. *Cahiers Linguistiques d'Ottawa* (Ottawa), **8** (1980), 1–19.

Findings of morpheme acquisition studies are discussed, particularly the Identity and Interlanguage Hypotheses, and the problem of methodology is acknowledged as crucial. The approach should be broadened by developing a multi-factor explanation of L2 learning, which would isolate the variables which govern it. L2 learning occurs during the later stages of the altricial phase, or afterwards, so the variables can best be studied using tightly controlled experiments with adults.

A dynamic approach to interlanguage is another way of understanding the process of L2 learning. The model is provided by the work of Bailey (1973) and Bickerton (1975) on language variation, and traces the nature and paths of change in the learner's language.

**81–366 John, Athialy P.** 'Approximative languages' and language learning situations. *IRAL (Heidelberg)*, **18**, 3 (1980), 209–15.

This paper deals with the closely related problems of language contact, approximative systems and language-learning situations, and proposes the recognition of 'fixed approximative languages'. An approximative system (La) is the deviant linguistic system employed by the learner in

attempting to use the target language, and is a point in a succession of stages, La1, La2, etc. At any stage it forms a system in itself. Interference forms a 'critical barrier' to perfect acquisition of particular L2 features, and may characterise a whole community of learners, leading to the formation of a special variant of the L2 system called the 'approximate language', LA. The latter can be identified for each of the Indian languages, for example.

Different kinds of learning situations can also influence the learner's system, particularly the 'language milieu', i.e. whether L2 is the same as that of the surrounding community or not, or the language milieu is bilingual. The situation may be a mixture of these types. LA analysis could be a useful adjunct to contrastive analysis.

**81-367 Karpf, Annemarie and others.** Phonology of dialect interference in second-language learning. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **18**, 3 (1980), 193-208.

The real linguistic basis for second-language learning is not the standard variety of the source language but its regional variant or the local dialect. On the phonological level, it makes more sense to speak of variants, not languages, in contact. Source-language dialects can cause positive and negative transfer, as is shown by a study of a Styrian (Austrian) dialect in contrast with Standard School English. The two main approaches to dialect in school are elimination of dialect and functional bi-dialectism (retention of the child's local language in addition to the standard language). For countries like Austria, where most pupils speak a dialect, that dialect should be accepted. It is useful if the teacher has knowledge of the dialects. Some dialect-specific features which are not in the standard language may correspond to features in the foreign language—this positive transfer should be used more consistently than at present.

Mechanisms of foreign-language learning on the phonological level include interference/transfer. When the learner is concentrating on syntax, lexicon and morphology, phonological interference increases, since source-language elements are more easily recalled than newly learned target-language items. Likewise, stored material is more likely to be pronounced correctly than new items of vocabulary.

The learner's corrective strategies comprise internal and external correction on various linguistic levels. Errors of performance and of competence should also be distinguished. In correcting phonetic errors, individual variation has to be taken into account, as well as regional variation, making a continuum from mini- to maxiphonology.

An investigation of source- and target-language productions made by 60 Styrian informants with different exposure to English is reported, with analysis of intonation, segmental and suprasegmental interference, and devoicing.

- 81-368 Monshi-Tousi, Mohammad and others.** English proficiency and factors in its attainment: a case study of Iranians in the United States. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **14**, 3 (1980), 365-72.

Fifty-five Iranians studying in various fields at the University of New Mexico were tested for proficiency in English. In general their scores fell between levels achieved by fourth- and seventh-grade native speakers. Subjects also completed a questionnaire designed to elicit data on factors believed important for the acquisition of proficiency in English. Association with American friends and the amount of time spent in the United States emerged as the most important variables. The number of years spent in studying English in Iran (in formal classroom settings) proved to be a negligible factor.

- 81-369 Snow, Catherine E. and others.** The acquisition of some Dutch morphological rules. *Journal of Child Language* (Cambridge), **7**, 3 (1980), 539-53.

The acquisition of the morphological rules for plural, agentive, and diminutive suffixes in Dutch was studied. Subjects included 7- and 12-year-old native speakers, and second-language learners in three age groups (5-10 years, 12-18 years, and adult). The first- and second-language learners showed very similar orders of acquisition for the rule systems governing plural and diminutive, but the second-language learners showed a subtle form of interference from their first language in acquiring the agentive. The findings suggest that morphological acquisition proceeds piecemeal, with the learning of specific word ending + allomorph sequences, and that generalisations at the level of morphological rules may not be made even after several years of correct performance with the allomorph in question.

## CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

- 81-370 Esser, Jürgen.** Contrastive analysis at the crossroads of linguistics and foreign-language teaching. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **18**, 3 (1980), 181-91.

Contrastive analysis (CA) is concerned with synchronic studies of at least two languages, carried out either for academic/theoretical purposes ('confrontive') or for practical/didactic purposes ('contrastive'). The practical application of CA lies in the prediction and diagnosis of learners' errors: it may be strong, i.e. predictive, or weak, i.e. diagnostic. It can only predict or explain errors deriving from structural differences between native and target language. Other reasons for errors must also be taken into account, including overgeneralisation, sequencing of teaching items and imperfect learning. There has been little interaction

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between the approach of the linguist and that of the teacher to CA. There is a need for a 'teaching grammar' of English, and not merely one, but as many as there are languages to be contrasted with English.

The method of describing two languages should combine the grammatical approach with analysis of conceptual strategies (functions), distinguishing concepts or referents which are language specific and those which are not. Representative types of mistake were classified, and more than two thirds were found to involve differences in language-specific concept formation. It is also important to consider mistakes relating to the norm, i.e. formal characteristics of each language which have different functional styles according to the medium used (speech, writing). Confrontive linguistics may be able to throw light on these problems.

## TESTING

**81-371 Brown, James Dean.** Relative merits of four methods for scoring cloze tests. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **64**, 3 (1980), 311-17.

Four methods of scoring cloze tests are compared: exact-answer (EX), acceptable-answer (AC), clozentropy (CLZNT) and multiple-choice (MC). It was hypothesised that the four scoring methods would not differ in reliability, validity, mean item facility and discrimination, or in usability. A cloze passage was prepared in an open-ended and a multiple-choice format, each of which was administered to about 50 students of similar language background. Results showed that there were differences in reliability, mean item facility and discrimination, and usability, but not in validity [table ranks the four scoring methods for each criterion]. More studies are needed of what cloze tests are really testing. The best overall scoring method is the AC method, which seems fairer to the students than the EX method.

**81-372 Collett, M. J.** Examples of applications of computers to modern-language study. 1. The step-wise development of programmes in reading, grammar and vocabulary. *System* (Oxford), **8**, 3 (1980), 195-204.

The first of two articles describing ways in which existing computer installations have been used by a university French department. A format which presented multiple choice questions in sets of five was applied to reading and grammar units. Usage recording facilities, added later, showed disappointing results, but a marked improvement was found when units were specifically linked to weekly assignments. A new type of programme designed for vocabulary review included significant improvements: individual student performance could be recorded, and no student was ever called upon to repeat an item which he had already

answered correctly. Further useful features built into this programme were a record of how frequently wrong answers have been selected for each item, an automatic print-out of the entire contents of each unit, and the maintenance of a continually updated alphabetical master list of all words so far included in the total set.

**81-373 Cziko, Gary A.** Psychometric and edumetric approaches to language testing: implications and applications. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 2, 1 (1981), 27-44.

A psychometric test is designed to maximise individual differences, resulting in scores which have to be compared with those of a comparison or 'norm' group; an edumetric test yields scores which are meaningful in their own right. Integrative tests (e.g. cloze and dictation) are now being used in contrast to more traditional discrete-point tests (e.g. vocabulary and grammar tests). Criticism of norm-referenced tests questions their appropriateness, since the test items are not related to the objectives of any particular programme, whereas domain- and criterion-referenced tests, which are primarily edumetric, allow scores to be interpreted not in relation to a norm group but in reference to a well defined domain of behaviour for which, in the case of criterion-referenced tests, some criterion has been set. Problems arise, however, in specifying the domains of behaviour.

The relation between the psychometric/edumetric dimension and the integrative/discrete-point dimension is considered. Integrative tests seem to be more in keeping with the edumetric approach, though they are usually put to psychometric uses, because they are direct measures of language proficiency. They could probably be adapted into tests with excellent edumetric characteristics [different combinations of variables are discussed].

**81-374 Ducroquet, Lucille.** Objective or subjective testing? *System* (Oxford), 8, 3 (1980), 237-43.

The claim for objectivity has been commonly used in the past few decades as a criterion for excellence in language tests. This claim is examined here, firstly through a critical presentation of the characteristics of objective tests, and secondly as compared with integrative tests (with particular reference to John Oller Jr., 1979). This examination leads to a discussion of what the best approach to testing language might be, and it is argued that a combination of integrative and objective techniques should ensure maximum validity and reliability.

- 81-375 Düwell, Henning** Leistungsbereiche der Lernerfolgsüberprüfung. Eine Untersuchung zu den Aufgabenstellungen von Klassenarbeiten des Englisch- und Französischunterrichts in Klasse 10. [Applications of achievement testing. A study of tasks in class tests in English and French in class 10.] *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), **29**, 5 (1980), 446-63.

A study of 654 French and English class tests written by 10th grade pupils in 35 schools of various types in the Federal Republic of Germany is discussed. The tests are examined with regard to (1) their points of execution in the temporal/organisational frameworks of their respective language classes, (2) their content, and (3) their different types of item. A total of 1,448 required linguistic operations are located and categorized according to a descriptive model as either isolated language elements or complex language applications. The study is designed to describe language achievement testing (*Lernerfolgsüberprüfung*) practices in the 10th grade. The required linguistic operations are examined to determine their usefulness as testing criteria for the 16+ school-leaving qualifications currently under discussion.

- 81-376 Fretwurst, Peter.** Ständige Leistungskontrolle – eine unabdingbare Komponente des Unterrichtsprozesses. [Continuous assessment as an indispensable part of the teaching process.] *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin), **24**, 6 (1980), 257-60.

Continuous assessment is important in foreign-language study both to motivate the pupils and to pinpoint gaps in their knowledge. The teacher is then able to adapt future lessons and to fill these gaps in accordance with the specific needs of the class. In order to reflect progress accurately, all the various activities which form part of language teaching must be examined. Accent and intonation must be tested as well as grammar and vocabulary. Tests should not only be concerned with what has been covered recently but also with what has been dealt with in the more distant past.

Teachers should make sure that the pupils grasp the long-term aims of the assessment system so that they develop a positive attitude to it. They should be made aware of the criteria by which their work is judged. Indeed, pupils should be encouraged to assess their own progress and to identify the areas of knowledge where improvement is called for.

- 81-377 Fretwurst, Peter.** Die Bewertung der Leistungen als notwendiger Bestandteil des pädagogischen Prozesses im Fremdsprachenunterricht. [Assessment of pupils' performance as an essential part of the education process in foreign language teaching.] *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin), **24**, 7/8 (1980), 322-6.

The wider goals of a communist education and the effects on the

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character development of individual pupils should determine the method of assessing education standards. Tests ought to be planned at the same time as the lessons rather than afterwards. It is the teacher's responsibility to see that the marking system is fair and consistent. However, the teacher should comment on performance according to the individual requirements of each pupil. A pupil's attitude to a subject is greatly influenced by the teacher's reaction to his performance. Whenever possible each pupil should be made aware that he is making progress.

Assessing grammatical exercises, translations and the like is comparatively straightforward; the more creative use of a foreign language poses a different problem. A teacher must assess to what extent mistakes hinder effective communication while bearing in mind that if too much importance is attached to correctness, the pupils may be discouraged from attempting to communicate. A pupil's final course mark should be taken as his ultimate grade because otherwise he may be held back by an earlier failure which has since been made good.

### COURSE DESIGN *See also abstracts 81–391, –402*

**81–378 Hog, Martin and Müller, Bernd-D.** Sensibilisation à la langue et processus non-linéaires dans l'acquisition d'une langue étrangère. [Making the learner alive to the language and non-linear progress in learning a foreign language.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **54** (1980), 95–120.

This paper is the description of the linguistic and pedagogical bases as well as the structure of a German course for advanced learners in which the language is not treated as a system of signs but rather as a social phenomenon, as a constituent element of the identity of the individual and of his linguistic group. The method is based on tasks designed to enable the learners to reach learning targets focusing on the following axes: perception as active interpretation; development of meaning in the mother tongue or in foreign languages; intentions and their verbal expression; set/reified speech acts.

## SYLLABUS DESIGN

**81–379 McDonough, S. H.** Psychological aspects of sequencing. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **18**, 4 (1980), 312–20.

For the course writer, psychological information about processes and strategies of second-language learning are as important and necessary as linguistic descriptions of source and target language. An example of a fragment of a syllabus is examined from *Look, Listen and Learn* (1968) by Alexander, to show how the language can be systematised; students'

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own verbalising is strictly controlled to prevent errors. Some structures and vocabulary are introduced merely because they are useful in the classroom situation.

Recent writers have pointed out that order of presentation of language items may not be as important as was once thought. Difficulty may be an artefact of the syllabus. Most of the information available is about the product ('interlanguage') and very little is yet known about the learning process. Current areas of discussion concern parallels between first- and second-language learning, the idea of an internal syllabus, and morpheme acquisition studies [examples]. Despite the gradual replacement of structural criteria by communicational criteria, the presentation of grammatical constructions is still based on intuitive ideas of relative difficulty.

**81-380 Valdman, Albert and Warriner-Burke, Helen P.** Major surgery due: redesigning the syllabus and texts. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), 13, 4 (1980), 261-70.

The attainment of a higher level of communicative skills in regular foreign-language courses requires, not the replacement of the traditional situational-structural syllabus by notional or 'communicative' syllabuses, but, rather, clearer definition of objectives and limitation in the scope and content of features specified in syllabuses and introduced in textbooks. Four directions are suggested which should make the situational-structural syllabus more compatible with the imparting of a minimal level of communicative ability: (1) giving semantic and functional notions higher priority than surface grammatical features in the selection and ordering of grammatical features; (2) making the use of grammatical features subordinate to the achievement of communicative ends rather than teaching them for their own sake; (3) introducing features of spoken (as versus written) language discourse in textbooks and providing more authentic speech samples; (4) reducing grammatical apparatus to a strict minimum and accepting less than full-formed utterances from beginning students. These new directions require not only a reduction in the scope of current textbooks but imaginative changes in their design and the content and progression of syllabuses.

## TEACHER TRAINING *See also abstract 81-401*

**81-381 Solmecke, Gert and Boosch, Alwin.** Einige Faktoren der fremdsprachlichen Leistung zukünftiger Englischlehrer. [Some factors which influence the linguistic abilities of future teachers of English.] *Neusprachliche Mitteilungen* (Berlin), 33, 4 (1980), 252-62.

This report is based on the results of a survey of 187 trainee teachers of English and concerns the relationship between their linguistic ability

on the one hand and their attitudes, interests, personalities and social backgrounds on the other. In general it was found that linguistic talents corresponded with an extroverted personality, self-confidence and a high regard for the value of foreign languages. The students who performed least well in the tests were those whose attitude to English as a means of communication was negative. The students with poor oral skills tended to have introverted personalities, to overrate their mother tongue as a means of communication, to have a low opinion of their own linguistic talents, were reluctant to practice their English, had below average grades in foreign languages while still at school, and had a low level of motivation.

Most of these students will soon be qualified teachers. How will their attitudes influence their pupils? In order to gain a realistic picture of the classroom situation, research into the subject of the 'foreign-language teacher as a linguistic model' is urgently needed.

**TEACHING METHODS** *See also abstracts 81–363, –406/7*

**81–382 Coste, Daniel.** Analyse de discours et pragmatique de la parole dans quelques usages d'une didactique des langues. [Applications of discourse analysis and speech act theory to language-teaching methodology.] *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 1, 3 (1980), 244–52.

This paper discusses the way in which speech act theory and discourse analysis have been applied to practical pedagogy, with particular reference to the teaching of French as a foreign language. There has been a tendency to relate these two areas of enquiry to different aspects of language teaching, with speech act theory being associated with the teaching of the production of separate spoken utterances in general contexts and discourse analysis with the teaching of the understanding of larger stretches of written language in specialised contexts. An explanation is given for this state of affairs; it is important to understand and resolve the ambiguities that it creates in language-teaching methodology.

**81–383 Kacowsky, Walter.** Die Funktional-Notionale Kommunikationsdidaktik und ihre Auswirkungen auf den Fremdsprachenunterricht. [Functional and hypothetical methods of teaching communication and their effects on foreign-language learning.] *Moderne Sprachen* (Vienna), 23, 1/2 (1979), 1–32.

In order to cater for all the likely situations in which the pupil may one day find himself in the real world, courses based on 'functional and hypothetical methods of teaching' have been introduced, the goal being practical communicative ability rather than unusable linguistic knowledge. By means of a comparatively limited number of formulas

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and set phrases which can be adapted for use the pupils can be taught to cope effectively in a variety of situations in which knowledge of a foreign language is essential. Such teaching methods are particularly suited to intensive courses and they are also useful for the teaching of lower-ability groups.

However, other areas of language study should not be neglected. The study of texts and grammar is vital. Older pupils should be encouraged to keep up their languages when they have left school by the regular reading of foreign texts. Everyday life in modern English-speaking countries should be studied, but pupils should also be taught about the historical development of these countries.

**81-384 Schiffler, Ludger.** Über das Miteinander von Lehrern und Schülern im Fremdsprachenunterricht. [Co-operation between teachers and pupils in foreign-language teaching.] *Praxis des neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund), 27, 4 (1980), 341-7.

In recent years teaching methods have called for 'communicative foreign-language learning lessons', at least in the advanced stages of language learning, and this call has been met with general approval on the part of teachers, except for one reservation: the problem of how best to continue to progress in grammar remains unresolved. Communicative teaching means shaping the linguistic content and subject matter of the lesson so that the learner is able to express himself in the foreign language. When possible the student's contributions to the lesson should correspond to his actual views, and, most difficult of all, teaching methods should be adopted in which pupils learn and practice these linguistic patterns in genuine communication with the teacher and then use the patterns in new situations and contexts.

## CLASS METHODS: PRONUNCIATION

**81-385 Griffen, T. D.** A nonsegmental approach to the teaching of pronunciation. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), 54 (1980), 81-94.

The teaching of pronunciation has traditionally been conducted in speech segments. Recent evidence from phonetics, however, indicates that speech is produced in a nonsegmental continuum, marked by the coarticulation of speech features. This evidence is applied to teaching in order to give a more natural method for the acquisition of proper pronunciation. Rather than teaching pronunciation as a series of discrete and independent letters strung together, this method introduces speech dynamically through features overlapping one another. Thus, for example, the difference between German *ich* and *ach* is not in the consonant segments, but in the vowels constrained by them.

- 81–386 Hill, Clifford and Beebe, Leslie M.** Contraction and blending: the use of orthographic clues in teaching pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 14, 3 (1980), 299–323.

Certain problems are outlined which arise when ESL materials rely too exclusively on contractions (orthographic phenomena) as a means of presenting blendings (phonological phenomena). Basic information on contractions and blendings that can be used by teachers is then presented. Constraints on the contraction of BE, HAVE, the modals and *not* are presented, then parallels between (1) blending patterns involving contractable words and those involving non-contractable words; (2) blending patterns involving contractable words and patterns of combining lexical roots with suffixes; and (3) blending patterns involving contractable words and single lexical items. These parallels should help teachers preparing ESL materials to obtain maximal exploitation of orthographic cues in teaching pronunciation. Working with this information, teachers can make efficient use of the limited number of contractions as they introduce the wide range of blendings which non-native learners need to master.

- 81–387 McCarthy, B. N.** La notion d'intonation neutre et l'enseignement des langues étrangères. [The idea of 'neutral' intonation and foreign-language teaching.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), 54 (1980), 133–55.

In the early stages of foreign-language programmes, great care is taken in the presentation of basic and unambiguous grammatical structures and lexical items. It is usual to find these accompanied by equally basic intonation patterns, often described as 'neutral'. Without rejecting the notion of neutral intonation as such, this article examines a series of problems associated with it: With what degree of precision is it possible for phoneticians to define 'neutral' curves? To what extent is it possible or desirable to respect fixed intonation patterns in the framework of a foreign-language method? What is the effect of deviating from the norm?

- 81–388 Masthoff, H. R.** Die perception von verrauschten silben und ihre bedeutung für den ausspracheunterricht. [The perception of noise-masked syllables and their significance for pronunciation teaching.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), 54 (1980), 121–31.

Good pronunciation forms an essential component of the foreign-language capability. The training of discrimination ability should be the basis of pronunciation teaching. Is the acquisition of the phonetic system of a foreign language controlled by psycho-physical rules of speech perception? An attempt is made to retrace the acquisition

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process by using noise-disturbed stimuli in a perception test. The results show specific perceptual behaviour patterns, which can be interpreted as perceptual regularities of phonetic foreign-language acquisition. Ways of making use of these results in pronunciation teaching are suggested.

### VOCABULARY TEACHING

- 81-389 Baxter, James.** The dictionary and vocabulary behaviour: a single word or a handful? *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **14**, 3 (1980) 325-36.

Choosing the most appropriate dictionary for students in the ESOL classroom is a recurrent problem. To provide a context for dictionary selection, this article presents a view of vocabulary referred to as 'vocabulary behaviour'. An explicit distinction between spoken and written English reveals the relation between dictionary use, classroom vocabulary behaviour and student success in meeting their communicative needs. Whereas a bilingual dictionary tends to encourage the employment of a single lexical item, the monolingual dictionary demonstrates that definition is an alternative. Through use of a monolingual dictionary, students are led to the use of conversational definition in speech and thus benefit from the full range of resources offered in spoken English. Questionnaire data are presented describing the dictionary habits and preferences of a population of Japanese university students of English.

- 81-390 Nattinger, James R.** A lexical phrase grammar for ESL. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **14**, 3 (1980), 337-44.

Current work in lexical grammars suggests that we need to think of lexicon for ESL classes in much broader terms and must pay more attention to the importance of prefabricated speech routines in language behaviour. This article discusses the kind and extent of lexical phrases, using categories from recent work in artificial intelligence, and outlines further research that is necessary to make these speech routines an integral part of the syllabus.

### LANGUAGE FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES *See also abstracts* 81-402, -405

- 81-391 Hutchinson, T. and Waters, A.** Performance and competence in English for Specific Purposes. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **2**, 1 (1980), 56-69.

Teachers make assumptions about the knowledge and abilities of their students and they exploit this assumed competence in their teaching

strategies. The competence which a student needs to bring to a technical course if he is to cope adequately with it does not include knowledge of the specific subject to be studied nor its terminology: the competence assumed by the teachers is the same for all subjects. Communication in technical education is predominantly oral- and visual-related, so the student should be able to handle visual-dependent discourse, which exploits the strategies and resources of general English. A wide-ranging knowledge of everyday vocabulary and the ability to mobilise this knowledge in the interpretation of technical discourse are important aids to comprehension and memory. Closely paralleling this is the assumption of a threshold level of scientific and technical knowledge, which is basic to life in a technology-oriented society. The flow of new technical information is frequently embedded in an assumed socio-cultural knowledge, which, in the British technical college, reflects the presuppositions of British history, culture and society. The ability to interpret and express information through graphic modes of presentation is vital. Students must be able to structure knowledge on a macro-scale in a logical and coherent fashion.

Implications for the materials designer are that there is no justification for courses in English for particular specialisms. Technical tasks should be given which must be solved by the student using English. Syllabuses should logically be topic-based. Source material should be taken from a wide range of media, and due weight given to graphic forms of presentation.

### READING

**81-392 Clarke, D. F. and Nation, I. S. P.** Guessing the meanings of words from context: strategy and techniques. *System* (Oxford), **8** (1980), 211-20.

This article describes a strategy for guessing meanings from context and suggests ways of practising this strategy. The strategy involves four steps: (1) determining the part of speech of the word; (2) looking at the immediate grammar; (3) studying the wider context (usually the conjunction relationships); (4) guessing the word and checking the guess. A basic list of conjunction relationships is given in the Appendix. The previous research, and value and applications of the skill are discussed, and suggestions are made for future studies.

**81-393 Curtis, Mary E.** Development of components of reading skill. *Journal of Educational Psychology* (Washington, DC), **72**, 5 (1980), 656-69.

Efficiency in verbal coding and listening comprehension ability were assessed in skilled and less skilled readers in second, third, and fifth grades. Analyses indicated that younger and less skilled readers differed

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from older skilled readers on both factors. However, as verbal coding speed increased, comprehension skill became the more important predictor of reading skill. These results were interpreted within a limited processing capacity model of reading. Verbal coding processes, which are slow, reduce the amount of attention available for other reading processes, thereby producing deficits in comprehension of what is read.

**81-394 Goodman, Kenneth S.** Word omissions: deliberate and non-deliberate. *Reading Research Quarterly* (Newark, Del), **16**, 1 (1980), 6-31.

When people read orally, they sometimes appear to omit words that are in the text. This report presents evidence from oral reading miscue research to support a psycholinguistic view of why omissions take place and how they reflect the reading process. Word level omissions are classified as deliberate and non-deliberate. Deliberate omissions involve the readers choosing, after consideration, to omit a word rather than to substitute a real word, or a non-word, or to seek help. On the other hand non-deliberate omissions result from the operations of the reading process and are often indicators of readers' strengths in the use of that process. Readers are often unaware that they have made non-deliberate omissions. Non-deliberate omissions are sub-divided as follows: (1) omissions incidental to a complex miscue on a phrase or clause level; (2) omissions of optional surface structure elements; (3) omissions of unpredictable elements; (4) omissions involving dialogue; (5) omissions of words in compounds; and (6) omissions involved in prediction of other structures. The evidence cited does not support old views that omissions result from inability to respond to an unknown word, lack of word attack skills, or carelessness. The report concludes that omissions are surface representations of an underlying interaction between the reader and the text.

**81-395 Lewkowicz, Nancy K.** Phonemic awareness training: what to teach and how to teach it. *Journal of Educational Psychology* (Washington, DC), **72**, 5 (1980), 686-700.

This article categorises the various phonemic awareness training tasks (i.e. tasks that require the ability to perceive a spoken word as composed of a sequence of individual sounds) according to their probable usefulness in the early stages of reading-readiness training. The tasks of blending and oral phonemic segmentation are singled out as most closely associated with reading and therefore most clearly deserving of inclusion in a reading-readiness programme. The potential of the other phonemic awareness tasks for aiding mastery of blending and segmentation is evaluated, with the help of experimental evidence about relative difficulty of tasks; where available evidence is insufficient, appropriate experiments are suggested. The article also surveys current knowledge about how

to teach segmentation and blending and points out areas where further research in teaching methods is needed.

- 81-396 Stanovich, Keith E.** Toward an interactive-compensatory model of individual differences in the development of reading fluency. *Reading Research Quarterly* (Newark, Del), **16**, 1 (1980), 32-71.

Interactive models of reading appear to provide a more accurate conceptualisation of reading performance than do strictly top-down or bottom-up models. When combined with an assumption of compensatory processing (that a deficit in any particular process will result in a greater reliance on other knowledge sources, regardless of their level in the processing hierarchy), interactive models provide a better account of the existing data on the use of orthographic structure and sentence context by good and poor readers. A review of the research literature seems to indicate that, beyond the initial stages of reading acquisition, superior reading ability is not associated with a greater tendency to use the redundancy inherent in natural language to speed word recognition. Instead, general comprehension strategies and rapid context-free word recognition appear to be the processes that most clearly distinguish good from poor readers.

**SPEECH** *See also abstracts 81-357, -383*

- 81-397 Butzkamm, W. and Dodson, C. J.** The teaching of communication: from theory to practice. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **18**, 4 (1980), 289-309.

The aim is to give the teacher a practical framework which can be applied in the classroom. The analysis of the framework is based on tape recordings of classroom lessons in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Germany and on observations made during a Schools Council project on bilingual education in Wales. Communication in the classroom is either 'medium-orientated', i.e. teacher and learner are focused mainly on the language being uttered, or 'message-orientated', i.e. the focus is on satisfying the pupil's immediate needs other than those of language, such as curiosity. 'Role-taking' by the learner refers to medium-orientated communication while 'role-making' refers to message-orientated communication.

Four methodological errors which have retarded the development of communicative competence in the classroom are: (1) communicative cut-off—the inability to proceed beyond set phrases; (2) sugar on the pill—teachers using role-playing for light relief instead of integrating it into the language-learning system; (3) failure to exploit the communicative potential of their language situations, e.g. response-controlled exercises [ways of allowing scope for conjecture are suggested]; (4)

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absence of sub-structure – starting on communicative situations without some kind of preparation in the form of mimicry/memorisation.

Examples of role-making activities for 11-year-olds are discussed, including the teacher's role during preparation, and in the correction of mistakes. In this way, the teacher can free himself from the textbook and respond to the real communicative needs of his class.

**81–398 Wendt, Michael.** Kommunikative und rezeptive Kompetenz als didaktische und pädagogische Lernziele des schulischen Fremdsprachenunterrichts. [Communicative and receptive ability as didactic and pedagogic goals in the teaching of foreign languages at school level.] *Bulletin CILA* (Neuchâtel), 32 (1980), 5–24.

The traditional method of dealing with each linguistic point is to contextualise it. Such passages, however, are rarely convincing and result in a contrived use of language totally lacking in freshness. To promote authentic communication the teacher must anticipate plausible situations in which the pupils are likely to need to speak the foreign language. It is pointless introducing vocabulary which will never be used and situations which will never arise. Role-playing helps develop social skills. Communicative ability in a foreign language consists of the readiness and ability to be socially effective and responsible. Thus such methods of teaching foreign languages can also provide an exercise in character-building.

Polite set phrases should indeed be learnt by heart but they are not enough in themselves for real communication. Grammar must also be learnt, but it should be thought of not as an end in itself but more as an aid to effective communication.

## COMPREHENSION

**81–399 van Dijk, Teun A.** Discourse studies and education. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* (Wollongong), 3, 1 (1980), 1–28.

A discussion of some applications of results from discourse studies in the field of education. The major structures of discourse are discussed, in particular the semantic, pragmatic, schematic and conversational structures. These structures are then taken as the abstract basis for a cognitive model of discourse comprehension. A brief sketch is given of the main results of current experimental work on discourse processing. Discourse comprehension appears not only to be determined by knowledge and other factors of the cognitive set of language users (beliefs, opinions, attitudes, etc.), but also changes this set, e.g. in processes of learning.

Applications in the study of education are discussed in the framework

of the following issues, representing the 'textual' dimensions of education: (i) classroom dialogue and interaction, (ii) reading and comprehension, (iii) textbooks, (iv) teaching discourse and communication, and (v) discourse analysis. Learning in these various dimensions of education should respect the basic results obtained about comprehension. Language learning should take place within a broad integrated framework for the acquisition of discourse and communication skill.

### AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS *See abstracts* 81-361, -406

#### TELEVISION AND RADIO

**81-400** **Bufe, Wolfgang.** L'enseignement des langues à l'université à l'aide de la télévision. [Using television to teach languages at university.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **157** (1980), 87-98.

Viewers in Saarland are able to receive four French-language television channels. For the last 10 years, real-life TV broadcasts (as opposed to special educational TV) have constituted an integral part of courses in spoken French at the University of the Saar, and a television document is included as an option in the final *Staatsexamen*. The ultimate goal of the TV-based language course is to improve the student's capacity for oral expression. During the first two years of the four-year course, however, the accent is placed on oral comprehension. Materials are selected in accordance with the aim of each stage. Television broadcasting is structured to provide a referential context which can be exploited to provide a linguistic progression.

The introduction of television into language teaching has contributed to the increased importance accorded to the spoken language. The potential exists for expanding the scope of the medium. Interesting problems of methodology arise. [Lesson plan.]

**81-401** **Hill, Brian.** Preparing teachers to use radio and television programmes. *British Journal of Language Teaching* (Birmingham), **18**, 2/3 (1980), 193-6.

Of all the variables contributing to the successful use of broadcasts, the teacher is the most important. But few teachers are using broadcasts as much or as effectively as they could, not because of the content of the programmes but because (1) technical resources are inadequate, (2) proper preparation is neglected, (3) the difficulties of using broadcasts are underestimated, and (4) back-up support by the broadcasting authorities is insufficient.

A co-ordinated approach to training teachers to handle the new media is recommended, which would link the broadcasting organisations, the Department of Education and Science, local authorities and teachers.

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At present the task is only tackled piecemeal. A planned series of short in-service courses on regional lines could form the core of the new approach, including activities such as practical production workshops, and ways of exploiting programmes for oral and written work.

**ENGLISH** *See also abstracts* 81–362, –367/8, –386, –389/91

**81–402 Andor, Jozsef.** Deep semantic relations, cognition and the teaching of English. *ITL* (Louvain), **47** (1980), 29–38.

Most current course-books for teaching English as a foreign language are text-oriented, i.e. the choice of lexical items is determined by the text itself. Then follow grammatical explanations about problems in the text, then a series of drills. A reverse process is proposed, which starts with discussion of lexical items, then clarification of grammatical points, and follows with a text which exemplifies what has preceded it.

Stage 1 presents the intrinsic semantic content of, e.g., a verb; stage 2 shows how the transformational rules of syntax map the semantic relations of predictors and arguments into overt, superficial forms. Students use role-playing to practise using the predicates in different collocational circumstances. Compound sentences and embedding are covered later in the course. Stage 3 is a detailed study of a given text constructed around pre-conditional key-predicates and their compulsory and optional arguments. This should be a helpful approach for students without advanced language training who want to translate specialised scientific texts. This is demonstrated by experiments with Hungarian medical students.

**81–403 Komorowska, H.** Linguistic and communicative competence in Polish school leavers – a diagnostic study. *ELT Documents* (London), **108** (1980), 40–53.

A research report on factors accounting for the educational attainment of secondary-school leavers after a four-year obligatory course of English as a foreign language [published in Polish in book form in 1978]. The main objectives were: an evaluation of educational achievement in terms of both linguistic and communicative competence; a diagnosis of variables connected with the individual learner and the learning process, and with the individual teacher and the teaching process, and a diagnosis of environmental variables; correlations of factors from these three groups and the educational attainment studies; hierarchies of factors accounting for success and failure in FL acquisition at a high-school level. Compound variables were broken down into sub-variables. [Research instruments; sample; results.]

Implications for the educational process at high-school levels include: (1) More attention should be given to communicative competence rather than mere grammatical correctness, by stressing vocabulary and

fluency, especially during the third and the fourth year of instruction. (2) A cognitive rather than audiolingual approach should be promoted since both the organisation of the educational process, and the approach to psychological variables inherent in code-learning theory, correlate strongly with the development of communicative competence. (3) More emphasis should be given to the preparation of students for individual work with self-instructional techniques, and encouraging conversational practice with no fear of error. (4) More attention should be given to formal aspects of the educational process and especially to school equipment and the number of students in the language group. (5) Teaching methodology should be less rigidly prescribed, as classroom techniques are insignificant compared with the attitudinal and motivational impact of the teacher's personality. (6) Individualisation should be promoted whenever the size of class permits it. In all the other cases, differences of approach to rural and urban learners should be introduced because of considerable discrepancies between the two groups in interests, motivating factors and needs.

**81-404 Pickett, Douglas.** Getting English into perspective. *ELT Documents* (London), **108** (1980), 54-73.

Some of the 'background' data from the IEA English study are compared for Sweden and the Netherlands to show marked differences in school and teacher characteristics. Though both countries do well in English achievement, they differ radically on many parameters which are thought to be important. In both, teachers have very little ELT training, but high competence in English. Poorer countries tend to have more teacher training but lower achievement. Methodology is clearly less important than language competence, and mother-tongue performance needs improving before foreign-language performances can improve. It is ironic that poorer countries need to introduce English earlier in the curriculum because it is important to national development and as a medium of instruction. In the study, home background seems to count for very little. There is a distinction to be made between measures of interest in English (positive factor) and recognition of its utility (negative factor). The fact that verbal ability, which emerged as a predictor of success, is closely allied to IQ, should have been given greater emphasis by the study because it is only by recognising inequality that steps can be taken to compensate for it.

**81-405 Scholfield, P. J.** Evaluating selection policy and grammatical and semantic information in an EST dictionary. *Fachsprache* (Vienna), **2, 3** (1980), 98-109.

When evaluating dictionaries for learners of scientific and technical English, it is particularly important to test the kind of word/phrase/sense selected for inclusion, and the kinds of grammatical and semantic information given about each such item. Current EST dictionaries often

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include unnecessary specialist words to the exclusion of 'grey-area' items which are either semi-technical or related more to the rhetoric of scientific discourse, and which learners often find difficult.

**FRENCH** *See also abstracts 81-362, -372, -382*

**81-406 Gros, Nicole.** Audio-visuel et français langue étrangère: bilan des travaux en France et perspectives. [Audio-visual methods and French as a foreign language: an assessment of work in France and future prospects.] *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), **29**, 4 (1980), 349-61.

Upon recalling the context in which audio-visual methods have appeared, it becomes evident how the initial period of rigidity led to the present fragmentation: the dualistic trend of confirmation and change through 1971-1972, developments in 1976, new tendencies. The language teacher must now of necessity see his role transformed from that of an attentive and technically competent user of audio-visual methods to that of an organiser of his own pedagogy. The resulting perspective is one in which language instruction is transformed into a didactically autonomous domain, a task focused on the learner's production and awakening awareness of his status as an expressive being in an open pupil/teacher interchange.

**GERMAN** *See abstract 81-378*

## RUSSIAN

**81-407 Briggs, Tony.** Russian and nothing but Russian. *Times Higher Education Supplement* (London), **416** (24 Oct. 1980), 12.

An experiment in intensified language teaching carried out in the Russian Department at Bristol University is described. All non-language work was suspended in favour of a continuous programme of translation, conversation and other Russian language classes. Most of the hard work was done in the mornings; in the afternoons the students had more passive activities such as Russian films and talks. The students wanted an even more intensive course, which was provided the following year, the number of classes being raised from 20 to 30 for the week. Attendance was voluntary and extremely good. All the students were eager to take part again. The scheme has proved itself able to instil enthusiasm, and has fully justified the extra work involved in carrying it out.

**81-408 Muckle, James.** The case for Russian. *Times Higher Education Supplement* (London), 415 (17 Oct. 1980), 24.

Russian is the native language of a quarter of the population of Europe, and more than half of the remaining population lives in countries where Russian is the first foreign language taught in schools. It is important for foreign trade, and numerous scientific papers and books are published in it. The impact of the culture and political system of the USSR is considerable, yet only a quarter of one per cent of pupils offered Russian for public examinations (in 1977), i.e. only one teenager in 400 tries to learn it.

Results achieved by teachers of Russian should have dispelled the fallacy that it is 'too difficult'. A relatively high proportion of pupils who take it up keep on with it. Employment opportunities compare favourably with those for other languages. There are enough teachers if they could be deployed rationally. We need to understand the Soviet Union, which is not the same as supporting it.

**81-409 Thompson, Irene.** Acquisition of cases by students of Russian: a preliminary investigation. *Russian Language Journal* (Michigan), 34, 117 (1980), 43-52.

The aim was to investigate whether there exists in Russian, as in other languages, a certain order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes which is relatively stable across individuals and which is immune to methods of instruction, textbooks, teachers, etc. The small-scale nature of the study as well as its cross-sectional nature do not permit definite conclusions, but certain observations can be made: (1) there appears to be a certain hierarchy of difficulty among the six cases of Russian as measured by the accuracy with which they are used in the free speech of students at varying levels of proficiency, learning Russian as a foreign language in a classroom environment. (2) This hierarchy appears to persist over relatively long periods of time regardless of additional exposure and formal instruction. (3) There are several plausible explanations for the existence of such a hierarchy: (a) order or presentation may play a role in the beginning stages, but why this order should have a long-term effect is unclear; (b) there is a significant positive correlation between accuracy of use and the natural frequency of the cases in spoken Russian; (c) there is a significant positive correlation between accuracy of use and frequency of use of the cases by the learners themselves; (d) surface morphology does not appear to determine accuracy of use, at least not in a free speaking sample; and (e) the semantic complexity of the cases may play a role in the way they are learned, but the definition of semantic complexity for Russian cases needs to be worked out independently before this proposition can be tested.