Teaching particular languages

Arabic

95–337   Byram, M. S. and others (U. of Durham). The future of Arabic Studies in Britain. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 55–6.

In the interests of stimulating more interest in Arabic among potential university applicants, a research project was set up to map the existing pattern of applications and to explore new sources of students. Interviews with admissions tutors showed that the increasing emphasis on Modern rather than Classical Arabic and on contemporary issues is attractive to students. Students currently come almost exclusively from middle-class Anglo-Saxon backgrounds or from Muslim backgrounds, and the evidence is that any sixth-form pupil considering a university Arabic course would have to overcome considerable resistance from parents and teachers and ignore peer-group pressure, although fears of lack of career opportunities in the field are in fact unfounded. Arabic Studies can lead to specialised careers using Arabic or to all those careers usually open to Arts graduates. Sixth formers' perceptions of the Arab world come largely from the media and are of a world of trouble and political conflict, peopled by the stereotypes of rich oil magnates and poor peasants. The school curriculum does not necessarily offer a more balanced picture, and schools may in fact be actively discouraging pupils from considering Arabic as a possible university subject. The formation of a pressure group to examine school curricula and teaching materials and to work for the inclusion of a systematic treatment of the Arabic world in the National Curriculum may be the only substantial way of changing attitudes and images of pupils enough to make then consider Arabic Studies as a university course.

English

95–338   Forth, Ian and Naysmith, John (West Sussex Inst. of Higher Ed.). 'The good, the bad, and the ugly': some problems with grammar rules. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 78–81.

External (E) and internal (I) rules are distinguished, the latter referring to the statement of authoritative facts about the language, the former comprising learner intuition/hunches about how the language system might operate. E rules can further be divided into instructional dictates (e.g. 'verbs following *can, must* and *should* use the infinitive without *to*') and explanations which interpret, clarify and offer reasons why a particular grammatical structure is used. I rules are informal, and change over time as the learner extends his/her hypotheses about the language

E rules areas not always helpful and may encourage students to overgeneralise; they may be provided in a technical, abstract form. English grammar labels are also potentially misleading as they may have a cognate in another language (e.g. the 'past perfect' is different in English and Portuguese).

Heuristic I rules, on the other hand, seem no more reliable nor, according to the authors, do they necessarily help learners to have a deeper and more personalised understanding that would be the case if an E rule were presented instead. Moreover, some learners do not actually prefer inductive, problem-solving approaches, finding them messy or unstructured.

There can be no single approach to the presentation of grammar rules in the classroom; schools should take a concerted approach to metalanguage, for example – by defining in advance which grammatical terms students should know. Teaching materials need to offer a judicious balance between contextualisation and outright explanation, to help students develop their grammatical discoveries in a structured way.

95–339   Macaro, Ernesto (U. of Reading). Target language use in Italy. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 52–4.

This article describes a small scale research project (involving a survey of 21 Italian teachers of English) which examined actual classroom use of the target language and its interrelationship with collaborative and independent learning. The results showed that the Italian teachers surveyed felt that in order to

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create an atmosphere conducive to FL learning the teacher should use the TL as much as possible. This perception was apparently qualified, however, by a belief that it is impractical/inefficient to speak in English when, for example, correcting pupils' oral performance, giving instructions, dealing with lower level students (who would potentially gain more from explanation or encouragement in the native language) and maintaining discipline. With regard to the latter, it was felt that the TL can be used easily with well motivated students but not steadily with disruptive or troublesome pupils.

The teachers believed that pair work encouraged use of the TL by pupils though there were reservations about factors such as the inevitable domination of the interaction by the strong student. Quite simply, students had different needs, strategies and learning styles and though experienced teachers could accommodate these, they were nevertheless under pressure from higher authorities, colleagues or received wisdom to use the TL as the prime means of classroom communication whatever the practical considerations. It is concluded that TL use is but one ingredient in a successful methodological recipe.

95–340 Taylor, David S. Vowels, consonants and syllables in English: an English teaching perspective. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 1 (1995), 1–8.

The terms 'vowel', 'consonant' and 'syllable' are crucial in all discussions of English pronunciation. Despite this, the meaning of these terms is often not clear. In particular, it is frequently unclear whether they are being used in a phonetic or a phonological sense. Both phonetically and phonologically there are problems of definition. This paper explores the

meaning of these terms, and points out that, as teachers of English, we can only make sense of the phenomena to which these terms refer if we take into account both the phonetic and phonological aspects, while at the same time carefully distinguishing between them.

95–341 Thomas, Sarah (Science U. of Malaysia). A discourse-oriented approach to ESP. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **25**, 2 (1994), 94–122.

ESP/EAP is essentially concerned with the genre-specific texts students are required to read/write and the kinds of activities they need to participate in. To be effective, ESP/EAP teaching and materials must be informed by adequately researched linguistic descriptions of the target genres and texts in general.

There are characteristic rhetorical and organisational features and linguistic options which distinguish different genres and, without prior identification of these, ESP teaching will be *ad hoc* and cannot expect to help learners cope with the demands imposed on them by the need to read and write in their specific disciplines. Successful pedagogy which aims at enabling learners to master these genres must draw on linguistic descriptions

which provide insights into the features and organisation of the texts.

A discourse-based approach is recommended here to meet the need for ESP practice which is rooted in an understanding of the communicative purposes of texts and the linguistic manifestations of such purposes. An analysis of experimental research articles shows that: (i) choice of theme in citations can serve as a text organisational device to show the interdependencies and connectedness of the elements making up a stretch of text; (ii) the macro-structure of an entire research article can be represented in terms of the generally-recognised Problem–Solution discourse pattern.

95–342 Webber, Pauline. Speaking practice in the medical English classroom: bridging the gap between medical English and the everyday world. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 1 (1995), 64–70.

Advice is offered to less experienced teachers of medical English, especially those whose learners have limited language and/or subject knowledge. Topics must be found which bridge the gap between general and specialised language: for example, learners can interview each other using a questionnaire about lifestyle (diet, exercise, etc.), then read a more technical paper on this subject. Case studies with attempted diagnosis are popular and can be readily graded. Topics such as medical

ethics, acupuncture and the relation between illness and poverty can reduce the problem of different levels of professional knowledge within a group. Even for absolute beginners one can find suitable tasks, e.g. filling in a patient's personal details on a form. Teachers should not hide their own lack of subject expertise: learners do not expect this, but require guidance on such matters as pronunciation, general lexis and idiomatic language such as 'I can't put my finger on it'.

95–343 Zyngier, Sonia (Federal U. of Rio de Janeiro). Introducing literary awareness. *Language Awareness* (Clevedon, Avon), **3**, 2 (1994), 95–108.

Debates over what to include in the literary canon have reached the point of questioning the validity of literature as a discipline. Proposals to integrate the study of literature within the area of cultural studies have been made. This article reassesses the role of literature in the curriculum. The questions should centre not on what to teach, but on how to do it. Based on the recent developments in stylistics and in language awareness in Britain, this article proposes the emergence of a new discipline – literary awareness – and shows how it can be beneficial to EFL students at tertiary level, especially as an introductory course to literary studies. The delicate issue of competence in literature is also dealt with and arguments are raised in favour of the validity of interpretation by EFL readers. The objective here is to develop a less authoritative, text-oriented programme which may foster students' sensitivity to the literary phenomenon.

French

95–344 Asher, Colin and others (U. of Leeds). MFL for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties: exploring the possible. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 14–16.

In autumn 1992 the School of Education of Leeds University was asked by a local special school to assist with the teaching of French to boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A brief sketch of the background to the project is followed by extracts from the reports of the two PGCE students who were attached to the school for one day a week during the autumn term.

Teaching was based on lexical chunks of language rather than grammatical structures. Games played a major role. A variety of techniques had to be used with much pupil interaction and many changes of activity. The boys were enthusiastic about the classes and seemed to gain in self-confidence. The methods and strategies adopted were not very different from those employed in mainstream classrooms; what these disturbed pupils needed was more of the same: more success and encouragement, more fun, extra care in presentation, extra sensitivity to pupils' needs, extra firmness in handling groups.

A footnote by David Morris, Adviser for Modern Languages for Leeds LEA, emphasises that the project has pointed the way forward for language teaching in special schools. Thanks to pooling of resources and ideas, their pupils need no longer be excluded from learning an MFL – as experience taken for granted in mainstream schools.

95–345 Armstrong, Nigel (U. of Newcastle-upon-Tyne). The sounds of informal French. *Francophonie* (Rugby), **10** (1994), 20–5.

At a more advanced level of proficiency learners should be introduced to the basics of French phonetics so they can at least recognise what happens to spoken language used in less formal contexts. Phonetic characteristics of informal speech often set up barriers to understanding. Most of the article is devoted to the study of the phonetic features of elision, assimilation and liaison, which are probably more of a problem to learners than difficult words. Some pedagogical applications are suggested.

95–346 Broady, Elsbeth and Le Duc, Dominique (U. of Brighton). Learner autonomy and the video camera: a wider role for video-recording activities? *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 74–7.

Video recordings have often been used in language teaching for the purposes of assessment and feedback on student oral performance, but learners are not naturally disposed to using their recordings in this way. The focus should be on the whole viewing experience. Learners can find it quite demoralising to watch themselves on video and be forced into judging their own performance. Teachers need to discover how to use student video recordings so that they do not reinforce a negative focus on error, but offer a stimulating medium in which learners can express themselves. One video project undertaken

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with university science students taking a French option involved producing a scenario on the theme 'A weekend in Paris', acting it out and recording it in a university TV studio. The task gave them the chance to script 'typical' dialogues, injecting humour and their own characterisation into predictable situations. Viewing the end product again some weeks later helped the students to see how much their French had progressed since the recording and made them more confident about taking on new objectives. Time-limited activities with more advanced students involved producing three-minute television reports to tie in with their studies of the French media and news techniques. Students felt this improved their oral French considerably and made them more sensitive to factors affecting successful communication. Pressure of time meant they learned to organise themselves very quickly and mobilise only their active language resources for the task in hand. Video recordings when properly used are very powerful tools in helping learners to evaluate themselves and to confront fears and anxieties about performance.

95–347 Denis, M. (U. of Mons-Hainault). De l'utilisation du document oral authentique en classe de FLE. [The use of authentic oral texts in French-as-FL classes.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **111** (1994), 91–108.

Three reasons are offered for the use of authentic oral texts: language is seen as a social practice, considered in actual use; listening skills and appropriate attitudes can be developed; the texts can relate either to future real-world learner needs or to classroom purposes – playful, poetic, musical – which again foster positive attitudes.

A four-stage approach to texts is advocated. The first stage, sensitisation, includes motivation, orientation, role-play on similar topics, prediction. The second, construction of meaning, includes general and detailed comprehension, interpretation, phonetic discrimination, games. The third, production, includes further role-play and inventing stories. The fourth, reflection, includes traditional grammar but also a focus on discoursal and pragmatic features of language. Evaluation should be formative, raising learners' self-awareness and helping them to develop their own strategies.

95–348 Diadié, B. (U. de Niamey, Belgium). Le bilinguisme, une richesse culturelle? [Bilingualism – cultural enrichment?] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **111** (1994), 109–22.

This article considers bilingualism as a source of cultural and linguistic enrichment for African schoolchildren. It suggests using bilingualism pedagogically to prove that learning French (L2) helps learners, on the one hand, to master the grammar of their mother tongue (L1) and, on the other hand, to master the local oral literature. Using recited mythical stories in an African language (Zarma) it is possible to carry out a series of translation exercises into French, the aim of which is progressively to discover how the two systems work and the style inherent in each of the languages. Indeed, the coexistence of two languages and two cultures offer pedagogical opportunities that can easily be used by teachers. Apart from practical exercises to be carried out in class, there is above all the introduction to an intercultural approach to language teaching.

95–349 Lyman-Hager, Mary Ann (Pennsylvania State U.). Video and interactive multimedia technologies in French for the 1990s. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **68**, 2 (1994), 209–28.

The development of video-associated technology in the last few years opens up an enormous range of video options available for the teaching of foreign languages and culture. These are discussed here in the light of a French-teaching project, which studied the difference made by technology in the third semester of university language programmes. The use of video in the context of second-language acquisition theory is discussed, and both current and potential uses of authentic video and multimedia technologies in the French-as-a-foreign language curricula of this decade and beyond are examined. The selection and creation of materials are considered in relation to the development of the goals and objectives of the project. This approach requires a change in the roles of teacher and learner – the teacher becomes a facilitator and the learner can contribute from his/her own knowledge and experience. Problems associated with the selection of content, methodology and format of video are examined.

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95–350 Petrey, Sandy (SUNY, Stony Brook). French Studies/Cultural Studies: reciprocal invigoration or mutual destruction? *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **68**, 3 (1995), 381–92.

Using Cultural Studies in combination with French language courses in the United States to boost interest in the latter is misguided because it is grounded in a misunderstanding of what Cultural Studies is and what it does. This misunderstanding is due to a lack of definition of the field as a whole, encompassing as it does an enormous range of topics. For while one sense of 'Cultural Studies' promotes the study of a world apart from the students' and is beneficial to the learning of French, another promotes not contact with a different culture but a different view of the students' own.

Much of the appeal of Cultural Studies seems to derive from its demand for alternatives to the elitist tradition of European hegemony: the very tradition with which French is associated. Cultural Studies is thus adamantly opposed to the dominant orientation of French studies in the United States and threatens to undermine it. Since the topics covered in Cultural Studies may just as well be studied in English as any other language, efforts to integrate French Studies and Cultural Studies to boost interest in the former are also doomed.

95–351 Swingler, Perry. Learning to count in French. *Francophonie* (Rugby), **10** (1994), 7–10.

The scheme of work described here, which uses number as a platform for a range of learning activities, was developed for primary school learners. The basic activity is a board game, with the board –

one for each child – adaptable to any language-learning need. Preparatory work, materials required and the mechanics of the game are all described in detail.

95–352 Wieczorek, Joseph A. (Loyola Coll.). The concept of 'French' in foreign language texts. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **27**, 4 (1994), 487–97.

One common trend in French-as-a-second-language texts is to expose students to the many facets of France. The texts therefore ignore to a large extent the cultural and sociolinguistic contributions of the 42 countries that boast French as a primary, secondary, or tertiary language. Linguistic and cultural aspects of additional francophone countries are necessary for a well-rounded perspective of French as a language spoken over a large geographic area and by a diverse population. This study looks at 12 textbooks and additional language learning materials, chosen to represent various authors, publishers, and philosophies. A brief analysis was

made of the presentation of material concerning the country or area represented. Information about countries other than France averaged about 5.13 percent of the texts surveyed. In addition, little dialectological information was provided about France itself. The lack of a multicultural and multidialectal approach may foster some undue prejudice toward certain language varieties and may impede communication by inadequately preparing our students for real-world language use. Suggestions are offered for a more balanced approach to the French language and francophone cultures for both instructors and learners.

German

95–353 Chavez, Monika M. Th. English native speakers reading German: syntactic versus semantic problems and strategic behaviour. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **32**, 4 (1994), 321–33.

This article, based on an exploratory empirical study conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, shows that intermediate learners of German whose first language is English, experience more semantic difficulties when reading an English text and more syntactic difficulties when reading a German version of the same text. While strategic behaviour is overall more prevalent in reading German, it is more diverse in the area of syntax when reading English.

A stronger emphasis on various syntactic features of language, such as word category, agreement relationships, tensing, and word placement in the teaching of reading German, and potentially other second languages, is recommended.

This paper argues the necessity of including syntactic features of language, such as tensing, subject-verb agreement, verb placement, case encodings, and word category in the teaching of

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strategies of reading German to native speakers of English. In support of this argument, semantically and syntactically analysed data from an English (first language) cloze text are compared with those from an identical German (foreign language) version. Specifically, the comparison focuses on (a) semantic and syntactic performance and (b) the number and types of self-reported strategies.

95–354 Eckart, Helga (U. of Wales Coll. of Cardiff). Business German in continuing education: a pilot study. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 67–8.

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education has recently estimated that 350,000 adults have registered to study a foreign language over the last three years, and there are indications that at least part of this increased demand emanates from a growing awareness of the importance of foreign language acquisition in the British business community. In this context the author examined the characteristics, motivation and perceptions of students enrolled on a new German diploma at Cardiff University. The students, with an average age of 39, studied for two evenings a week for two years, devoting half their time in the second year to either a literary or a business/commercial German option. Results showed that the most important motivational factors for joining the course were that it was potentially useful for a future job, and that it led to a formal qualification. 'Sheer interest' also scored highly. Students thought listening comprehension was the most important aspect of their language studies, and also the least difficult. Translation was perceived to be the least important aspect. Students believed that it would become increasingly important for British companies to employ personnel which business language skills, and considered that German was the most important language in this context, followed by French, Japanese, Italian and Spanish. They considered Russian and Chinese of relatively low importance.

95–355 Kaunzner, Ulrike A. Neue Wege zur Verbesserung des Hörverstehens und der Aussprache beim Fremdsprachenerwerb: Ein Projekt im Rahmen des LINGUA-Programms der EU. [New ways to improve aural comprehension and pronunciation in foreign language acquisition: a project sponsored by the EU LINGUA programme.] *Zielsprache Deutch* (Munich, Germany), **25**, 2 (1994), 68–74.

The project deals with the Tomatis Method which is used to accelerate and improve aural comprehension and pronunciation in foreign language acquisition; it offers new audio-cassette materials for pronunciation practice, especially for adult learners. The theoretical background to the Tomatis Method is introduced. Learning depends on motivation: we hear what we want to hear and what we are used to hearing. Different languages make use of different sounds, and the neuromuscular system for listening and speaking is shaped by the mother tongue. The LINGUA project has developed cassette materials for training listening comprehension with the 'electronic ear': the passive (group) and active (individual) phases of the training process are described, during which the learner experiences how people hear and speak their mother tongue.

95–356 Casciani, Santa (U. of Missouri, Columbia) **and Rapallino, Luisa** (Inst. of European Studies, Milan). Un prospettiva concettuale nel'insegnamento della letteratura in un corso d'italiano come lingua straniera. [A conceptual perspective of the teaching of literature in a course of Italian as a foreign language.] *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **71**, 4 (1994), 433–45.

This paper illustrates how poetic language can be used with students at a very low level of linguistic proficiency, because even at this level they can identify with concepts expressed in a poem. The application of cognitive theory to language learning can help teachers to find the best ways of helping students to evolve intellectually, by developing processes such as building new concepts onto their own background knowledge [i.e. linking long-term and short-term memory]. Difficulties in interpreting a literary text are considered [e.g. the way in which concepts in a text change in meaning according to how they are perceived and interpreted by the individual].

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The practical application of these theories is illustrated by the description of an approach to the study of a poem by Leopardi by two sets of beginners in Italian. Details of activities for preparation for reading, for looking at language and content and for the task of comment and reproduction are given. A comparison of the results of the two groups is shown by a quotation from the commentary of one student from each group.

95–357 Di Carlo, Armando (U. of California/Berkeley). Comprehensible input through the practical application of video-texts in second language acquisition. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **71**, 4 (1994), 465–83.

This paper argues the value of visuals, particularly video texts, in motivating students to learn about language and culture. Video texts [e.g. TV commercials] show how native speakers communicate with each other and thus make learners aware of non-linguistic aspects of the target culture. With video, the teacher can integrate situational and functional approaches, incorporating all the communicative elements of a language, including the structure of the grammar. Because they enjoy TV programmes, students can assimilate both the language and the culture in an anxiety-free atmosphere. Suggestions are made for pre-viewing, viewing and post-viewing/follow-up activities in the presentation of a video segment.

95–358 Nuessel, Frank (U. of Louisville) **and Cicogna, Caterina** (Consulate General of Italy). Strategies for teaching vocabulary in the elementary and intermediate Italian classroom. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **71**, 4 (1994), 521–47.

Following a brief review of existing research in second-language vocabulary acquisition and current strategies for teaching lexical items, Danesi's bimodal model of second language acquisition is discussed: this stresses access to both cerebral hemispheres in the acquisition/learning of second languages. The four practical elements proposed by Danesi and used here for adaptation to the teaching of vocabulary are: contextualisation, visualisation, diversification and personalisation. General recommendations for vocabulary acquisition strategies are given and the role of games, puzzles, problem-solving activities and the use of semantic domains of vocabulary are discussed. These theoretical considerations are followed by a detailed look at specific activities for teaching discrete vocabulary and a brief comment on assessment procedures.

Spanish

95–359 Estébanez, Salvador (Spanish Embassy, London) **and Feltham, Anne** (West Sussex LEA). 'Sección bilingüe': GCSE business studies through Spanish. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 47–51.

In 1990, West Sussex LEA and the Spanish Embassy decided to launch the *Sección Bilingüe*, the GCSE Business Studies through Spanish, at Millais School (an 11–16 girls' comprehensive). The course began in September 1991, the Embassy agreeing to provide a native-speaker teacher for three years.

The course is modular and is taught throughout and examined in Spanish. It was originally intended that assessment would be based entirely on coursework but now the exam accounts for 60% of the final grade (in 1996 it will be 80%). The change has meant more traditional teaching by the teacher and less autonomy for the students. The nature of the bilingual course involves an increased workload for both teacher and pupils but so far both have found it rewarding. There is a danger that students may overreach themselves, and reservations have been expressed at their having to commit themselves to a heavy work load at an early stage. The teacher must be fully competent both in the language and in business studies.

GCSE results to date have been excellent; both the girls and their parents are enthusiastic, and some pupils have elected to go on to take a Spanish qualification, namely the Instituto Cervantes Diploma in Spanish.

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95–360   Vives, Gemma and Meara, Paul (Swansea U. of Wales). Word associations in Spanish. *Vida Hispanica* (Rugby), **10** (1994), 12–22.

Words elicit associations which are largely shared by members of the same speech community; non-native speakers produce responses different from, and more diverse than, those of native speakers. A table of word associations produced by 50 native speakers of Spanish to 200 common Spanish words is reproduced. The respondents were adults of both sexes covering a wide range of age, education and social class. Most of the associations would be valid for any language but some are specifically Spanish and not obvious to people from outside the culture.

Ways of exploiting these word associations with advanced learners are suggested. They provide a context for working on vocabulary and information concerning the meanings and uses of words. They can also help to create awareness of allusions taken for granted by native speakers and of the unspoken links between words.

95–361   Walsh, Frances (Greenshaw High Sch., Sutton). Spanish across the ability range. *Vida Hispanica* (Rugby), **10** (1994), 46–50.

Spanish in the UK is usually taught as a second foreign language, with all that this implies in terms of limited resources and restricted class contact hours. As teachers of what is effectively a minority language, Hispanists cannot afford to neglect any means at their disposal.

A number of classroom activities and language games (including tasks for pairs and small groups) for use across the ability range are described, which can help develop pupils' understanding of vocabulary and language structures, encourage their use of the target language, afford scope for creativity, and contribute to enlivening the atmosphere of the classroom. The role of the foreign language assistant, information technology and homework are also discussed.

Russian

95–362   Hall, Tony (U. of Birmingham). Birmingham's prelim project: transferable skills in foreign language teaching. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **11** (1995), 43–6.

A group of university students with only 16 weeks of Russian were encouraged to put on a performance in Russian, comprising two short sketches, poetry readings, joke-telling and songs. The did all the planning and preparation themselves, including production, props, lighting, advertising, whilst the tutor simply offered ideas and promoted discussion. The objective was to foster the principles of communication, co-operation and co-ordination, and raise awareness of the importance of self-presentation, leadership, delegation, etc. Expertise is not necessary, either in the foreign language or in singing, acting, word-processing or other practical skills: students learn how to learn, and to support and accept each other. The project was enjoyable as a language exercise but also developed other skills transferable to students' future lives.

95–363   Rubenstein, George. On acquisition of Russian cases by American classroom learners. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 1 (1995), 9–34.

This paper describes a study of the oral speech of 136 adult American learners of Russian. The study was aimed at determining the accuracy order of Russian cases. Two groups of midcourse learners (ML; N = 73) and two groups of endcourse learners (EL; N = 63) were interviewed with the same instrument eliciting the use of the oblique cases. The oral performance of ML and EL was compared by a detailed statistical analysis of their group scores and group means. The study demonstrated that there is an order of accuracy common to both ML and EL. According to the decreasing accuracy, the Russian cases cluster in three rank orders: 1. Prepositional and Accusative; 2. Genitive and Instrumental; 3. Dative. This order differs from the acquisition order of Russian children. An attempt to find an explanation for the observed accuracy order in the morphological and semantic simplicity of the cases, in the order of their presentation, in their external and internal frequencies, and in the effect of L1 has shown that these factors are to a certain extent related to the accuracy of the learner use of specific cases. Although none of these factors alone can account for the observed accuracy order, the latter may be a result of their combined effect,

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