Teaching particular languages

English

89–223   Atkinson, David (British Institute, Palma de Mallorca). The mother tongue in the classroom: a neglected resource? *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **41**, 4 (1987), 241–7.

In teacher training very little attention is given to the use of the learner's native language in foreign language teaching. The main reasons for this neglect are: (1) the association of translation with the grammar/translation method, (2) a backwash effect whereby native speakers have often themselves been trained in an environment where the trainer (also a native speaker) focuses mainly on the (relatively unrepresentative) situation of a native speaker teaching a multilingual class in Britain or the USA, (3) the influence of Krashen and his followers whose theories have promoted the ideas that 'learning' (as opposed to 'acquisition') is of little value and that transfer has only a minor role to play, and (4) the truism that you can only learn English by speaking English – but this does not mean that English should be the only language used in the classroom. At early levels, about five per cent native language to 95 per cent target language may be most profitable.

Some general advantages of mother tongue use, particularly for early levels, are discussed. Transfer techniques form a part of the preferred learning strategies of most learners in most places, so should not be underestimated. Another important role of the mother tongue is to allow students to say what they really want to say sometimes. Many teaching techniques involving the use of the mother tongue are quick and require little preparation, assuming that the teacher shares or understands the students' native language: e.g. eliciting language, checking comprehension, giving instructions, discussions of classroom methodology, presentation and reinforcement of language, checking for sense, and testing. Students can be encouraged, through activities involving translation from the mother tongue, to develop useful strategies like circumlocution, paraphrase, explanation and simplification. Translation can also be used to promote guessing strategies.

Excessive dependency on the mother tongue is obviously to be avoided. To teach without using it at all would be less than efficient.

89–224   Charge, N. J. and Giblin, Karen (Bell Coll., Saffron Walden). Learning English in a video studio. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **42**, 4 (1988), 282–7.

This article presents a rationale for the creative use of a video studio in the context of task-based communicative language teaching. With access to video cameras and a video studio (facilities possessed by a growing number of schools all over the world), students can learn how to film and produce short sequences in English. The course described here consists of ten 90-minute units spread over five weeks. Students progress through all the stages necessary to enable them to produce their own video film. In each unit, the technical aims are made explicit, as are the language skills and input required for the video expertise being taught. The process of planning and filming sequences involves the learners in real communication tasks, which cannot be completed successfully unless the necessary linguistic skills have been mastered; and the goal of producing something provides motivational force. The course outlined here has been tried out with a number of classes ranging from Lower Intermediate to Advanced levels, and in each case the results have been very satisfactory. The students have commented that they have enjoyed learning a skill through English and that their general command of the language has improved.

89–225   D'Sousa, Jean (National U. of Singapore). Interactional strategies in South Asian languages: their implications for teaching English internationally. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **7**, 2 (1988), 159–71.

To achieve communicative competence in English it is necessary for foreign learners to combine the grammar of English with the rules of the native language of the learner. Indian English, for example, adapts to local patterns, e.g. *just* is used in requests or to minimise an action (*just I will go and come*), or conversely it influences local patterns, for instance in the frequent use of politeness formulae where this is not done in the native language. The reasons for such and other developments are the spread of education, industrialisation and social reforms.

The new language and the local culture have considerable mutual influence. It is therefore important for the true assessment of communicative

competence in English in speakers of South Asian languages (1) to take into account the English language in the local context, especially its socio-cultural context, (2) for teachers to recognise the mutual influence of English and the local language, and (3) to develop and use appropriate teaching materials.

89–226 Görlach, Manfred. English as a world language – the state of the art. *English World-Wide* (Amsterdam), **9**, 1 (1988), 1–32.

A survey of work done in the field of English as a World Language (EWL) leads to the following conclusions. (1) Much descriptive work is still necessary if it is to be possible to make reliable statements on the local distributions of English and particularly its regional characteristics on individual levels of grammar ranging from pronunciation through lexis and syntax to pragmatics. (2) The history of regional forms of English and the resulting dialectal and sociolectal variation must be documented carefully from colonial archives and other historical sources. (3) Linguistic change will have to be documented and explained, especially where the high prestige of International English leads to a levelling of speech towards close-to-standard forms. (4) Speakers' attitudes towards international and regional standards will have to be better explored. (5) The political role of English must be defined, especially for ESL/EFL countries of the Third World. (6) The importance of English in relation to other languages must be investigated, especially from a contrastive point of view. (7) Linguistics, and the discipline of EWL in particular, must be part of a wider science of the 'humanities' of foreign cultures.

89–227 Grabe, William (Northern Arizona U.). English, information access, and technology transfer: a rationale for English as an international language. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **7**, 1 (1988), 63–72.

The role of English as an international language has engendered considerable debate recently. In this paper it is argued that English is the major international language at least in part because it is the dominant world language of science and technology. In particular, its role in information access and technology transfer is a major explanation for the rise of English world-wide. Evidence is presented both to support English as the international language of science and technology and to explain its essential role in information access globally. Implications of the analysis are discussed for English language teaching as well as for the role of language in future information access systems. The arguments presented suggest that no country can afford to ignore the important role English plays in information access and technology transfer and still expect to compete professionally and economically.

89–228 Kachru, Braj B. The sacred cows of English. *English Today* (Cambridge), **4**, 4 (1988), 3–8.

Non-native speakers of English not only outnumber native speakers, they also increasingly use different varieties of English in cultural contexts not traditionally associated with the language. While sociolinguists may derive satisfaction from having an international language which crosses cultural and national boundaries, purists view the diversity of Englishes as divisive, as a sign of decay or threat to the ethos of the language.

The spread of English has been instrumental in slaughtering sacred cows of various types: acquisitional, sociolinguistic, pedagogical and theoretical. 'Interference' is the acquisitional sacred cow; unfortunately the way the concept is used distorts the institutionalised varieties of English in the 'Extended' or 'Outer' Circle, the main problem being that creative aspects of 'interference' from other languages and cultures are ignored. Sociolinguistic sacred cows are English as a tool for Westernisation: paradoxically English, in ethnically diverse and linguistically pluralistic societies, brought together the local leaders and became a weapon in national uprisings against the colonisers. English is now an exponent of local cultures in the 'Outer Circle'.

Pedagogical sacred cows are the essentially Western concern with models for teaching English, 'universally' applicable teaching techniques, motivation, materials and syllabus design. Theoretical sacred cows centre on three basic linguistic concepts: the speech community, the ideal speaker-hearer and the native speaker.

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89–229 Kennedy, Chris (U. of Birmingham). Evaluation of the management of change in ELT projects. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **9**, 4 (1988), 329–42.

All ELT projects imply a greater or lesser degree of change at various levels, and many represent an attempt to innovate. Project management therefore involves not only administrative and financial expertise, but, equally importantly, skills in the promotion of change. Very little has been written on this subject with respect to ELT, but the literature on innovation is extensive in other fields. The paper introduces some of the concepts commonly used in innovation theory and tries to relate these to ELT project management. The outcome is a number of questions that need to be asked when projects are initiated, during the process of implementation, and subsequent to project completion. The questions can be used therefore as a basis for both formative and summative project evaluation. Exemplification will be provided from ELT and ESP contexts.

89–230 Pennington, Martha C. (U. of Hawaii at Manoa). Context and meaning of the English simple tenses: a discourse-based perspective. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **19**, 1 (1988), 49–74.

The English simple tenses (present and past) are examined in the context of pedagogical assumptions usually made about their meaning, use and instruction. It is found that the several meanings ascribed to these tenses are essentially inaccurate. Each tense gains much of its associated meaning from context, and the central sense of each is a kind of modal, rather than temporal or aspectual, meaning, representing subjective interpretations of events and situations. Ways of depicting these tenses in visual displays are proposed and implications for teaching explored.

89–231 Pociecha, Sherill Howard. Action and condition in the post-elementary classroom. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **42**, 4 (1988), 288–93.

This article proposes that a distinction between 'action verbs' and 'condition verbs' can be very useful to post-elementary learners who have trouble choosing correct verb forms. By facilitating a more functional approach to the tense system, the distinction can contribute to a better understanding of the appropriateness of target structures. The article outlines the differences between the two types of verb, suggests a presentation of the distinction suitable for post-elementary learners, and touches on some of the implications that the action/condition concept has for the presentation of tenses.

89–232 Stalker, Jacqueline W. and Stalker, James C. (Michigan State U.). A comparison of pragmatic accommodation of non-native and native speakers in written English. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **7**, 2 (1988) 119–28.

The analysis of 10 edited essays written by freshman native and non-native speakers of English who are novice, non-proficient writers of English, indicates that both groups produce approximately the same number and kinds of sentence level deviations from standard written English. At this level the non-native speakers appear no more 'foreign' than do the native speakers. At the discourse level, the non-native students produce fewer faulty structures, and produce more coherent essays with clearer illocutionary guides for the reader. This analysis indicates that non-native speakers in a college writing class can certainly profit from instruction focused on developing discourse level strategies that structure coherence overtly and provide obvious illocutionary guides for the reader.

89–233 Thompson, Geoff (U. of Liverpool). Using bilingual dictionaries. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **41**, 4 (1987), 282–6.

Although monolingual dictionaries are generally regarded as better than bilingual dictionaries, they have their disadvantages. These include the assumption that the learner knows the foreign word and can understand the L2 definition, an assumption which leads to surreptitious recourse to a (usually unsatisfactory) bilingual dictionary.

The bilingual dictionary should be aimed at one

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language group rather than two [e.g. not for Chinese learners of English as well as English learners of Chinese]. Equivalents in the L2 should be given for L1 terms, and definitions in particular should be given in the learners' L1. Examples in the L2 should be copious (with L1 equivalents where necessary) and there should be explanations in the L1 of differences between it and the L2. The *Longman English dictionary for Portuguese speakers* (Konder, 1983) comes close to the ideal, while the *Hungarian learner's dictionary of English* (Thompson *et al.*) will match the required specifications when published.

New bilingual dictionaries could be based on existing monolingual dictionaries, each aimed at speakers of one language. Monolingual dictionaries are fine for the most advanced levels; otherwise the bilingual dictionary can do the same things, several of them in a more efficient and motivating way.

89–234 Tickoo, M. L. Michael West in India: a centenary salute. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **42**, 4 (1988), 294–300.

The late Dr Michael Philip West taught English in India in the early years of this century. He stayed close to the ordinary English classroom and from it learnt much that was new. But he suffered neglect because he stood away from and opposed to the dominant beliefs and practices of his day. In the centenary year of his birth, this article attempts to explore parts of what he left to English language teaching and to the bilingual education that he propounded. Special attention is paid to those aspects of ELT in India to which West made noteworthy additions, namely his policy of making reading the main means and the sole end of bilingual education. He spent years improving textbooks, using psychological studies of learner interest, and selecting and regulating vocabulary according to his principles of lexical selection and lexical distribution. He thus came to formulate a 'minimum adequate vocabulary' for basic reading courses, and wrote large numbers of graded or 'built-in plateau' readers. He made sizeable additions to word study and research, culminating in his *General Service List of English Words* (1953) which is still used as a reference work, and his 'definition vocabulary' of 1,490 words which could describe the 24,000 items of his *New Method Dictionary* (1936). His other major addition to the field of word study has, however, been neglected, i.e. his 'word-rating scale' (which concerned the relative ease or difficulty of a cognate vocabulary item or a new meaning of a known word). His most seminal ideas relate to his thinking on reading, providing for five successive reading abilities (word recognition, word interpretation, synthesis, grouping, and scanning/skimming). He later designed a three-stage programme of reading, with stages for vocabulary, development of skills, and aspects of strategic reading. His greatest achievement came from his teaching in experimental classes.

89–235 Tudor, Ian (U. Libre, Brussels, Belgium). Using translation in ESP. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **41**, 4 (1987), 268–73.

This article describes the use of translation activities with one group of ESP learners in Germany. Two activities are described in which mother-tongue input material and a variety of translation tasks were used. Activity One was designed to improve learners' ability to communicate in their area of professional specialisation. Each student had to prepare an oral presentation for the rest of the group on one aspect of his or her professional activity, on the basis of relevant L1 material, with back-up material in English as necessary. The presentation session was conducted entirely in English. Activity Two was based on journalistic material and was designed to develop discussion skills in a more general sense. Learners received a text from the German press on a current affairs topic, together with at least one English text on the same topic. They had to (1) make a rough oral translation of the text, (2) make a written summary translation, then (3) prepare for a class discussion of the text topic. The L2 texts provided a source of language data to help with tasks (2) and (3). In addition to giving rise to relevant and motivating communicative activities, this fostered the acquisition of new language resources by the learners through the provision of precisely defined communicative goals – 'stretching' learners' existing competence in a controlled manner by means of the first-language input.

89–236 West, Richard (U. of Manchester). A consumer's guide to ELT dictionaries. *ELT Documents* (London), **126** (1987), 55–75.

A series of workshops held with British and foreign teachers considered the dictionaries available to English language learners, selected criteria by which to compare them and then applied these criteria to the dictionaries. Only monolingual dictionaries, intended for speakers whose mother tongue is not English, were considered.

Recent innovations are described: the production of dictionaries for learners at all levels; pocket dictionaries; ESP dictionaries; semantic dictionaries; the recent proliferation of all dictionaries. Four categories were selected – for advanced learners; for learners at lower levels; pocket; ESP. Within each category, each dictionary was examined using the criteria: (*a*) UK price, format and date, (*b*) number

of pages, (*c*) level/coverage, (*d*) workbooks, (*e*) pronunciation, (*f*) ease of use, (*g*) definitions, (*h*) grammatical assistance, (*i*) illustrations, (*j*) appendices.

The workshops were interesting as much for what they revealed about teachers' attitudes to, and uses of, the dictionaries, as for the practical evaluation of the dictionaries. The best buys in each category were: advanced – *Longman dictionary of contemporary English*; intermediate – *Longman active study dictionary*; elementary – *Harraps 2000 word dictionary*, pocket – *Harraps mini pocket English dictionary*; ESP – *Oxford-Duden pictorial English dictionary*. The results of the study are collated with star ratings and comments at the end of the report.

French

89–237 Bogaards, P. (U. of Leiden). A propos de l'usage du dictionnaire de langue étrangère. [The use of the foreign language dictionary.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **52**, 1 (1988), 131–52.

The use of dictionaries by 371 Dutch learners of French at university level was studied by means of a questionnaire. Of monolingual dictionaries, *Petit Robert* was by far the most used and best liked; of bilingual, *Van Dale*. Major reasons for preferring particular dictionaries included completeness, clarity, abundance of examples, everyday language.

Dictionaries were used far more for written work than oral, and for production than comprehension. Bilingual ones were used more for all purposes: 43·9% of students used them daily, a further 52·9% at least once a week, whilst for monolingual the figures were 7·3% and 53·3%. [Summary and critique of research on dictionary use.]

89–238 Byram, Michael and others (U. of Durham). Apprentissage des langues et perception d'autres cultures. [Learning foreign languages and how other cultures are perceived.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **219** (1988), 59–63.

In order to assess how learning French affects children's attitudes towards the French way of life, two groups of 200 11-year-old Durham school children beginning the study of French were tested over a period of three years; 100 children in each group were interviewed; and in additional four classes were studied in depth over a period of eight months.

The most significant variable proved to be sex –

girls having markedly more favourable attitudes towards non-English-speaking foreigners than boys. Textbooks, many of them stereotyped and not reflecting real life, were the dominant influence in forming the children's picture of France. Teachers' attitudes and their personal experience of France had regretably less effect, while school visits all too often reinforced, or even evoked, negative attitudes.

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89–239   Hewer, Sue (Northern Coll. of Education, Dundee). Communiquer par ordinateur: technologies interactives dans l'enseignement du français en Grande Bretagne. [Communicating by computer: interactive technologies in the teaching of French in Great Britain.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number **8/9** (1988), 30–6.

Computer-assisted learning need not be non-communicative. Most of the work in modern language teaching in state schools stems from earlier developments in teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). The most widely used applications of the computer involve either practice or simulated communication – though there is only one really effective program generally available for teaching French. Exercises of the manipulating-the-text type need not be purely mechanical: Students are led to acquire the ability to anticipate, taken for granted in the native speaker; errors constitute a means of learning.

Word processors have proved of value in the production of written work. Interactive videos could be of enormous benefit in introducing young learners to the culture of the target language. TELETEL, the French equivalent of MINITEL, can also be useful to teachers of French, while satellite television will further extend the resources available to modern language teachers and even make possible genuine communication between pupils in different countries.

German

89–240   Bernhardt, Elizabeth B. and Berkemeyer, Victoria C. (Ohio State U.). Authentic tests and the high school German learner. *Die Unterrichtspraxis: for the teaching of German* (Philadelphia, Pa), **21**, 1 (1988), 6–28.

The research described in this article analyses the reading strategies of FL learners at five levels of instruction in German, and examines students' ability to deal with four types of authentic text: friendly letter, general article, business letter, newspaper article. Students' recall protocols were subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Results show that, contrary to the expectations of their teachers, students at all levels were able to construct meaning from all four types of text. Performance improved significantly according to years of instruction, although the proficiency fifth

year students (Level 5) fell well below those at Level 4.

Performance on the different text types was not consistent with the text typology listed in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Reading. Two levels of difficulty emerged: reportage and the letters. Subjects found the articles significantly more difficult than the letters but different strategies influenced performance on different types of text. The authors conclude that lack of syntactic knowledge rather than lack of vocabulary interfered with comprehension.

89–241   Bernstein, Wolf Z. Zur Gestaltung einer Verstehensgrammatik und deren Rolle im Leseunterricht. [Towards a grammar of comprehension and its use in teaching reading.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **19**, 3 (1988), 2–9.

Difficulties encountered in the teaching of reading may be of an interferential or intraferential nature. The latter arise from the inherent difficulties in the target language itself and a grammar of comprehension is designed to deal with them. L2 learners must first master structural meaning before lexical meaning in construing texts. A grammar of comprehension aims therefore at identifying word forms and syntactic structures, extending knowledge of word combinations and their functions and developing a pragmatic grammar of expectancy.

This is analogous to learning the rules of untying knots as opposed to tying them, which is the task of a grammar of production. Other aspects of the grammar cover finite words, reflexive pronouns, verb prefixes, gerunds, transitivity, participles, word order and subject-object inversion, none of which are dealt with adequately in traditional grammars. A grammar of comprehension should be in the learner's native language; if he can read such a grammar in the target language, then he does not need it.

89-242 **Neher-Louran, Joachim.** Produktionsorientierte Verfahren im Deutschunterricht. [Ways of stimulating active language production in the teaching of German]. *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **19**, 3 (1988), 28–39.

After a summary of the development of the teaching of literature in West Germany in the 'seventies and 'eighties, the importance of the active role of the student in language learning is stressed. Four methods of stimulating active language production are presented, namely (*a*) the altering of literary texts, (*b*) free composition, (*c*) scenic interpretation and (*d*) the audio-visual realisation of literary texts. Detailed suggestions are given for the implementation of each method. If each student is involved in a given task, motivation will be heightened. The relationship between creative productivity and analysis is discussed.

Both production and presentation must be well thought through. Suggestions are made for the presentation and criticism of pupils' own texts. Evaluation should be on aesthetic, linguistic, stylistic, literary and possibly visual grounds, and grades should be avoided. Possible obstacles to satisfactory results are size of class and classroom, length of lesson and variables such as extraneous noise, extremes of temperature and pupils' personal feelings of anxiety and competitiveness.