Language learning and teaching

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

74-245 Besien, F. van and Spoelders, M. Van schoolspraakkunst naar pedagogische grammatica. [From language skills in the school to pedagogic grammar.] *Levende Talen* (The Hague), **305** (1974), 97–108.

One of the most important points in the current discussion of the role of grammar learning is whether the study of the grammar of the mother tongue leads to improved language skills, and, if so, what form this grammatical study should take. The relationship between linguistics and the teaching of grammar is discussed and some of the main concepts of transformational generative grammar are reviewed, in particular Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device. A flow-chart model for the construction of a pedagogic grammar is provided, the components being all relevant scientific investigations, applied linguistics, FLL methodology and what is called 'pedalinguistics'. Some of the practical uses which might be made of a pedagogic grammar are discussed.

74-246 Dulay, Heidi C. and Burt, Marina K. Should we teach children syntax? *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **23**, 2 (1973), 245–58.

Two research studies on the acquisition of L2 by children were carried out: the first tested the habit-formation theory as against the creative construction theory, by means of comparative error analysis. According to the habit-formation theory, mother-tongue structures interfere with the learning of the L2 structures; the creative construction theory, on the other hand, predicts that errors would not be due to interference, but would be developmental (i.e. similar to those made by children learning that language as natives). [Experiment

described.] 85 per cent of the errors were found to be developmental, i.e. characterised by the omission of functors (*dog eat turkey*), and over-generalisations (*foots, eated*).

The second study went on to compare the sequence of acquisition of certain grammatical morphemes (or functors) in three different groups of children. [Diagram of results.] There were marked similarities in acquisition between the groups (although the degree of acquisition differed somewhat); the order of acquisition was found to be different from that found in L1 acquisition. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed: less emphasis should be placed on the learning of words and structures, and more on content, with reinforcement by visual aids wherever possible, because the children will process the language themselves.

74-247 Lee, D. A. Modal 'auxiliaries' in generative grammar – some pedagogic implications. *ITL* (Leuven), **20** (1973), 19–30.

A semantic analysis of some English modal verbs is made in terms of one or more of the operators (after Seuren) Neg, Poss and Nec. Optimally, learning of these operators and their combinations would precede the learning of surface lexical items. Generative semanticists have shown that modals are main verbs in sentences which dominate the proposition, and that surface structures which include them result from raising transformations. Where raising fails to take place adjectives like *possible*, *necessary*, etc., surface; hence modal verbs are more structurally complex than these and should therefore be taught later. [References.]

74-248 Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana. La sicolingüística y el aprendizage de idiomas. [Psycholinguistics and second-language learning.] *Lenguaje y Ciencias* (Trujillo), **13**, 4 (1973), 165–70.

The principal pitfall of traditional contrastive linguistics is that it considers that the difficulties of second-language learning arise from

phonemic, morphological, syntactic and lexical differences between the base and target languages as whole systems external to and independent of the learner. The Rumanian school of psycholinguistics starts from the assumption that every person develops his own individual linguistic system. The second-language learning process must be viewed from the contact of this individual linguistics system with the *parole* of the target language within the learner. Final conclusions as to learning difficulties must not be drawn from prior comparative analysis of the two language systems but from concrete data obtained in real situations. Errors are of two types: general, in as much as they occur in learning any second language and are derived from the specific structure of the human mind, and specific (derived from the relation between the base language and the target language).

74-249   Vaessen, A. J. M. De plaats van de grammatica in het onderwijs van de moderne vreemde talen. [The place of grammar in the teaching of modern foreign languages.] *Levende Talen* (The Hague), **305** (1974), 97–108.

The historical development of the 'grammar only' and 'no grammar at all' approaches to foreign-language teaching are traced, with reference to the Viëtor principle, American structuralism and the influence of Skinner and Chomsky. The L1 grammar/L2 grammar model of Helbig is reproduced and commented on. The learner's ability to learn a grammar inductively, by insights or the so-called 'aha!-experience', is discussed. Neither extreme is supported here; the conclusion is that considerable further research into learning psychology will be necessary befor the role of grammar in foreign-language teaching can be defined with any precision.

PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING *See also abstracts* 74–246, –274, –281

74-250 **Anderson, Richard C.** Concretisation and sentence learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology* (Washington, DC), **66**, 2 (1974), 179–83.

One- to three-word modifiers that were judged to have the effect of making the subject noun phrase in each of a series of sentences more denotatively specific were prepared. In the first experiment people who received sentences containing concrete modifiers recalled significantly more words than people who received unmodified sentences, provided that in the former case the modifier was part of the retrieval cue. In the second experiment people exposed to concretely modified sentences recalled significantly more words than people who had seen redundantly modified sentences. [Tables; references.]

74-251 **Cromer, Richard F.** Child and adult learning of surface structure cues to deep structure using a picture card technique. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* (New York), **3**, 1 (1974), 1–14.

An experiment requiring the learning of 'new' (nonsense) words replacing the words *eager* and *easy* in the linguistic structure *John is eager/easy to please* showed that only adults and higher-IQ children could perform better than chance on the new words. Contrary to prediction, children showed no differential learning ability on the two types of words to be learned. However, an analysis of the strategies used gave evidence of a language-specific learning ability in children but not in adults. It is proposed that the inability of lower IQ children to learn the words, as well as the lack of differential learning of the two types by higher-IQ children, was due to the nature of the task – being more like that used in concept formation experiments than like natural language.

74-252 **Henning, Grant H.** Remembering foreign language vocabulary: acoustic and semantic parameters. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **23**, 2 (1973), 185–96.

To determine whether second-language learners encode vocabulary in memory by families of associated meanings and/or interrelated sounds (semantic and acoustic encoding clusters), and to ascertain the correlation between such encoding and language proficiency, 75 students were given tests of short-term memory vocabulary recognition and language proficiency. In the first experiment, 59 Ss were selected from five groups: one native-speaker group and a group from each of the four proficiency levels for foreign students studying English as a second language. In a second study to cross-validate the experiment, 16 native speakers and students of Persian as a second language were tested.

Results indicated that second-language learners do encode vocabulary into acoustic and semantic memory clusters; semantic and acoustic recognition errors were significantly more frequent than non-related errors. Learners at a low-proficiency level appeared to register vocabulary in memory more by sound similarities than by related meanings; high-proficiency learners relied on associated meanings rather than sound similarities. Significant positive correlations were found between proficiency and percentage of semantic errors. Significant negative correlations were found between proficiency and the percentage of acoustic errors.

74–253 **Leonard, Laurence B.** The role of intonation in the recall of various linguistic stimuli. *Language and Speech* (Hampton Hill, Mddx), **16**, 4 (1973), 327–35.

The effects of intonation on the recall of normal sentences, anomalous (grammatical but unmeaningful) sentences, anagram (ungrammatical but meaningful) strings, and word lists were examined. Results indicated that intonation facilitated recall only in the anomalous sentence condition, suggesting that, in such learning situations, intonation may function as an additional component of grammar, rather than as an independent linguistic variable. [Tables, references.]

74–254 **Ott, C. Eric and others.** The effect of interactive-image elaboration on the acquisition of foreign-language vocabulary. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **23**, 2 (1973), 197–206.

Interactive-image mnemonics (memory aids consisting of a mental picture of two objects in some kind of interactive relationship) were used by college students to learn the meanings of German words. One experimental treatment provided ready-made interactive pictures and the other a procedure by which Ss could generate their own mental mnemonic pictures. The two control treatments included a repetition group and one which received no prescribed learning strategy. The two experimental groups remembered approximately twice as many words as either of the control groups, both on an immediate recall test and a delayed-retention test two weeks later. Data from individual reports suggested that over 75 per cent of the words which were remembered by Ss across all treatment conditions (including the control groups) were learned by elaborative strategies. These results suggest that the use of elaborative devices, either spontaneously or by design, is a natural and effective way for Ss to approach this kind of task.

ERROR ANALYSIS   *See also abstract* 74–278

74–255   James, Carl. Linguistic measures for error gravity. *Audio-Visual Language Journal* (Birmingham), **12**, 1 (1974), 3–9.

If linguistic criteria could be used for the objective measurement of the language used by examination candidates exams would have definite advantages over so-called 'objective tests'. In fact, it is only in the scoring that tests can be called objective – their main drawback lies in defining the difficulty of each item. In exams, however, linguistic difficulty is irrelevant because the candidate can produce target language forms of any complexity he chooses. Another drawback of tests is that the pupils' expressiveness is stifled and what emerges is 'language-like behaviour'; exams, on the other hand, produce language in the context of the drive to communicate.

The test writer is concerned with homogeneity of difficulty, the exam marker with difficulty as reflected in the candidates' errors. A scale of degrees of errors is implicit in exam marking, whereas a test answer is either right or wrong. Linguistic considerations attendant on deriving error-weightings are discussed: (1) frequency; (2) consistency; (3) deviance, and (4) rule range. Under (3) it is suggested that the establishment of degrees of deviance would make measurement less subjective [reference to Chomsky's strict subcategorisation rules and selectional rules, which are analytic techniques which examiners could use]: using this process, a range of error gravity (4) can be established, more serious errors being those which entail further, dependent, errors.

Learners' utterances should not be matched with target-language forms and labelled deviant, but should be seen as a fluctuating, continuous learning process. A new kind of contrastive analysis between transitional competence and native-speaker utterances would be helpful in preventing 'fossilisation' in L2 learning. [References.]

TESTING *See also abstracts* 74–255, –273

74-256 Cohen, Arthur M. Assessing college students' ability to write compositions. *Research in the Teaching of English* (Urbana, Ill), **7**, 3 (1973), 356–71.

A research project on the assessment of English compositions in junior colleges recommends the involvement of teachers in the design and conduct of the project. At an initial workshop a score sheet was devised as a key to marking, listing 19 categories to which yes/no answers could be given. Multiple blind scoring was used to eliminate bias on the part of teachers, who carried out the experiment over two semesters; each student wrote two compositions, one before, and one after instruction [details]. Analysis of results showed that the design could be used to assess change in students' ability to write compositions.

74-257 Doble, Gordon. How free should the composition be? *Modern Languages* (London), **55**, 1 (1974), 6–11.

Poor performances in the traditional discussion-type essay in A Level French papers suggest that the aims and limitations of this activity should be established more precisely, and that alternative ways of testing pupils' ability to write more freely in a foreign language should be explored. The problems of assessment are discussed, particularly the value placed on linguistic as against communicative competence (40 per cent of marks should be given for linguistic accuracy and 60 per cent for content and other linguistic features).

It is suggested that pupils might be less inhibited by a more controlled exercise such as the 'structured essay', in which stimulus is provided in visual, textual or spoken form to enable pupils to write cogently on a defined topic. [Discussion of teaching techniques from the early stages of greater control to eventual free-writing, and comparison with the linked technique of guided conversation.]

74-258 Gipps, C. and Ewen, E. Scoring written work in English as a second language: the use of the T-unit. *Educational Research* (Windsor, Berks), **16**, 2 (1974), 121-5.

For the purposes of scoring essays written in a second language, two of the most important considerations are the intelligibility and the structural complexity of the writing. Various disadvantages are inherent in the use of clauses and/or sentences as a basis for analysing structure in written work; a more satisfactory technique was developed by Hunt in America, using what he termed a 'minimal terminable unit' or 'T-unit' [details]. This technique was applied in the scoring of the NFER open-ended writing and speaking tests, which formed part of the battery of 'Tests of English Proficiency for Immigrant Children'. During the development of these tests, the battery was administered to Asian children, for whom it was found that the average T-unit length in writing and speech increased with increasing length of stay in Britain. (Average T-unit length has been found by Hunt and O'Donnell to increase with age for children writing and speaking in their native language.) The results of the NFER testing indicated that much of the development of proficiency in both the speech and writing of the Asian children took place after three-and-a-half years in Britain. (These findings were essentially a by-product of test development, and therefore must be viewed with caution.)

TEACHER TRAINING

74-259 Aarts, F. G. A. M. On the relation between the teaching of English grammar at the university and the teaching of English in the secondary school. *Levende Talen* (The Hague), **305** (1974), 108-17.

While foreign-language teachers should avail themselves of the results of educational and psychological research, their attention should mainly be focused on the language they are going to teach. Various proposals for curricula to be used in teacher training at secondary-school level are examined with reference to the place of

linguistics in language teaching. Knowledge *of* a language and knowledge *about* a language should be carefully distinguished. The goals of a language course are not adequately defined in terms of the four skills only.

Knowledge about language should be part of general education. Young people who realise what language is and how it is used will be encouraged to take an interest in language description and analysis. [Detailed analysis of some exercises from a well-known English textbook course, with consideration of how concepts in modern linguistics could be brought in.] Knowledge about language is important for its own sake, and the language teacher must arouse the pupils' interest in linguistic matters. The university should provide him with the training to enable him to do so.

74–260 La Valva, Maria P. and Sprissler, Manfred. Einige Überlegungen zur Fortbildung der Fremdsprachenlehrer. [Some remarks on the in-service training of modern-language teachers.] *Bielefelder Beiträge zur Sprachlehrforschung* (Bielefeld), **3** (1973), 21–8.

The language centre of Bielefeld University has been running correspondence courses, lasting from six to eight months, for modern-language teachers from all types of schools. The courses are constructed and run by members of various faculties on a fully integrated basis. This type of course does not interfere with the normal work of the participants. It can only be adapted to one particular level of teacher at a time. The course material should have a multi-media basis, e.g. study material, tests, tapes, etc. Particularly useful are the periodic study groups which involve about ten people and allow direct discussion between lecturers and schoolteachers.

One such course which the University ran for teachers of Italian from three North German *Länder* is described. The 24 participants were pre-tested so that the content of the course could be adapted to their special needs. In addition to the work done by correspondence, two small study groups met every other month. The course ended with a two-day seminar on four different aspects of Italian teaching.

Modern-language teachers need constantly to be testing and improving their own linguistic skills; such courses are specifically devised for this purpose, and are thus more effective than stays abroad or contacts with native speakers. [Diagram.]

TEACHING METHODS

74-261 **Debyser, F.** La mort du manuel et le déclin de l'illusion méthodologique. [The demise of the textbook and the decline of the methodological mirage.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **100** (1973), 63–8.

For 20 years improvements in language teaching have been developed by marrying descriptions of language with theories of learning to beget 'ideal' courses. [Titles of French a-v courses for foreigners.] The resultant kits were considered to be scientifically sound; they used new technical apparatus. But the linguistic descriptions were incomplete and the models of learning theory inadequate. Moreover the 'improvements' in methodology constrained classes and teachers alike to follow a cumbersome lesson progression in which every gambit was assumed to be foreseen. The courses were entirely teacher-orientated at a time when other disciplines in the curriculum were abandoning the lock-step accumulation of knowledge in favour of pupil-orientated individual instruction, exploratory learning and group-work. Foreign-language teaching must be freed from the tyranny of methodology; tinkering with techniques must be supplanted by a responsible innovation based on a thorough re-appraisal of educational aims. A fruitful starting-point would be the theory of simulation. [See following abstract.]

74–262 Debyser, F. Simulation et réalité dans l'enseignement des langues vivantes. [Simulation and reality in foreign-language teaching.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **104** (1974), 6–10.

Theories of language and of learning make use of models. These serve as intellectual schemata which aid reflection. Each model is essentially static; its design is changed as soon as experiment reveals its inadequacies. However, as a basis for course design a model can be a hindrance to foreign-language learning because of its intrinsically deterministic nature, which results in pupils mimicking and learning by rote far more than they learn to react through the medium of the target language to a constantly changing environment. [Types of skill training: supple reflexes; preparation for stereotyped performances; adaptation to fluid situations.]

Simulated situations are widely used to train people to show initiative and take risks which in real life could be disastrous [examples]. Essentially they constitute a training in experience. Something analogous to practising musical scales must probably remain in language teaching but other activities should be blended with it to encourage flexibility. Pupils need much more practice in simulated situations in which they must use the target language to make decisions and take initiatives.

74–263 Forštová-Polívková, Dorota. Rozlišování artikulăcně a akustiky blízkých hlásek při jazykovém studiu a vynčování. [The discrimination of articulation and acoustics of closely similar vowels in a language laboratory.] *Cizí jazyky ve škole* (Prague), **17**, 7 (1973/4), 302–15.

Listeners of different nationalities perceive the same sound, vowel or consonant, differently. This psycholinguistic problem is important in foreign-language teaching. The teacher corrects the pupil's pronunciation on the basis of the perception system of a foreigner, but the pupil, judging on his own pronunciation by a perception system keyed to his mother tongue, is convinced that he is pronouncing

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correctly. Until pupils learn to perceive the foreign language as the foreign speaker perceives it, i.e. to appropriate the foreigner's perceptual base, they will have difficulty with their pronunciation. They therefore need to be trained, from the start and systematically, to perceive the sounds of the foreign language as a native speaker perceives them.

74-264 **Galisson, R.** Pour une méthodologie de l'enseignement du sens étranger. [Towards a methodology for teaching the foreign meaning.] *Études de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris), (nouvelle série) **11** (1973), 89–126.

The methods of teaching meaning have remained under-developed in French as a foreign language. [Reference is made to American and French practice.] French a-v courses assume that the film-strips implicitly relate the French expressions to their French semantic referents. But the learner relates them instead to referents in his own culture [examples]. Furthermore, the models used by a-v course designers will not serve all pedagogic purposes in the initial stages of language learning. However, the target language itself can make good the models' inadequacies as follows.

Learning may start with the extra-linguistic referent but develops along two linguistic axes: (1) syntagmatic – words in context serve as definers (co-occurrents); (2) paradigmatic – syntactally interchangeable words act as discriminators (correlates). [Sub-classifications, e.g. picturable/non-picturable, diagrams of interrelationships and suggestions for teaching approaches.] Crédif methods, like other a-v courses, are iconic, not strictly referential. Hence the Level I approach to meaning needs caution. There should be a post-introductory phase during which the learners grow accustomed to using semic analysis which should then be used throughout the intermediate level. Later work should make use of monolingual dictionaries. To teach the target culture, more complex visuals can be incorporated in the post a-v stage. Usually a-v visuals are overloaded, and cannot transmit all the meaning which the authors intend.

74-265 Huot, Hélène. Théorie et pratique de la notion de trans-
formation. [Theory and practice of the notion of transfor-
mation.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **22** (1974), 16–44.

In terms of the principal models of transformation grammar [refer-
ences and discussion] the transformational exercises which are usually
found in traditional school textbooks of grammar provide no oppor-
tunity for the pupil to gain an awareness of syntactic operations or
constraints on transformations. Exercises contain a medley of
syntactic and semantic phenomena [example]. Data from an experi-
ment designed to test the use of relatives by children of 11–16 suggest
the complexity of the tacit operations in which the children engaged,
and include errors which are not linked to the relativising transform-
ation [examples and discussion]. Exercises in recently published
school texts of grammar evidence a familiar confusion of content
[examples].

Even when exercises make use of transformational grammar,
problems are presented by the gap between theory and application
and by the particular needs of teaching. The relative is taken as
an example of the use of transformational grammar, the choice of
models and the problems for teaching [examples and discussion].
A limited use of a transformational approach, and the drawing of
supplementary information for teaching purposes, has a place in the
teaching of French as a first language. The study of constraints on
transformations and the operations involved is of more value than
the construction of 'trees'. There is no quick and easy help for the
language teacher.   [References.]

74-266 Jamison, D., Suppes, P. and Wells, S. The effectiveness
of alternative instructional media: a survey. *Review of
Educational Research* (Washington, DC), **44**, 1 (1974), 1–67.

The survey covers traditional classroom instruction (TI), instruc-
tional radio (IR), instructional television (ITV), programmed in-
struction (PI), and computer-assisted instruction (CAI). Achievement
test scores are the measure of effectiveness most frequently used.

Despite the difficulties of making cross-media comparisons which were scientifically valid, various reasonably clear patterns emerge. Each type of instruction is reviewed separately [tables of research project analysis], with some international coverage. General conclusions were that students learn effectively from all these media and relatively few studies indicate a significant difference in one medium over another. There was little evidence to show that varying the type of TI would influence student learning (though the verbal ability of teachers correlated positively with student learning, and smaller classes may improve primary-grade performance slightly); there were few studies of the effectiveness of IR but they show it to be about as effective as TI, though the extent to which IR can be substituted for TI remains to be shown. ITV, used in a way which simulates TI, is equally effective, but there is little evidence of its unique possibilities being utilised. Both PI and CAI attempt to improve the quality of instruction by individualising certain areas. Few significant differences in achievement were noted, although students learned more quickly. Small amounts of CAI used as a supplement to regular classroom teaching lead to improved performance, particularly with less able students. [Implications for educational policy and future research.] [Extensive bibliography.]

74-267 Littlewood, W. T. Programmed instruction and language teaching. *Modern Languages* (London), **55**, 1 (1974), 12–16.

The limitations of programmed instruction are discussed with reference to various papers. The creative and integrated nature of language makes it intrinsically unsuited to treatment by a fully programmed course. Programmed instruction may well, nevertheless, be suitable for more limited aims, such as where (1) material can conveniently be broken down into small units, (2) a one-to-one relationship can be set up between stimulus and response, and (3) no creativity or free expression is required. Programmed instruction has encouraged careful grading, feedback, scrutiny of results, preparation of materials, and an emphasis on effectiveness as viewed from the student's point of view. [References.]

CLASS METHODS: PRONUNCIATION
See abstract 74–263

VOCABULARY   *See also abstract 74–252*

74-268 Firges, Jean. Fremdsprachenunterricht ohne Vokabellernen ? [Foreign-language teaching without learning vocabulary ?] *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart), **29**, 1 (1974), 57–63.

One hundred and sixty-nine pupils from six selective secondary school classes took a six-week pronunciation course as a preliminary to the Crédif course *De vive voix*. As retention was not the aim of the teaching, the pupils had no access to the written or printed word and no homework apart from illustrating the words used. A fortnight later they were tested on retention of vocabulary. Of the 114 nouns used in the course, 30 test words were selected on the basis of frequency, complexity of structure and appeal. The average success rate was 77 per cent, girls doing slightly better than boys; pupils' control of their own performance and absence of examination strain are suggested as reasons for this success.

LANGUAGE FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES
See abstracts 74–222, –277, –280, –284

READING   *See also abstracts* 74–222/3

74–269 **Eskey, David E.** A model programme for teaching advanced reading to students of English as a foreign language. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **23**, 2 (1973), 169–84.

For advanced students of English as a foreign language reading materials will range beyond the students' aural–oral abilities, and the reading programme should be composed of instruction in the critical skills and practice in various kinds of reading: (1) language knowledge (ability to decode syntactical and lexical signals), and (2) the ability to follow a given line of argument. The reader's problem is processing information at three levels simultaneously [diagram] – the printed page, the abstract form (structure of text, sentences and words) and the inner level of meaning, both of linguistic forms and of the passage as a whole.

A model reading programme is discussed [diagram], entailing an intensive programme of in-class instruction, and an extensive programme of carefully controlled reading outside the class. [Suggestions for using individualised instruction.] More research is needed on the complex relationship between rhetorical form and syntactical form [references]. The reader also needs to gain access to the writer's underlying assumptions, and to study contrastive rhetoric. Cloze procedure is recommended for teaching and testing advanced reading. [References.]

74–270 **George, P. T.** Teaching the mechanics of reading to beginners in English – the case for a return to a traditional approach. *CIEFL Bulletin* (Hyderabad), **9** (1972/3), 6–17.

The need for system in learning, so that the learner can distinguish what is systematic and regular from what is not, is stressed. Current methods of teaching reading are examined critically: the look-and-say method (which ignores the systematic relations that exist between graphological patterns and speech sounds), and the phonic method (which over-simplifies the systematic aspects of English graphology and does not prepare the learner for exceptions).

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An alternative method, 'functional phonics', enables the pupil to develop an intuitive approach to reading through experience of a graded presentation of words in phonic categories. New words that do not fit these categories should be learned by rote, using traditional alphabetical letter names. Once the mechanics of reading have been mastered in this way, using only the pupil's readers and the blackboard, reading for meaning on the look-and-say model can be increasingly introduced. [The application of the method to one lesson of a reader is illustrated.]

74-271 Goodacre, Elizabeth J. Reading research in Britain – 1973. *Reading* (Manchester), **8**, 1 (1974), 14–20.

Recent surveys confirm that there has been little improvement since 1964 in the reading comprehension skills of pupils in Britain. The results of some 1973 surveys are briefly discussed, covering topics such as reading standards, literacy, EPA projects, dyslexia, remedial provision, language and reading, child language development, pre-reading vocabulary, use of reading schemes, and children's interest in books.

74-272 Quigley, Helen. The pre-reading vocabulary of children leaving nursery school. *Educational Research* (Windsor, Berks), **16**, 1 (1974), 28–33.

Fifty children, all native English speakers, in their last term at an LEA nursery school, were given a criterion referenced test devised to sample their knowledge of words used in the first books of six well-known reading schemes. Average age and social class distribution were analysed [figures]: the sample contained a larger percentage of children from broken homes and fewer middle-class children than in the national sample. A preliminary test indicated that the sample was representative of the nursery school population.

The test was designed on the lines of the English Picture Vocabulary test [details]. The results were analysed to show: (*a*) the total 'word knowledge' score of each child; (*b*) variations in total score

with respect to sex and social class; (c) the familiarity of each word; (d) analysis of words known by parts of speech. The scores show that children with an average level of verbal comprehension were by no means familiar with all the common words they would soon be asked to read in the primary school. Their vocabulary size was average, but they lacked critical words. They were moreover a privileged group in that they were attending nursery schools. There is clearly a disparity between words children understand and the content of elementary reading books, which points to the need for a reappraisal of these books. [References.]

74-273 **Saville-Troike, Muriel.** Reading and the audio-lingual method. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **7**, 4 (1973), 395-405.

Audio-lingual programmes should recognise reading as a skill in itself, rather than reinforcement of oral work. Advanced students will be using English (reading) as a learning tool. They will need to process words in groups rather than as single lexical items. Structures unique to written English should be introduced and analysed in written contexts. 'Socio-cultural meaning' and culture-specific meanings need to be explained, and students should be able to distinguish between assertion and presupposition.

In order to improve reading skills, weaknesses should be identified by means of diagnostic tests: skills to look for are word-recognition, phrase-reading skill, recognition of semantic and syntactic redundancies, and knowledge of punctuation as a clue to meaning [teaching methods for strengthening these skills are suggested]. Some techniques traditionally used in teaching composition to native speakers are recommended for advanced students [details]. Contrastive analysis of discourse structure in English and the learner's language would be useful in expectancy training. [Examples of different approaches to the analysis of complex structures are given, together with some suggestions for improving comprehension.]

COMMUNICATION

74–274 Valette, Rebecca M. Developing and evaluating communication skills in the classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC) 7, 4 (1973), 407–24.

Genuine communication usually occurs outside the foreign-language classroom. Formal classroom evaluation reflects the real goals of teaching, and the evaluation technique sets the tone of the foreign-language class. Skill-getting techniques are sometimes confused with the ability to use those techniques for communication. [The author compares Belasco's, Rivers' and her own models of language acquisition.] Standard and classroom tests generally measure the skill-getting activities. The failure of classroom foreign-language learners to achieve communicative competence is usually due to the teachers' failure to teach and test it. To acquire communicative competence language-learners must be put in situations where they can communicate and want to do so. Under the headings of 'speaking', 'writing', 'listening', and 'reading', ways of doing this are described, especially through work in small groups, and ways of improving command of the elements of the language are also included. [An indirect test of general ability in English is described in a postscript.]

WRITING *See abstracts* 74–256/8

AUDIO-VISUAL METHODS *See abstracts* 74–264, –266

PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION *See abstracts* 74–266/7

INDIVIDUALISED INSTRUCTION   *See also abstract* 74-282

74-275 Davidson, J. M. C. Individualised learning: technological and educational issues. *Modern Languages in Scotland* (Aberdeen), **3** (1974), 108–12.

Motivation factors specific to language learning are considered. Fluency of speech has been taken as a priority but is not recognised as such by many pupils. Provision therefore needs to be made for different interests. In a general way, a learner needs to know what he is trying to do, and why, and what progress he is making. More specific examination syllabuses will help. Individualised instruction needs the full co-operation of the learner. Steps in instituting a system in the second year of language learning are considered: appraisal of each student's needs, attitudes, and achievement; individual plans of work drawn up by teacher and pupil; allocation of time to various activities – perhaps one day a week, and related to available resources.

   Assignments, mainly based on printed materials, should involve frequent simple activities, with the purpose clearly stated beforehand and with pre- and post-tests. A school or neighbourhood bank of assignments could be built up. The main aim is to balance class lessons with individualised learning periods. Implications for the structuring of teaching materials are discussed, including increased use of aids, but the main consideration must always be that of pupil need. [Study materials are recommended.]

74-276 Valette, Rebecca M. Thinking about 'individualised instruction'? Caveat emptor! *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Ontario), **30**, 3 (1974), 266–72.

The apparent advantages of individualised instruction over traditional classroom instruction are based on the assumption that (1) students are willing to work hard and able to pace themselves optimally, (2) teachers have the talents and energy for preparing supplementary materials, learning activity packets, etc., and organising multiple

activities efficiently, (3) the content of the materials is educationally sound and also stimulating, (4) the available classroom space and facilities are sufficiently flexible, and (5) the teacher is provided with assistants for classes of over ten students. If all these assumptions are true for any one class or school, individualised instruction will probably be successful, but arguments are presented to show that, among other things, individualised instruction is more likely to succeed with advanced, more highly motivated students than with beginners; deadlines often need to be written into programmes to help students plan their work; the individual talents of available teachers need to be utilised in preparing materials and building programmes; provision must be made for practising oral communication skills (which are neglected entirely for skill-getting in many programmes), and finally, since individualised instruction is a do-it-yourself project, it is best to begin with small advanced classes, and then to apply proved techniques with intermediate and even beginners' classes. Where complete individualised instruction programmes are not feasible, selected features can be incorporated into traditional programmes. The test of success will always be the competence of the student.

ENGLISH *See also abstracts* 74–246/7, –256, –258/9, –269/74

74–277 Allen, J. P. B. and Widdowson, H. G. Teaching the communicative use of English. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **12**, 1 (1974), 1–21.

It is argued that in an English for science and technology situation advanced students can no longer be taught using the oral inductive methods of the conventional structure syllabus. Language teaching has to shift its focus of attention from the grammatical to the communicative properties of language. An English course at this level should be concerned both with discourse (the ability to recognise how sentences are used in the performance of acts of communication) and text (the ability to manipulate the formal devices which are used to combine sentences in creating continuous passages of prose).

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Suggestions are made for the teaching of discourse based on specially constructed passages into which questions are inserted together with solutions which make overt the kind of reasoning needed to answer them. An approach to the teaching of grammar at an advanced or remedial level is discussed, together with a technique for guided paragraph-building specially designed for use in the context of scientific writing.

74-278 Libosvárová, Milada. Chyby v užívání anglického členu a jak jim předcházet. [Errors in the use of English articles and how to prevent them.] *Cizí jazyky ve škole* (Prague), **17**, 3 (1973/4), 120–8.

An analysis of errors made by some Czech students studying English at the Brno Military Academy has shown that 20–30 per cent of mistakes relate to the use of the article. The errors were classified under 16 headings and the possible causes in each incidence were considered [examples]. Textbooks of English for Czech students do not pay enough attention to article usage. Teachers should compose additional exercises to help to prevent such errors [suggestions]. Also useful are tabular surveys, indicating, for example, the use of articles with countable nouns. Drills in the use of articles must be proportional to drills in other grammatical points. The use of articles is not an essential component in communication in English but the high frequency of elementary mistakes in such usage should be minimised.

74-279 Morrow, K. E. and Shaw, Marilyn. L1 techniques in EFL teaching. *English Language Teaching Journal* (London), **28**, 3 (1974), 197–202.

Some L1 teaching techniques can help to create the kind of linguistic environment which Chomsky suggests is desirable for language learners. For example, foreign learners of English respond well to the project method, which consists of a series of assignments based on a single theme. The student is taught the language needed to explain and expand the situation. [Detail is given of the five

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assignments involved in a project designed for native speakers and used with a small group of intermediate students]. This technique gives the students a feeling of satisfaction at having created something themselves. Subject-matter is chosen mainly because it will arouse the students' interest. The fact that knowledge of the language is acquired in a haphazard way means that extra-project work is necessary. Although vocabulary can be acquired through private reading, structures must be explicitly taught. The teacher keeps a record of what has or has not been taught and the student can see how the items he learns fit into the grammar of the language.

74–280 Pittman, G. A. A suggested strategy for 'vocational' courses in English for adults. *English Language Teaching Journal* (London), **28**, 2 (1974), 125–30.

Organisers of vocational courses often assume that difficulties of communication in English are due to ignorance of vocabulary rather than to a weak command of structure. Specialised vocabularies are often too narrow or too advanced to cater for the wide needs and range of achievement found in classes in developing countries. In addition, common remedial problems, such as the use of verb forms, have to be dealt with. It is useful for the teacher running specialised courses to have blanket material available (i.e. material which incorporates structural elements which need remedial attention as well as vocational vocabulary) to meet the needs of a wide range of students. Suggestions are made to guide teachers preparing such material. New (specialised) vocabulary should be incorporated in known sentence-patterns, which in turn incorporate remedial elements [a table indicates how this can be done]. Elements appropriate to the students' attainment and occupations and to the aims of the course should be chosen from the basic material. The adult learner will in this way be presented with a coherent system of describing actions and a coherent system of prepositions and vocabulary. [Brief teaching hints.]

74–281 Politzer, Robert L. and Hoover, Mary Rhodes. On the use of attitude variables in research in the teaching of a second dialect. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **12**, 1 (1974), 43–51.

Elementary-school classes of black children in the San Fransisco area were given a daily period of intensive language training for five weeks, using one of two types of treatment. With Treatment 1 an attempt was made to establish first the idea of a difference between standard and non-standard speech, although it was stressed that the latter was legitimate. With Treatment 2 the teaching materials and approach were the same, but no attempt to establish the concept of standard versus non-standard speech was made, and overt contrast of standard and non-standard was avoided.

The subjects' attitudes towards non-standard speech were measured in order to determine whether these affected the results of teaching. It had been assumed that Treatment 1 would be more effective than Treatment 2, but the scores obtained were not significantly different. There was evidence that the use of non-standard Black English had a good effect on the learning of standard responses with children having a favourable attitude towards non-standard Black English, and that drill in standard English alone, without contrast with non-standard, helped those pupils who had lower attitude scores. The conclusion can be drawn that if the learners are favourably disposed towards their own non-standard speech, the sympathetic use of this in the teaching of standard English is beneficial. The hypothesis that non-use of the learner's language is preferable when the learner is not attached to it (i.e. when his integrative motivation is high), and vice versa, needs to be investigated.

74–282 Stibbs, Andrew. A scheme of freely-chosen individual and group work in English with younger mixed-ability groups in a comprehensive school. *English in Education* (London), **8**, 1 (1974), 35–43.

The various activities ('tasks') which make up the scheme outlined in the title are described: 200 different cards give the children the

outline of their tasks (many invented by themselves), which lead up to different kinds of writing, reading, listening, talking, finding out and creating (e.g. plays or tapes). Available materials, including the provision of books, are described, as well as the organisation and running of the scheme and the follow-up to find out what the children achieved. It was found that the children selected and concentrated on tasks which they found valuable and which they adapted to their abilities. [Some group activities as well as individual projects are described.] Conclusions are that self-initiated work is likely to be done more thoroughly than compelled work, and is more valuable for the worker. [Additional tasks completed by three children of differing ability over a period of time indicate the value of this kind of activity for weaker as well as abler children.]

FRENCH *See also abstracts 74–257, –261/2, –264/5, –268, –275*

74-283 Hurman, J. D. Oral exploitation of a text: from learning difficulties to teaching materials. *Audio-Visual Language Journal* (Birmingham), **12**, 1 (1974), 41–8, 61.

Answering questions orally on a written text can be a productive exercise in learning a foreign language, provided that pupils' linguistic difficulties are used as indices in structuring and grading the teaching materials. The difficulties stem (1) from the semantic content, (2) from the complexity of the language employed and (3) from the different psycholinguistic operations involved in the acts of listening and reading. All three areas of difficulty are investigated separately from the standpoint of the pupil.

A list of possible textual complexities, both semantic and syntactic, is included to afford help in the choice of suitable texts for oral exploitation at various attainment levels. Using as the chief criterion the pupil's ease of accessibility both to the information sought by the question and to the means of expressing this information in a possible answer, four main categories of question difficulty are established and a fifth is outlined. A summary of methodological procedures is appended, together with a detailed application of the recommended

approach to this exercise, in the form of a French text and questions corresponding to the four suggested categories.

74–284 Vigner, Gérard and Martin, Alix. Une expérience d'enseignement des langues de specialité: le français technique dans les collèges d'enseignement professionnel de Tunisie. [An experiment in the teaching of language in a specialised field: technical French in Tunisian Polytechnics.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **102** (1974), 18–26.

Tunisian students in technical training colleges are handicapped by their lack of knowledge of technical French. Research has been carried out into the basic differences between standard French and technical French, the situations in which they occur and the appropriate teaching methods. This article is based solely on the difficulties experienced by first-year industrial students. Although three levels in technical French are envisaged, only the first level is discussed here, i.e. the basic elements of a technical sentence (verbal constructions and forms, derivations and complex phrase units.)

Students should be taught the importance of derivation as a means of adding to their lexical stock. The importance of suffixes and prefixes is also stressed [many examples]. When a new word is required to describe some new technical apparatus it is usual to form new semantic units by using pre-existing lexical material. Phrase units may be expanded to an almost unlimited extent; the students gradually familiarise themselves with the methods of expansion described, so that they can form their own complex phrase units. Exercises are reproduced from a course of 12 one-hour lessons intended for Arabic speaking students who have studied French at school, but for whom technical French is completely new. Each lesson consists of two dialogues – the first presents the linguistic material, then, when this has been assimilated, the second introduces more syntactical examples and new phrase units. [Transcripts of selected exercises.]

GERMAN *See abstract* 74–239

ITALIAN   *See abstract* 74–260

RUSSIAN   *See also abstract* 74–244

74-285   Swan, Oscar E. On the problem of interference when teaching the Russian verb. *Russian Language Journal* (Michigan), **27**, 96 (1973), 118–27.

The use of comparisons with the student's native language in teaching a foreign language has in the past been criticised and avoided. However, despite formal dissimilarities, functional correspondences exist between languages, and it is possible to make use of these in the aquisition of a new language, taking advantage of the student's knowledge of his own language and presenting information about the new language by reference to this. Interaction between the native and second languages aids understanding and assimilation of the latter. Transfer of skills from one language to another is habitual, and it is more economical to apply to this a system of correction than to attempt to build an entirely new system [references].

The Russian and English tense and aspect systems are both based on similar semantic distinctions which help the understanding of the Russian system. Whereas in English the completive and habitual modes combine to form its non-continual aspect, and the progressive mode corresponds to the continual aspect, in Russian the completive gives the perfective aspect, while the habitual and progressive modes give the imperfective. [Diagrams, examples.]

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