

## Teaching particular languages

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### ENGLISH

**85–539 Biederstädt, Wolfgang.** Die Integration des Liedes 'A church is burning' in eine Unterrichtsreihe über 'Blacks in the United States'. Stunden = abstract, dargestellt am Beispiel einer neunten und zehnten Realschulklasse. [The inclusion of the song 'A church is burning' in a course of lessons on 'Blacks in the United States'. Abstract based on lessons with the ninth and tenth classes of the *Realschule*.] *Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund, FRG), **32**, 1 (1985), 3–9.

A survey recently conducted on the use of commercial songs in English language teaching revealed that most teachers who use such songs in their lessons are concerned with giving them a clear didactic function within a course of lessons. Preference goes to songs which speak out against war and racism and in favour of humaneness. For this reason, 'A church is burning' (a song about an incendiary attack on a black community church by the Ku Klux Klan) is chosen here as an example and the article describes how it was used in class as an integral part of a course of lessons on 'Blacks in the United States'.

**85–540 Dagut, Menachem B.** (U. of Haifa). A 'teaching grammar' of the passive voice in English. *JRAL* (Heidelberg), **23**, 1 (1985), 1–12.

Theoretical grammars describing competence are of less use to teachers than pedagogical grammars prescribing performance, which take surface forms as input and their functioning as output without attempting to discover any underlying uniform system. Such a teaching grammar concentrates on the semantic ('designational') and pragmatic ('social') aspects of the language which are more needed by students.

The English passive is a case in point. Transformationalists concentrated on the alleged formal relation between passive and active without explaining the communicative reason for choosing one rather than the other. A teaching grammar would concentrate on the latter – foregrounding action and suppressing agent – and show that the passive takes its place among a whole system of impersonal constructions in English. Passive constructions that introduce the agent with *by* belong elsewhere, communicatively speaking, and a teaching grammar would explain this and other stylistic choices of the passive. It would not prescribe a methodology to EFL teachers but be a prerequisite to their methodology.

**85–541 Jungblut, Gertrud.** Lehrgangsbedingte 'Verklumpungserscheinungen' bei Lernern im Englischunterricht. [Course-generated 'clumping phenomena' produced by learners in English teaching.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main) **83**, 6 (1984), 669–84.

This article describes an extraordinarily frequent error phenomenon in learning in English classes. It deals with cases of intralingual interference which are the result

of the similarity of linguistic learning material. The results of tests which the Dutch psychologist van Parreren carried out in order to investigate this learning defect are extrapolated on the conditions of learning in school English lessons. The hypothesis is that the type of error presented is not caused by the homogeneity of the learning material alone but is also due to the kind of system of instruction used. This is demonstrated by two cases from teaching practice, and at the same time it is shown how this learning defect can be prevented or, if necessary, corrected.

**85-542 Lynes, Colin and Woods, Louise.** Teaching seminar skills. *British Journal of Language Teaching*, 22, 3 (1984), 157-9.

The article describes a series of courses designed to improve the spoken English of overseas students in academic seminars. Students met in groups of eight for two hours a week. The course focussed on a series of commercially produced cassette recordings ('seminar cassettes') which feature authentic unscripted interviews with contemporary specialists and writers, and reports on international issues. Transcripts and questionnaires are also available. The students' problems in the areas of listening and comprehension and speaking were first identified. The students choose the speakers and topics they wish to discuss, and study transcripts a week before the class; the teacher outlines the general theme before playing the cassette. At the end of each stage students summarise the main ideas and discuss them; language problems are also discussed with the teacher. Optional written work follows.

The teacher's role is to encourage the students to express ideas rather than to concentrate on language. In group discussion he/she is a participant rather than a leader. An informal, unpressured classroom atmosphere is essential.

**85-543 Schleppegrell Mary.** Using input methods to improve writing skills. *System* (Oxford), 12, 3 (1984), 287-92.

This paper describes two special purposes English language programmes for Egyptian economists. One used a communicative approach consisting of conversation sessions and extensive writing, and the other focused on developing the receptive skills of listening and reading. Writing ability was tested, using an essay task, and the group that had concentrated on the receptive skills had greater gains in writing ability than the group that had focused on the productive skills of speaking and writing throughout the course. This gives added support to the input hypothesis of language acquisition and comprehension-based methods of language teaching.

**85-544 Porreca, Karen L.** (Ohio State U.) Sexism in current ESL textbooks. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 18, 4 (1984), 705-24.

A study was carried out on 15 of the most popular ESL textbooks used in ESL countries. It showed that sexism continues to flourish. Women were depicted only half as often as men; male 'firstness' (i.e. order of mention) was three times as prevalent as female firstness; there are six male workers for every working woman shown, and women's jobs are much less diverse than men's. Words designating motherhood or marital status and the noun *lady* occur far more frequently than their

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male counterparts. Masculine generic constructions (man/mankind) are used extensively. Adjectives used to describe females focus on emotions, physical attractiveness, marriage, and gender itself. Adjectives for males focus on renown, intellect and education. Two books were far superior to the rest in avoiding sexist usage: *React/Interact* and *Understanding and using English grammar*.

## FRENCH

**85–545 Brey, Christian.** (U. of Paris X). *Les travaux pratiques de reformulation*. [Practical exercises in reformulation.] *Langue Française* (Paris), **64** (1984), 68–80.

After graduation, students of science and technology will need to be good communicators within their chosen field of work. An important part of good communication is the ability to adapt (reformulate) messages in ways appropriate to their receivers. This paper describes examples of practical projects designed to train students in communication skills. Students working in groups carry out research into real industrial or technical problems and produce reports for the use of companies or research groups. Hence they learn through experience how to operate in different language varieties appropriate to different spheres of activity, which leads to a corresponding increase in confidence and motivation.

**85–546 Byram, Michael.** Cultural studies in language teaching. *Modern Languages* (London), **65**, 4 (1984), 204–12.

The majority of language learners in secondary schools get little or no insight into French culture. The teaching projects an impression of, rather than insight into, French culture. The texts used up to 16+ are essentially simplistic and biased in their presentation of French life [examples]. Even at advanced level the lack of contextualisation of authentic texts makes them unauthentic. The learner needs a higher level perspective to understand the relationship between French culture and his own (English) culture. It is necessary to decide (1) at what level (ethnic, national, regional) the analysis should be made, (2) on what terms the analysis should be made (social institutions, cultural artefacts, etc), and (3) what is the relationship of the cultural analysis to the associated language (French).

**85–547 Champagne, Cécile** (U. of Ottawa). *L'environnement pédagogique: source de difficulté dans la maîtrise des habiletés phonétiques en langue second*. [The classroom environment as source of difficulty in the acquisition of L2 phonetic skills.] *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **41**, 1 (1984), 31–42.

Results of a recent survey of French L2 classes in Ottawa indicate that the course books and teaching materials used accorded a very minor role to pronunciation skills and that little class time was devoted to these. Teachers and students alike shared the assumption that adults were incapable of acquiring correct pronunciation and that in

any case an authentic accent was of little importance in communication (although evidence exists to the contrary). In view of the bias of current teaching practice and the negative attitudes of both teachers and taught towards adult learners' potential, it seems probable that the difficulties adults encounter arise not from any innate incapacity (cf. the 'biological clock' and the 'critical period' for language learning) but instead are the result of social and psychological factors.

**85-548 Matter, Johan F.** (Free U. of Amsterdam). *Auditieve woordherkenning in het Frans als vreemde taal.* [Auditory word recognition in French as a foreign language.] *Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen* (Amsterdam), 20, 3 (1984), 51-65.

This article deals with some fundamental aspects of understanding spoken language in general and spoken French by non-native speakers of French in particular. The problem is discussed within a theoretical framework based on Marslen-Wilson's cohort theory, Morton's Information Processing theory, and psychological skill theory. It is predicted (i) that a word form is recognised the more readily as it resembles more its 'canonic' (= citation) form, and (ii) that a word is recognised more rapidly by native than by non-native speakers. In French there are three phenomena that affect the canonic form. They all have to do with the specific structure of French, where syllable boundaries often do not coincide with word boundaries, and where syllable structure generally has priority over word structure. These three phenomena are Elision, Liaison and *Enchaînement*. In experiments on the word recognition by native and non-native speakers of French it was found that: (1) native speakers recognise words more rapidly than non-native speakers; (2) elision has an important effect on word recognition when it occurs at the beginning of a word, none at all at the end of the word, whereas the influence of *Enchaînement* and Liaison on word recognition seems to be less important for both native and non-native speakers.

## GERMAN

**85-549 Dieling, Helga.** *In welcher Weise wirkt die muttersprachige Perzeptionsbasis bei der Wahrnehmung fremdsprachiger Laute?* [What is the effect of the perception of sounds in the mother-tongue on the perception of sounds in a foreign language?] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig, GDR), 21, 3 (1984), 170-4.

Phonetics teaching today concentrates more on correcting actual articulation than on influencing the perception of sounds.

Two different mother-tongue groups were tested on the basis of three different theories to find out the learning difficulties experienced with German vowels. One group consisted of Thai speakers and the other of Spanish speakers. The following results were established: (1) Contrary to expectations, both groups of speakers perceived German vowels in a similar way and the different mother-tongue backgrounds did not affect this perception significantly. (2) Though both Thai and Spanish vowel systems are simpler than the German, the Thai is relatively more complex than the

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Spanish. It could be established that the Thai speakers experienced relatively less difficulty with the German vowel system. (3) A group of learners with the advantage of a number of hours of language instruction experienced much greater success with perception and mastery of the German vowel system.

**85–550 Flippo, Karl.** Lesen zu Genuß und Erkenntnis. Zum schülerorientierten Unterricht in Deutsch als Fremdsprache. [Reading for pleasure and knowledge. Towards pupil-centred literature courses in German as a foreign language.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **3** (1984), 28–35.

Traditional methods of teaching literature cannot be described as pupil-centred, leaving pupils little or no opportunity for ‘active reading’, that is, the kind of reading which encourages real involvement with the text in hand, the development of a critical attitude towards it and, at the same time, a sense of enjoyment and discovery.

A project was conducted in the Netherlands to show how ‘active reading’ could be achieved within the framework of the modern languages curricula there. (The curricular prescriptions for ‘literature’ are not restrictively specific, demanding only that it should provide ‘insight’ and ‘knowledge’.) The project involved 266 advanced school students and 7 teachers of German. The six texts chosen for the project are named here and the approaches used with them listed: gap-filling, predictive writing, supplying a missing ending, answering questions. A detailed description of two of these approaches (gap-filling and answering questions) is given and reference made to another article by Flippo for details of the other approaches.

Results (based on textual analyses, discussions, and a brief written survey) demonstrated a high degree of motivation and participation among the pupils who clearly felt encouraged to become involved with the texts by expressing themselves and relating their understanding of the texts to their experience of the world.

**85–551 Pommerin, Gabriele.** Migrantenliteratur und ihre Bedeutung für die interkulturelle Erziehung. [‘Migrant literature’ and its role in inter-cultural education.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **3** (1984), 41–9.

Migrant literature is becoming increasingly important in the development of a migrant culture in the FRG and the growth of a migrant culture in itself goes hand in hand with the development of a fair policy towards migrants. Despite the differing backgrounds, styles, themes and personalities of migrant writers in the FRG, all their works have at heart the social, emotional and cultural plight of the migrant. For its survival and development, however, migrant literature should begin to deal with topics of more common concern, such as war, and move away from its present strongly autobiographical tendency.

The importance of migrant literature is becoming recognised more and more in intercultural education. It should form a greater part of educational reading programmes and be read more widely for pleasure, giving migrant children the opportunity to identify with, and critically distance themselves from, the characters and events described, and providing German children with greater insight into the cultures and backgrounds of their classmates. This also applies to the literary pro-

duction of writers whose countries are strongly represented by migrants in the FRG. The article also makes teachers aware of linguistic phenomena in amateur theatre groups in Berlin and Frankfurt where plays take place in inter-languages arising from a mixture of German and migrant languages. Teachers should see these inter-languages as languages in their own right and be more lenient with the language 'mixtures' of their pupils. The literature of professional and amateur migrant writers has an important part to play in multi-cultural education. Adults must ensure that youngsters have the chance to take advantage of it.

**85-552 Teichert, Herman U.** (Western Michigan U.). Computer-assisted instruction in beginning college German: an experiment. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), 2, 3 (1985), 18-24.

Background information on other German CAI programs and articles written by authors of German CAI programs with which the author is personally acquainted is first presented. Information on the author's experiment is then given. Two nearly homogeneous sections of second-semester German were utilised in this experiment. The experimental class used ten modules of computer-assisted instruction instead of the workbook, which the control group used. The purpose of the experiment was to find out if immediate reinforcement in self-pacing would enable the students to perform better on the final exam and to get a better course grade. Both sections were taught by the investigator. Both classes also took an achievement test at the beginning of the semester for comparison. The results show the experimental class was far superior.

**85-553 Whitton, Kenneth S.** Whither German - 1984? *Modern Languages* (London), 55, 4 (1984), 224-32.

Over 100,000,000 people in the world speak German, the second largest language group in Europe (after Russian), so it can hardly be spoken of as a 'minority language'. Historically, German has never had things easy in the United Kingdom. The formation of the Association of Teachers of German (ATG) heralded a more positive attitude among teachers. A questionnaire was carried out in 1983 as a follow-up to one done in 1973. Results reinforced the earlier conclusion that the teaching force in German is predominantly 'un-specialist' and isolated professionally. There was a dramatic drop in the number of schools with German language assistants from 27 per cent to 5 per cent.

There has been no great change in the number of hours of German taught. The greater part of German teaching is still carried out in years three to five. The drop-out rate as pupils progress up the school continues to be worrying. Because German is an optional subject it is vulnerable to curriculum reorganisation. At the level of higher education, there was a move towards combined honours degree courses, and an increase in the numbers electing to study German with a subject other than a modern language, such as a social science subject. As to teacher's attitudes to the present and future state of German teaching, there was an increase in pessimism.

## ITALIAN

**85-554 Vizmuller-Zocco, Jana.** Derivation in the advanced course of Italian. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **23**, 1 (1985), 13-31.

A pressing objective for advanced language students is to increase their lexical competence. The lexicon of any language is highly structured, as regards both form and meaning. These structures, however, obey specific rules which can be adapted to the learning situation in the form of exercises designed to facilitate simultaneous learning of both forms and meanings.

Three types of exercises on derivation are proposed for Italian: (1) contrastive analysis (English-Italian structures); (2) 'families' of words, building up derivatives from one lexical base and functions of suffixes and prefixes; (3) derivations based on etymological criteria.

## RUSSIAN

**85-555 Baker, Robert L.** (Middlebury Coll.). Foreign-language software: the state of the art *or* pick a card, any (flash) card. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), **2**, 1 (1984), 6-10.

This article reports on the state of the art with respect to software development for CALI for all languages, but with some emphasis on Russian. Much of the software has been developed either by good language teachers who do not know enough about programming, or good programmers who do not know enough about language teaching. The best teachers should be released to work as members of teams to develop good software. Ten areas in which much current software is deficient are: (1) instructional design; (2) the techniques of discovery learning; (3) 95 per cent is trivial; (4) it is fragmented rather than integrated; (5) lesson content is not accurate for the language taught; (6) the programming is not user friendly due to poor formatting and documentation; (7) there is too much cuteness; (8) there is no standard for the methods of obtaining foreign characters; (9) the software is not ready and tested when advertised; and (10) it is lacking in portability.

**85-556 Baker, Robert L.** (Middlebury Coll.). Foreign character font (FCF) SIG report. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), **2**, 2 (1984), 9-18.

This report contains a short overview of the present state of affairs in the CALI/CALL field relative to foreign character fonts, particularly Cyrillic. It also contains a list of word processing packages, course authoring programs, and other programs which either use, contain, or provide for the creation of foreign character fonts.