
Teaching particular languages

English

96-74 Brett, Paul (U. of Wolverhampton). Multimedia for listening comprehension: the design of a multimedia-based resource for developing listening skills. *System* (Oxford), **23**, 1 (1995), 77-85.

Multimedia, the computer-based delivery of video, audio, written text, graphics and the integration of these media may prove to be a useful tool for second-language learning. The purpose of this paper is to describe the design of such an application for PCs using moving video, to assist in the development of listening skills, within the field of Business English. The aims of the project, the basic

technological requirements and an overview of the application's key features, video, tasks, subtitles and provision of learner choice are followed by a detailed discussion of and rationale for the various learning options linking them closely with current methodological practice. Some of the possible advantages of multimedia applications for language learning are put forward.

96-75 Carter, Ronald and McCarthy, Michael (U. of Nottingham). Grammar and the spoken language. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **16**, 2 (1995), 141-58.

In this paper, it is argued that language teaching which aims to foster speaking skills and natural spoken interaction should be based upon the grammar of spoken language, and not on grammars which mainly reflect written norms. Using evidence from a mini-corpus of conversational English, the authors look at how four grammatical features which occur with noticeable frequency in the corpus are dealt with in currently popular pedagogical grammars. The investigation shows that treatment of the selected features varies from adequate to patchy to complete absence from the grammars surveyed. It

is concluded that research in discourse analysis does offer some helpful insights into the usage of these features, but that, in the absence of easy access to discourse analysis work and given the mixed treatment in grammar books, teachers and learners will often be thrown back on their own resources. However, even very small amounts of real spoken data can yield significant evidence which can be used imaginatively within inductive and language awareness approaches in and out of the classroom to increase awareness and knowledge of the grammar of conversation.

96-76 Cross, David (ENS d'Abidjan, Ivory Coast). Formal instruction in language teaching programmes. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 82-4.

EFL and FL teachers in developing countries are often non-native speakers facing large mixed-ability classes, and contriving materials to supplement the textbook, relate the language to the students' own lives and motivate the learners. Lessons often consist of mechanical presentation and practice stages. Teachers want to be 'up-to-date' but are unsure which direction to take. Vocabulary teaching is the least contentious issue. There is general agreement that structures are important. However, in such countries, EFL and FL learners are unlikely to visit countries where the language is spoken, so a functional syllabus is rare in state schools. More modern EFL 'communicative language teaching'

syllabuses give less importance to rehearsal for future performance needs and begin with structures needed for classroom interaction. However, this approach is rare in state schools where there are large classes and few textbooks. An eclectic approach to grammar is the most desirable: teachers should be prepared to give learners grammatical explanations without undue use of metalanguage. Teaching language with no indication of its systematic nature results in an impossible learning load, yet too much grammar study is also detrimental. A balance must be struck between formal language work, grammar-awareness-raising and communicative activities.

96-77 Darian, Steven. Hypotheses in introductory science texts. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 2 (1995), 83-108.

Hypotheses are one of the most important tools in scientific research. Yet they have received little attention linguistically and rhetorically. There has

been a great deal of work on hedges – markers of tentativeness – which form an integral part of hypotheses. But that work has not focused on

hypotheses *per se*, which have additional properties and functions. This paper examines the role of hypotheses in several introductory science texts, including the various elements normally associated with hypotheses, such as: assumptions, generalisation and prediction, observation and experiment, induction and probability. It discusses the major types of hypotheses: theoretical, statistical and

heuristic. The various patterns that hypotheses take are then analysed, including some of the more subtle epistemic elements (words expressing degrees of certainty) that tend to mark them. Several lexical items that play a role in hypothesis making (specifically: synonyms, collocations, and hedges) are then discussed. Some considerations for the teaching of hypotheses are considered.

96-78 Ho, Judy and Crookall, David (City U. of Hong Kong, Technological U. of Compiègne and IUFM de Picardie). Breaking with Chinese cultural traditions: learner autonomy in English language teaching. *System* (Oxford), **23**, 2 (1995), 235-43.

Basic thinking regarding certain aspects of learner autonomy is presented as well as certain cultural traits (such as the Chinese concern with face) which may be an obstacle to the promotion of autonomy, especially in the more traditional organisation of some classrooms. The use of large-scale simulation can, however, transform the ordinary classroom into

a learning environment that powerfully promotes learner autonomy. A concrete example of how this actually happened is discussed in detail, as are the cultural traits that both hinder and encourage autonomy in such a setting. The conclusion is that it is through concrete actions of taking responsibility that autonomy is learned.

96-79 Kanno, Yasuko and Applebaum, Sheila Dermer. ESL students speak up: their stories of 'How we are doing'. *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), **12**, 2 (1995), 32-49.

This study explores the ESL curriculum as experienced by students, casting light on their side of the story. Three Japanese secondary-level students were invited to discuss their experience of learning English and their stories were analysed in terms of Schwab's four curriculum commonplaces (learner, subject matter, milieu and teacher). The analysis reveals that for the students, learning English has to do with negotiating their identities in a new environment. The current ESL curriculum as it

focuses on the development of academic skills may not be providing enough support to help them integrate into the school community. In the absence of such support, some students may run the risk of perpetuating their marginality in the school and prematurely reaching a plateau in their English acquisition. Some practical ideas to promote integration, some of which are already implemented in Canadian schools, are discussed in the light of these findings.

96-80 McCarthy, Michael (U. of Nottingham). Vocabulary and the literature lesson. *Language Teacher* (Dublin, Ireland), **19**, 2 (1995), 19-22.

The teaching of vocabulary within literature lessons can be organised around the concepts of collocation, simile/metaphor and lexical fields. Within each of these areas, one can move from what is unmarked or normal in the language in general to what is marked or surprising in a particular work of literature. Thus under collocation, learners can be asked which of a list of words normally combine with *black*, then

explore Dylan Thomas's marked use of *bible-black*, *sloeblack*, *crowblack*. Metaphors and relations such as synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy can be exploited by blanking out words in a literary text and asking learners to restore them: some will be guessable, others not, and the best way to appreciate the original author's choice is to have one's own potential choices as a yardstick.

96-81 Morrison, Andrew (U. of Zimbabwe). Study arts: from critical communication skills to subject specific study in a Faculty of Arts. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* (Clevedon, Avon), **7**, 1 (1994), 55-78.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has seen relatively little attention to the design of courses and the development of materials for specific subjects

taught in a Faculty of Arts. The needs of the undergraduate Arts student studying for a general Arts degree (e.g. Philosophy, History, or French) are

not catered for in published materials. This is particularly so where ESL students are studying in a new academic cultural context and where there is also exposure to the demands of different and sometimes entirely new disciplinary cultures. This paper outlines the design and development of a course at the University of Zimbabwe aimed to meet the needs of ESL students studying in the Faculty of Arts. The development of Critical Language Awareness in relation to general and

subject specific study skills is discussed. The term 'critical communication skills' (CCS) is introduced and defined. An outline is given of a two-part course. In Part One students work through materials which address CCS in relation to a subject of common interest – the media in South Africa. In Part Two the demands of studying specific subjects are presented (e.g. Philosophy). The course is discussed in relation to ESP and critical skills development for use beyond university study.

96–82 Penner, Janice. Change and conflict: introduction of the communicative approach in China. *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), **12**, 2 (1995), 1–17.

Chinese resistance to the Communicative Language Teaching approach is often dismissed as the classic traditional versus modern approach debate: 'The Chinese will soon change.' However, because this is an example of cross-cultural exportation of educational innovations, there are many conflicts that must be resolved. This article examines how the beliefs, pedagogy, and structures that have developed

in the Chinese English language classroom culture restrict pedagogical change advocated by foreign and Chinese change agents. The issues raised serve to acquaint the reader with some of the complexities of pedagogical change. The issues are also of significance to educators who are considering teaching in an EFL context.

96–83 Yuguo Yu (East China U. of Science and Tech., Shanghai). Using a radio station on campus for English learning: recent developments in China. *System* (Oxford). **23**, 1 (1995), 69–76.

The use of campus radio for English learning in China has three main attractions: it gives students exposure to English at an appropriate level; it improves listening and speaking skills; and it can supplement the resources of English departments where these are limited. Description of a typical station reveals its accessibility, its quality in terms of language output, and its flexibility in both offering a variety of levels and monitoring students' needs and responses. Since programmes are broadcast out of classroom hours and repeated, students are able to choose their own learning pace and environment. All on campus are within reach of the the service

and so it provides great potential for liberating manpower.

The diverse audience, however, brings problems: it is hard to cater for everyone and programme materials are not inexhaustible. It is also the case that only the more motivated students benefit. The development of the monitoring function, however, with surveys, interviews and guidance in class may help to remedy this last problem, along with increased student involvement. For while campus radio lacks resources, it is the single most cost-effective way of helping students make progress.

French

96–84 Cambier, Anne (Gen. Adviser for Derbyshire) **and Wright, Mark** (Alfreton F.E. Centre). Satellite television for language learning: how it works, what programmes? what equipment? *Francophonie* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 21–4.

This is a detailed description of the technical aspects of setting up a satellite TV system, with particular reference to educational purposes. The paper looks at how satellite TV works and what channels/programmes are available in a range of

languages, and gives details of different equipment systems. The usefulness of programmes for teaching purposes is commented on and costs of various pieces of equipment and installation are given.

96-85 Chartrand, Suzanne-G. (U. of Quebec, Montreal). Propositions didactiques pour l'enseignement du français 'langue maternelle' dans les 'classes pluriethniques'. [Suggestions for teaching French-as-a-mother-tongue in multiethnic classes.] *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **16**, 1 (1994), 11-23.

The presence of allophone students in French secondary-school French classes demonstrates, to a greater extent than ever before, the urgent need to transform a large number of pedagogical and didactic practices. The author proposes some possible

avenues for teaching writing, text comprehension and vocabulary in these classes. 'Differentiated', active and co-operative pedagogy, and strategic teaching are the bases for the didactic orientation proposed.

96-86 Dubuisson, Colette and Nadeau, Marie (U. of Quebec, Montreal). Analyse de la performance en français écrit des apprenants sourds oralistes et gestuels. [Analysis of the written French performance of deaf students, whether sign language users or not.] *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **16**, 1 (1994), 79-91.

Numerous studies have been made of the difficulties that profoundly deaf students experience in writing an oral language. However, they have failed to find a solution to the problem. Because most of the studies deal with written English, the authors aimed to determine what happens with written French. Their first analysis of the 'deaf French' corpus shows that deaf students produce, on average, sentences that are over 60% incorrect, and that there is no

significant difference between students who know Quebec Sign Language and those who do not. It also shows that no significant progress in terms of grammatical sentence construction is observed between six-year-old and adult students. It was hypothesised that some of the errors made by deaf students are independent of the means of communication they use; this should be a subject of future research.

96-87 Lyman-Hager, Mary Ann (Penn State U.). Multitasking, multilevel, multimedia software for intermediate-level French language instruction: 'Ça continue ...' *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 2 (1995), 179-92.

Researchers and practitioners in the field alike cite the importance of input from native speech in the language acquisition process. Whether one believes in a theoretical perspective emphasising the value of input or the dynamic interaction relation between input and output, there is little doubt that providing students with sufficiently interesting input material (readings, videos, etc.) in the target language can, if used properly, enhance student interest and subsequent language learning. An example of a multimedia programme developed at Penn State

using a videodisk selection (*Télédouzaine*, Francis Cabrel's *Encore et Encore*, PICS 1985) illustrates the use of authentic materials with potential for adaptations for various levels, tasks, and media. This particular software project fits in well with the newly designed technology classrooms and the French curriculum of a large IBM-funded multimedia undergraduate language programme at Penn State, the Language 3 Initiative, and can be used as a model for similar developments in the other languages involved in the Initiative and elsewhere.

96-88 Romney, J. Claude and others. Reading for pleasure in French: a study of the reading habits and interests of French immersion children. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto, Ont), **51**, 3 (1995), 474-511.

This study of 127 French immersion students examines how much reading they did for pleasure in both French and English and what factors influenced those amounts. More than two-thirds never read at all in French for pleasure outside school. Time spent reading books voluntarily in French was not affected by gender, reading achievement in French, or

attitude towards reading in French. On the other hand, students benefited from some methods used by the French teacher to stimulate reading. The students' reading interests were also investigated. Recommendations to stimulate pleasure reading in the children's second language are formulated.

96–89 Salomone, Ann Masters (Kent State U.) and **Palma, Elvina** (Kenwood Elementary Sch.). Immersion grammar: a changing portrait of Glenwood School. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 2 (1995), 223–33.

Research on French immersion has concentrated on the achievements of immersion students for the past 25 years. This paper focuses on the pedagogical beliefs and practices of immersion teachers in a large midwestern city. The original qualitative study revealed that the six teachers being studied were concerned most with classroom management and covering the content dictated by the local course of study. Teaching French language was their third

priority. After five years, the four remaining teachers disclosed that all three concerns are now treated equally. Grammatical units interspersed into the immersion programme are helping to prevent the fossilisation of language that has been reported in the literature. These adjustments have been suggested by researchers and are being successfully implemented at Glenwood School.

96–90 Wright, Margaret and Craig, Olive (Queen's U. of Belfast). L'enseignement de la grammaire. [Teaching grammar.] *Francophonie* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 25–8.

Past decades have seen changes in the way grammar is taught. It is unfortunately not the case that teaching learners the grammar of French equips them to express themselves fluently and with confidence in that language. The functional/notional approach would seem to offer

the best way forward: grammar is presented in a meaningful context where it is needed for effective communication. The differing needs of GCSE and A-level students where grammar is concerned should not be overlooked.

German

96–91 Heafford, Michael (U. of Cambridge). The quest for fluency and accuracy. *German Teaching* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 9–13.

The present accuracy–fluency debate is looked at in the light of changes in language teaching from grammar-translation methods to communicative methodology. While changes that have improved communication are clearly beneficial, students wishing to study language at a higher level seem to have been left without knowledge of the formal structure of language, and many language teachers feel a need to give more overt grammar practice. A warning is given, however, that grammar teaching

needs careful planning; it should help learners to perceive patterns in language and the relationship between meaning and form. Ways are suggested of incorporating useful grammar teaching into the communicative approach. Lines of exploration are indicated and it is proposed that writing be dropped from language teaching in school and that teaching should concentrate on the other three skills in two contrasting languages.

96–92 Spinner, Kaspar H. Die deutsche Kurzgeschichte und ihre Rolle im Deutschunterricht. [The German short story and its role in the teaching of German.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **94**, 3 (1995), 231–42.

This contribution begins with an introductory survey of the concept of the German short story, beginning with the short story immediately after World War II, which was influenced by the American short story tradition. Preliminary stages within German literature, especially Franz Kafka's outstanding significance for modern short prose, are

characterised briefly. The focus of the article then shifts to the short story within the discussion of German didactics, with a description of approaches based on interpretation, genre-structural didactics, production-oriented teaching of literature and scenic interpretation while listing the various productive procedures.

Italian

96-93 Peressini, Rossella (U. of Durham). From teaching to research: role-play and communicative competence. *Tuttitalia* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 15-21.

A research project is described which investigated the possible relationship between role-play and the development of oral communicative competence. The methodology, assessment of students and evaluation of the project are described in detail. The two language-learning groups concerned had identical classes, except that where one used role-play the other used individual presentations. The conclusions reached were that the role-play group communicated better in terms of lexical variety, use

of conversational routines, fillers and creativity, and were more independent in the free stage of the assessment interview. However, while there was little difference in the level of accuracy in the two groups, the level of fluency of the role-play group was significantly better.

Details are given of the pre- and post-project questionnaires and the informal interview with a native FL [Italian] speaker on which assessment of the students' progress was based.

96-94 Wyburd, Jocelyn. (Gateshead Coll.). Suggested strategies for the use of authentic visual materials. *Tuttitalia* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 9-11.

Ways are suggested for using authentic Italian video material (e.g. TV news) with pre-university classes (GCSE and A-level). Strategies for making this material accessible to learners are proposed and a list of possible follow-up and extension activities is

provided; these include a variety of written exercises. Appropriately adapted to learners' abilities, they can take students beyond the stage of passive comprehension and spark off their inventiveness and creativity.

Russian

96-95 Kirkwood, Michael (U. of Glasgow). Learning and teaching Russian: from practice to theory. *Rusistika* (Rugby), **10** (1994), 14-25.

The author (in his inaugural lecture) describes his life history as a language learner and teacher, from schoolboy to professor. His experience has led him to three 'axioms': (1) fluency is acquired through repetition; (2) detailed knowledge of grammar is essential for comprehension; (3) fluency equals familiarity with subject-matter and grammar. He uses these axioms to 'test' three methods, grammar-translation, audio-lingual and communicative, and

finds all unsatisfactory: the communication method comes out best, but undervalues the importance of accuracy. Finally he describes new approaches to teaching Russian which he pioneered at the universities of Lancaster and London: Russian, not English, became the working language, translation and conversation classes were abolished, teaching centred on close analysis of Russian texts and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

96-96 Purcell, Sue. Russian in a weekend? *Rusistika* (Rugby), **10** (1994), 26-31.

A weekend course in Russian is described, the aim of which is to give students the confidence to try to speak Russian and be able to understand something when visiting Russia. The course runs for a total of 11 hours. The language covered is pared down to


basics: it must be simple, useful and relevant. The course content is divided into topic areas: introducing oneself, ordering drinks and meals, asking the way, shopping and discussing arrangements.

Spanish

96-97 la Torre, M. Dolores (U. of Newcastle). 'Bebenida bedendella': transcription in the Spanish language class. *Vida Hispánica* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 4-9.

Contrary to received opinion, beginner English learners of Spanish do not find either dictation or transcription easy, in spite of the largely phonetic orthography. Stress, rhythm, minimal pairs and spelling conventions, all pose problems.

Transcription, because it involves listening, reading and writing skills, and focuses on syntax and semantics as well as on sound discrimination, is a useful classroom exercise. Ways of exploiting transcription are suggested.

96–98 Tierney, Daniel and De Cecco, John (U. of Strathclyde). Modern languages in the Scottish primary school. *Vida Hispánica* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 10–14. 

In January 1993, after three years of experiment, it was decided to extend the teaching of a foreign language to all primary schools in Scotland, the teaching to be delivered by the primary teachers themselves. The linguistic competences they would require were identified and a training programme was launched.

The majority of the 400 teachers participating in year one of the scheme opted for French, but sixteen

volunteered to undertake the training in Spanish. The aim of the intensive 160 hours/27 days course was to give the teachers sufficient competence and confidence to teach primary pupils, together with training in the appropriate methodology.

End-of-course evaluation by the trainees indicated that they considered it worthwhile and felt confident of their ability to teach primary Spanish.