Teaching particular languages

Arabic

87–192 Rammuny, Raji M. (U. of Michigan). A model of proficiency-based oral achievement testing for elementary Arabic. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **19,** 4 (1986), 321–31.

This is a description of a proposed proficiency-based oral achievement test for elementary Arabic instruction. It begins with background information about the materials used for elementary Arabic at the University of Michigan, the rationale for testing oral skills at this level, and a brief description of the types of oral testing of Arabic that have been attempted during the past two years. The main part of this article provides a detailed description of the proficiency-based oral achievement test including its format, scoring procedure, administration, and implications. Included are a test facsimile and sample items.

English

86–193 Ball, Wendy E. Writing English script: an overlooked skill. *ELT Journal* (London), **40,** 4 (1986), 291–8.

Many Arabic-script writers who are students of English lack an important language-learning skill, that of understanding and using the graphic structure of a written foreign language. Some of the symptoms are identified: the main difficulty is in switching their writing direction, the influence of right/left orientation in the L1 being a strong one. Although writing is a non-linguistic skill, it is more than simply a motor skill. More disturbing problems arise when students are reading for information, as they do not instinctively use visual clues provided by typeface, layout, and spacing. Secondary symptoms of the student with a weak grasp of graphic structure include difficulty in keeping up with the pace of the class, inaccuracy in recording language, and lack of motivation. One student in four experiences the primary symptoms of difficulty.

The graphic characteristics of script are defined; these characteristics all interrelate. Graphic displays have different cultural connotations. Methods of teaching the skill of understanding graphic structure include the use of authentic materials, exposing students to different layouts and typefaces. Handwriting can be taught by giving students a photocopied folder of handwriting exercises, to be completed in their own time, with monitoring by the teacher. Well-presented work can be displayed on classroom walls; written text can be prepared in groups and displayed on an overhead projector to encourage a reaction to the visual impact of the work.

87–194 Biber, Douglas (U. of Southern California). Spoken and written textual dimensions in English: resolving the contradictory findings. *Language* (Baltimore, Md), **62,** 2 (1986), 384–414.

Although similarities and differences between speech and writing have often been studied, contradictory claims concerning the linguistic relationship between the two modes are still common. These contradictions can arise from basing global conclusions on restricted methodologies – such as assigning undue weight to individual linguistic features, or to choice of particular text samples and text types. The present study uses a 'multi-feature/multi-dimension' approach, which includes a broad range of linguistic features and text types in a single quantitative analysis, to provide a global description of similarities and differences among spoken/written text types in English. The distribution of 41 linguistic features in 545 text samples of approximately 2,000 words each is subjected to factor analysis (a multivariate statistical technique). Three underlying textual dimensions are identified: Interactive *vs.* Edited Text, Abstract *vs.* Situated Content, and Reported *vs.* Immediate Style. To demonstrate the value of the multi-feature/multi-dimension approach, the specific findings of earlier studies are reconciled within the model proposed.

87-195 Faber, D. (U. of Manchester). Teaching the rhythms of English: a new theoretical base. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, FRG), **24**, 3 (1986), 205–16.

The difficulty experienced by native and non-native speakers of English in understanding each other can often be attributed to the non-native speaker's ignorance of the rhythmic norms of English. For various reasons the theory of 'stress-timing' is inadequate as an explanation of the timing of English syllables and hence as a base for the teaching of this aspect of English. Bolinger's recent theory of 'syllabic rhythm' provides a better base for instruction. Long syllables contain a full vowel and short syllables contain a reduced vowel or syllabic consonant. Long syllables followed by another long syllable or by pause are pronounced extra-long, so that any stretch of continuous speech can be assigned a rhythmic form, provided that one knows which vowels are full, which weak and where the pauses fall. Alternatively, short syllables following long syllables can be seen as 'borrowing' rhythmic time from the preceding syllable; this explanation is recommended for teaching purposes.

87-196 Gaustad, Martha Gonter (Bowling Green State U., Ohio). Longitudinal effects of manual English instruction on deaf children's morphological skills. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **7**, 2 (1986), 101–28.

This study examined the imitation, comprehension, and production of twelve morphological features by groups of deaf subjects who were instructed through manually coded English. Their performances were compared with those of hearing subjects and also with their own follow-up scores from three years later. Results showed early deficits in the English skills of deaf subjects but steady improvement of scores on all tasks over time. Initially, subjects' age predicted only imitation performance while time in an MCE program predicted production performance in addition to imitation. But neither age nor time in program was a significant predictor of any performance at the time of follow-up. Implications for intervention with manual English codes are discussed.

87-197 Graham, Janet G. and Beardsley, Robert S. (U. of Maryland, Baltimore). English for Specific Purposes: content, language, and communication in a pharmacy course model. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **20**, 2 (1986), 227–45.

After presenting an overview of content-area ESL and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), this article describes an experimental course in communication offered to non-native English-speaking pharmacy students at the University of Maryland and reports the results of an evaluation of the course. A combination of content-area ESL and ESP, the course, which met weekly for one semester, was team-taught by a pharmacist specialising in communication for pharmacists and an ESL specialist. Speech functions deemed necessary for effective oral communication by pharmacists in their professional settings were used as an organising principle for the syllabus, which also provided for instruction in relevant linguistic structures, for instruction in communication principles and techniques, and for much active student participation. Although better evaluation measures are needed, student evaluations and comparison of the results on pre- and post-tests of the Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (Educational Testing Service) suggest that the course was effective.

87-198 Ramirez, Arnulfo G. (State U. of New York at Albany) **and Milk, Robert D.** (U. of Texas of San Antonio). Notions of grammaticality among teachers of bilingual pupils. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **20**, 3 (1986), 495–513.

Teachers attending summer institutes were asked to react to different varieties of English and Spanish. The teachers participating in the ESL and Applied Sociolinguistics Institutes evaluated four varieties of English: (a) standard American English, (b) Hispanicised English, (c) ungrammatical English, and (d) English/Spanish code alternation. The teachers participating in the Bilingual Institute judged four varieties of Spanish: (a) standard Mexican Spanish, (b) local Spanish, (c) ungrammatical Spanish, and (d) English/Spanish code alternation. All three groups of teachers rated each variety in terms of its appropriateness for the classroom, degree of correctness, and the speaker's academic potential. The teachers

ranked the English and Spanish varieties on a standard continuum. Teachers from the Bilingual Institute differentiated among the four Spanish varieties, while teachers in the ESL and Applied Sociolinguistics Institutes did not judge code switching less favourably than ungrammatical English. Some of the notions that teachers held about Spanish varieties were influenced by Spanish proficiency, ethnicity, and birthplace. Knowledge about language use in bilingual contexts did influence the teachers' level of tolerance toward marked English varieties, suggesting that some attitudes toward nonstandard speech styles are influenced by cognitive and motivational considerations.

87–199 Riddle, Elizabeth (Ball State U.). The meaning and discourse function of the past tense in English. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **20**, 2 (1986), 267–86.

The past tense is often used inconsistently, even by very advanced ESL learners. A major cause of the problem is a failure by teachers and students to recognise the extent to which a speaker's point of view and purpose in performing a speech act condition the choice between the present and past tenses in actual discourse. Following an analysis of the meaning and discourse function of the past tense, suggestions are offered for teaching and practising this tense in context.

87–200 Sheorey, Ravi (Oklahoma State U.). Error perceptions of native-speaking and non-native-speaking teachers of ESL. *ELT Journal* (London), **40**, 4 (1986), 306–12.

This article compares the error perceptions of native and non-native ESL teachers from the United States and India, respectively. The teachers were asked to evaluate 20 sentences containing eight types of errors, representing those occurring most frequently in a sample of 97 compositions written by college-level ESL students. Analysis of the responses indicated that native teachers were more tolerant of errors than non-native teachers and that, while both groups considered verb-related errors to be the most serious, generally the perceptions of the two groups were not alike. The article concludes with a discussion of how the results of the study can be used in marking student papers. Non-native teachers should be more tolerant overall in evaluating errors; they should give lower priority to spelling errors and greater importance to lexical nuances.

87–201 Smith, Larry E. (East-West Centre, Honolulu) **and Nelson, Cecil L.** (Indiana State U.). International intelligibility of English: directions and resources. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **4**, 3 (1985), 333–42.

This is a summary of the state-of-the-art research in international intelligibility with emphasis on English. It also suggests some directions for future research. It is argued that in future research it would be desirable to make distinctions between three key concepts: intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability. A selected bibliography of 163 items gives the reader an indication of how widespread this literature is, and at the same time indicates its limitations. The sources searched include publications across various disciplines: this indicates that intelligibility can be approached from a variety of points of view and interests. Since intelligibility depends upon so many factors of different types involved in a given speech event, it is difficult to find ways of integrating approaches and parameters. That is a challenge for future research.

French

87–202 Beacco, Jean-Claude (Bureau Linguistique, Rome). Textes et modalisation: perspectives didactiques. [Texts and modalisation: teaching perspectives.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **68** (1985), 115–28.

Types of discourse (news reports, learned articles, etc.) vary from culture to culture. A teaching-oriented discourse analysis can help to build reading (and writing) competence in the FL, by offering learners insights which can be re-used in other texts of the same type. The markers and their arrangement in types of discourse can be identified. Of particular interest is evaluative modalisation – i.e.

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the writer's qualification of a predicative relation. In film reviews, the evaluative element tends to be at the end and is often realised by inherently pejorative or ameliorative lexical markers. In news reports, the dominant processes are description and interpretation, but an evaluative element often precedes a quotation from a person involved in the news, e.g. *X est encore plus net*: '......', 'X is clearer still: "......"'. In articles in a historical review, the evaluative element is used sparingly, but nevertheless allows the writer to take sides with regard to historical events.

87-203 Coste, Daniel (ENS de St Cloud). Constitution et évolution des discours de la didactique du français langue étrangère. [The creation and development of theoretical discourse on teaching French as a foreign language.] *Etudes de Linguistinque Appliquée* (Paris), **61** (1986), 52–63.

The theory of foreign-language teaching may be narrowly defined as the totality of discourse (both written and spoken) about teaching/learning a foreign language. This discourse may be produced by researchers, teacher trainers, advisors, textbook writers and teachers and is aimed primarily at teachers and others in the group. Six major functions may be distinguished: to establish a scientific basis; to reinterpret ideas from established scientific fields; to recommend developments in language teaching; to present teaching aids; to make official policy statements; and to advocate original or minority ideas. These categories are used as a basis for briefly examining the development of discourse on language teaching since the 'sixties.

87-204 Courtillon, Janine (ENS de Saint-Cloud, CREDIF). Pour une grammaire notionnelle. [For a notional grammar.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **68** (1985), 32–47.

Theoretical and pedagogical grammatical descriptions will be quite different, partly because of their different objectives and partly because a complex metalanguage is desirable for the former but not the latter. Linguistic metalanguage (e.g. aspect, perfective) is inappropriate and inaccessible to most learners. A notional approach to grammar presents grammatical facts to autonomous learners in such a way as to help them construct for themselves the new semantic representations of L2.

In presenting grammatical facts to the learner, the teacher brings together those which are related (or opposed) in notional terms. The notions employed are the universal semantic features (labelled *noèmes* by Pottier, Martin) in areas such as time, space, person. Thus, one use of the French imperfect tense would be, in notional terms, to describe a past state of a person or thing.

87-205 Lee, Barbara (NFER, Slough). "French is hard because it's a different language." *British Journal of Language Teaching*, **24**, 2 (1986), 71–6.

The National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales (NFER) has conducted three surveys in recent years (1983, 1984 and 1985) to discover what pupils really think about learning French. Attitudes and performances were found to be closely linked. There was a close correlation between liking French and finding it easy. Most boys and most girls did not agree that girls did better at French. Yet tests showed that girls performed better than boys in all four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

Results showed that most pupils found French enjoyable and useful. Pupils' answers to questions concerning their most liked (or disliked) classroom activities suggest that, in order to interest those who are anti-French, pupils should be exposed to a wide range of materials: the way in which these are exploited should not be limited to language learning, and opportunities should be provided for pupils to use what they have learned in further, more extended, tasks.

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87-206 Plantin, C. (Free U. of Brussels). Connecteurs pragmatiques: propositions pédagogiques. [Pragmatic connectives: some pedagogic suggestions.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **76** (1985), 397–411.

Advanced learners of French often have difficulty with academic language. One aspect of the problem lies in the use of pragmatic (as opposed to logical) connectives. Such connectives are used in the production or comprehension of the argumentative structure of a text and include coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs, adverbs of time, interjections, prepositional expres-

sion and other fixed locutions. Teachers should train their students to identify the segments that are related by connectives and, by gap-filling exercises, teach them to draw pragmatic conclusions from the relationship. They should use continuous text rather than isolated sentences. [Brief analyses of the pragmatic use of *mais, voire, pourtant* and *néanmoins* are given.]

German

87-207 Eppert, Franz. Zum Konzept einer Grundgrammatik Deutsch als Fremdsprache. [On the concept of a basic grammar of German as a foreign language.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **16**, 4 (1985), 16–29.

The need for a pedagogical grammar of German to aid the teacher of German as a foreign language is self-evident. The author enumerates several basic principles which ought to underlie such a grammar. It should incorporate the data collected in such documents as *Grundbaustein*, *Zertifikat* and *Kontaktschwelle*. The examples used in such publications should also be used, although the supra-sentential level perhaps needs stressing in addition. A basic grammar should combine two functions: it should be a learning aid within the teaching process and at the same time it should complement teaching by serving as a reference grammar. The grammatical model underlying such a grammar should be tradi-

tional and it should take into account the collective experience of teachers of German as a foreign language. The structure of a basic grammar should of necessity take the parts of speech as its starting point. The verb should be dealt with first. The whole should be so presented as to bring out the communicative and pragmatic functions of the grammatical forms. A user-friendly grammar will require a simplified terminology. The use of metalanguage should be kept to an absolute minimum. The visual presentation in the form of diagrams and tables should be as helpful as possible. [Sample chapter dealing with the present of the modal verbs.]

87-208 Grandin, John M. (U. of Rhode Island). Teaching German business correspondence: a computer-assisted approach. *Die Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **1** (1986), 49–54.

The author highlights the problems encountered in teaching German business correspondence; these include the highly specialised phraseology and syntax of German business letters, as well as a different approach to business. It is possible for a non-German speaker to learn to write business letters in German and for this purpose the book *Ihr Schreiben vom*...by Werner Schmitz and Dieter Scheiner is recommended. It identifies standard components of a German business letter, such as the opening phrase or sentence and requests for information of various kinds, e.g. on prices, delivery

dates, etc. and shows how to use these phrases to construct a satisfactory letter.

Having established a glossary of standard phrases and sentences, these can be stored on an Apple word processor by means of a specially designed letter-writing programme, thus enabling a letter to be composed by the selection of appropriate phrases. Any editing, which usually consists only of punctuation and the placement of the verb, is quickly done and the finished letter is ready for printing.

Using these techniques, students can make rapid progress in composing business letters in German.

87-209 Grundmann, Elisabeth and others. Deutsche Sprache und soziale Information: Bericht über einen Bildungsurlaub mit ausländischen Arbeitern. [German instruction combined with socio-political information: a report on a holiday course for foreign workers.] *Deutsch Lernen* (Mainz, FRG), **3** (1979) [publ. 1985], 27–44.

Against the background of social isolation and prejudice experienced by foreign workers in the Federal Republic of Germany, this article describes a week-long holiday course run in the late 1970s, the aim of which was to improve the foreign workers' knowledge of German as well as provide an opportunity for them to discuss subjects relevant to their particular situation. The 24 participants came from a shipyard in Hamburg, and on average had lived in Germany for 10 years.

After language instruction in the mornings, the afternoons were devoted to various topics which had been chosen by the participants. The topics discussed were: work permits; social prejudice; problems with rented accommodation; threatened redundancy; unemployment. The aim was, where necessary, to provide basic information and then to stimulate discussion.

The evaluation of the course revealed that both the participants and the teachers felt it had been worthwhile; the participants felt better informed and had gained in self-confidence; for the teachers a measure of its success was that many of the participants decided to enrol for a more formal German course – something that most of them had never done before.

87-210 Lalande, John F., II (U. of Illinois) and Schweckendiek, Jürgen (Goethe-Inst., Munich). Zertifikat Deutsch als Fremdsprache and the Oral Proficiency Interview: a comparison of test scores. *Die Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **1** (1986), 16–26.

Fifteen US students took both the US Oral Proficiency Interview in German and the Zertifikat Deutsch als Fremdsprache, and a Spearman correlation of their scores was performed. The OPI score correlated highly with the ZDaF as a whole (0.63) and with three of the ZDaF subtests, namely grammar/vocabulary (0.69), oral communication in everyday situations (0.68) and theme-based conversation (0.74), but less highly with the subtests in listening (0.50), writing (0.44) and reading (0.39). The ZDaF correlated highly (0.63 or above) with all its own subtests. The results suggest that OPI is successful in its aim of taking account of function, content and accuracy, and that it could be used to indicate readiness to take ZDaF.

87-211 Steinmüller, Ulrich. Lernstatt im Wohnbezirk. [The neighbourhood as a learning environment.] *Deutsch Lernen* (Mainz, FRG), **3** (1979), [publ. 1985], 45–59.

This article deals with a new method developed in the Federal Republic of Germany of teaching guest workers to speak German, which in turn helps their integration and acceptance into German society.

The traditional classroom approach to language teaching was not appropriate for teaching German to guest workers. Instead the concept of 'learning in the neighbourhood' was evolved, which aims to bring foreigners and Germans together in small groups where they can learn to communicate with each other by means of various joint activities. There is no formal language teaching as such; communication skills in everyday, conversational German are acquired in a non-classroom environment by working together on a variety of projects, ranging from car repair to music appreciation or handicrafts. Each group has a moderator, who must be in the same situation as the other participants, i.e. not an outsider or an expert, and his/her role is to prepare and lead the group meetings.

Despite some difficulties, the concept has proved itself worthwhile and can make a positive contribution towards reducing discrimination against guest workers, whilst at the same time permitting them to retain their own cultural identity within the framework of German society.

87-212 Tracy, Rosemarie. The acquisition of case morphology in German. *Linguistics* (Amsterdam), **24**, 1 (1986), 47–78.

This paper traces the acquisition of case morphology and isolates task-structure variables which influence the course of development. The central factors to be discussed belong to both the language periphery of German (fusion within the specifier system of NPs, homonymy, degree of perceptual similarity, idiosyncracies) and complexities involving parameters and principles of core grammar (government, abstract case assignment, etc.). It is claimed that the learner constructs the morphological case system by searching for correlations across various linguistic subsystems. The relative straightforwardness with which individual cases correlate with formal grammatical principles turns out to be a reliable index of the difficulties encountered by the learner.

Russian

87-213 Chara, V. and Purm, P. Применения принципа коммуникативности в системе заданий и упражнений в учебнике русского языка. [Applying the communicative principle to a system of tasks and exercises in a Russian language text-book.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **5** (1985), 69–73.

A course for eighth-year students of Russian in Czechoslovakia is used to identify the role and place for grammatical/lexical exercises in a communication orientated programme. Three types, or stages, of exercise are identified and exemplified. First come strictly grammatical/lexical exercises drawing upon the sort of vocabulary and topics identified as of potential value to pupils. These are followed by exercises described as 'pre-conversational', being of a more open type to encourage the student to practise the same material in conjunction with functional categories (agreeing, requesting, informing, etc.). Finally, essentially open-ended questions or situations are suggested based on texts previously studied but allowing pupils to draw upon their own opinions or experience. In the exercises which make up the second and third stages, dialogue in pairs is the norm, with monitoring by the teacher.

87-214 Martynova, M. A. К проблеме формирования грамматических обобщений у иностранных учащихся при коммуникативно-деятенльном подходе к обучению русскому языку.

[The formation of grammatical generalisations as part of the communicative/ functional approach to the learning of Russian by foreign students.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **5** (1986), 78–81.

The arguments for a conscious approach to language learning as put forward by Belyaev and subsequently are summarised. In particular, the connection between a conscious approach and effective language learning in adults is stressed even where the basic aim is communicative competence. Indeed, the communicative method is seen as facilitating the development, as well as dependent upon the development of an understanding of the rules and systems of grammar. Grammatical generalisation is thus seen both as an aim and a method of language teaching. A three-stage process is envisaged. In the first stage, communicative language is developed through the use of analogies. In the second, inductive and deductive explanations of rules enable the learner to anticipate to a certain extent the appropriate forms of language. Finally, it is suggested that although some argue that the first stage develops a feeling for language, it is the final conceptualising stage which develops the true feeling for language, and hence true competence in its use. In this context, it is argued that an advanced stage of intellectual development contributes significantly to effective foreign-language learning.

87-215 Shatilov, S. F. Некоторые вопросы сопоставления иностранного и родного языков в методических целях. [The comparison of the native and the foreign language as a component of teaching methodology.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **5** (1985), 61–4.

The place of comparison between the native language and the target language in teaching and learning must be understood by the teacher and made clear to the learner. In practice, transfer of similar features can be assumed to take place; avoidance of interference must be the principle aim. In developing communicative skills it is necessary to avoid over-reliance on comparison, which can prevent ultimate mastery of the foreign language: however, only a knowledge of the ways in which languages differ will provide the learner with the means to correct errors and build confidence. In devising exercises, the teacher must be aware of where transfer can be relied upon and where interference must be anticipated. Exercises can take three forms: genuinely communicative, artificially communicative and 'linguistic'. The second of these must reflect the teacher's awareness of problems likely to be encountered. The third, less in quantity but still of great importance, are designed to develop the awareness of language differences necessary to enable learners to understand and correct their own mistakes. The dosage must be carefully balanced to develop communicative skills.

Comparison and contrast can focus upon structural or semantic aspects of the languages being studied, but always in relation to the level of previous knowledge of the learner. For most students, the starting point for comparison must be a phenomenon in the foreign language. Only with advanced language specialists will the teacher expect to share detailed knowledge of language systems.

Spanish

87-216 Homstad, Alice (U. of Wisconsin Center, Sheboygan). 'El intérprete': a pair activity to promote communicative competence in Spanish. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **19**, 4 (1986), 289–97.

This article describes the underlying constructs in the research, purpose, and implementation of an original classroom/language laboratory activity to promote creative inter-student communication. The materials were developed with an eye toward lowering the affective filter and concentrating on the message to be communicated. An added benefit is entertainment, even occasional laughter, on the part of students. The activity has been used during the second year of university instruction but could also be included in the high-school curriculum.