
Teaching particular languages

Chinese

88–328 Appel, Joachim. Chinesisch an der Schule: acht Argumente und drei praktische Vorschläge. [Chinese in the school: eight arguments and three practical suggestions.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, FRG), **86**, 6 (1987), 569–77.

In this article the author recommends that Chinese be offered in schools, not only for practical reasons, but above all because of the educational value to be derived from exposure to a non-Indogermanic language. Learning Chinese can help pupils to gain insights into an entirely different linguistic structure and thus a different way of thinking. Working with Chinese characters, which trains cognitive as well as

creative and practical skills, is an important part of the learning process. Thus, there are several factors which indicate that Chinese appeals to pupils who might otherwise not be inclined to take the foreign languages normally offered at school. The article concludes with a number of suggestions for facilitating the integration of Chinese into the foreign-language programmes of schools.

English

88–329 Brown, J. D. (U. of Hawaii) **and Hilferty, Ann** (Harvard U.). The effectiveness of teaching reduced forms of listening comprehension. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **17**, 2 (1986), 59–70.

This classroom research investigates the effectiveness of teaching reduced forms (e.g. *gonna* for *going to*) for improving listening comprehension among EFL students in the People's Republic of China. A randomly selected experimental group ($n = 16$) received 30 lessons of approximately 10 minutes each on reduced forms. This was part of their regular course work. At the same time a control group ($n = 16$) received 'placebo' lessons of ten

minutes on minimal pairs in pronunciation. Three measures of listening comprehension were used to pretest and posttest the students. The results indicate that teaching reduced forms does aid listening comprehension, but this is reflected to varying degrees in the three measures. The discussion explores causes for these differences, as well as solutions to some of the problems encountered in small classroom research.

88–330 Carrell, Patricia L. (Southern Illinois U.). Content and formal schemata in ESL reading. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **21**, 3 (1987), 461–81.

This article reports the results of an experiment investigating the simultaneous effects on ESL reading comprehension of both culture-specific content schemata and formal schemata, as well as any potential interaction between them. In the study, high-intermediate ESL students read, recalled, and answered questions about each of two texts. For each of two groups of readers (students of Muslim and Catholic/Spanish backgrounds), one text had culturally familiar content, the other culturally unfamiliar content. Within each group, one half of the subjects read the texts in a familiar, well-organised rhetorical format, the other half read the texts in an unfamiliar, altered rhetorical format.

Results showed the conditions expected to yield good reading comprehension (familiar content, familiar rhetorical form) did so. Similarly, the conditions expected to yield poor reading comprehension (unfamiliar content, unfamiliar rhetorical form) did so. More interestingly, the results for the 'mixed' conditions (familiar content, unfamiliar rhetorical form; unfamiliar content, familiar rhetorical form) indicated that content schemata affected reading comprehension to a greater extent than formal schemata. Specific results are presented and discussed, as are limitations of the study and teaching implications.

88-331 Dretzke, Burkhard. Beurteilung von Aussprachefehlern im Englischen. [Evaluating English pronunciation errors. *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt-am-Main, FRG), **86**, 6 (1987), 507-17.

This paper deals with the problem of evaluating those errors in pronunciation which are typically made by German-speaking students of English. Pedagogical and psychological aspects, as well as linguistic considerations, are examined in this connection. The author concludes that mispronunciation can only be assessed objectively by means of tests used to ascertain native speakers'

standards of linguistic acceptability. To this end, an experiment was conducted to determine the reactions of 225 native speakers of English who had been presented with 24 typical mistakes and asked to rate them according to certain criteria. The results of this experiment are summarised in the form of an evaluative chart, which can also be used as a guide for teaching English pronunciation.

88-332 El-Sayed, Ali M. (Kuwait U.). Varieties of today's English: implications for teaching EFL in the Arab world. *ITL* (Louvain), **76** (1987), 63-86.

'Today's English' extends beyond the national borders of its native speakers: many varieties of English are spoken throughout the world. It has always been the practice in the Arab world generally, and the Arabian Gulf in particular, to hire native speakers of English to teach it in schools and universities, on the assumption that they will be more effective than Arabic-speaking teachers of English, but this is not necessarily so. Students are

limited in this way to hearing one particular native speaker, whereas it might be better for them to be exposed to a variety of internationally acceptable Arabic speakers of English. The skills of reading and writing are, moreover, more useful for Arab students than listening and speaking, since they are the channels through which Western science and technology can be reached. More culturally suitable materials are needed to motivate Arab students.

88-333 Goldstein, Lynn M. (Monterey Inst. of International Studies). Standard English: the only target for non-native speakers of English? *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **21**, 3 (1987), 417-36.

An implicit assumption of most research on the acquisition of English as a second language is that standard English is the only target for non-native speakers of English. The study reported in this article demonstrates that black English served as a target for Hispanic boys acquiring English as a second language in the New York City metropolitan area. In addition, the study shows that extensive peer contact with blacks was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the acquisition of two

features of black English, negative concord and distributive *be*, and that choice of blacks as a reference group played no role in the acquisition of these two features. However, since contact did not account for all the variation and subjects made comments indicating that they had affective responses to input, the study suggests that the concept of reference group should be revised rather than abandoned.

88-334 Holmes, Janet (Victoria U. of Wellington) **and Brown, Dorothy F.** (Sydney Coll. of Advanced Ed.). Teachers and students learning about compliments. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC) **21**, 3 (1987), 523-46.

Paying appropriate compliments and identifying them accurately is an aspect of communicative competence which may differ in a variety of ways from one culture to another. This article provides examples of misunderstandings in compliment exchanges in different cultural contexts and analyses them as instances of pragmalinguistic and socio-

pragmatic failure. An analysis of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms of complimenting behaviour in two English-speaking communities forms the basis of a set of exercises designed to assist learners in developing the ability to recognise and use compliments appropriately.

88-335 Kolke, Ikuo (Kelo U., Japan). Focuses of applied linguistics in Japan: a case study. *A/LA Review* (Madrid), **4** (1987), 44–56.

In Japan approximately 12 million people learn English over the various stages of schooling, and in language schools attached to companies and other institutions. Teaching English as a foreign language is big business in Japan, with nearly 4,000 textbooks selling to college and university students and 200 publishers of such materials. Teaching methods are still based on grammar–translation, though newer methods are gaining ground. In linguistics, the relationship between theory and application is no longer one way (from theory to application) but interest is growing in the feedback from application to theory–formation.

Some historical and geographical factors which need to be considered are discussed, particularly the period from the 'twenties to the present day. It is felt that the large average size of English classes in Japan

mitigates against the newer learner-centred approaches. Listening comprehension presents special difficulties to Japanese learners; translation is very popular in schools.

Research on language acquisition in Japan is either traditional (long-term case studies of young children learning Japanese) or psycholinguistic in approach (Japanese children learning their native language in Japan or learning English in Japan and in the USA). Research on second-language acquisition is also becoming more popular, particularly concerning universal features, and Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis. Contrastive linguistics (English/Japanese), sociolinguistics and bilingual studies, computational linguistics, neurolinguistics and linguistic pathology, are all popular fields of study.

88-336 Murphey, Tim (U. of Neuchâtel, Switzerland). English through music: a sheltered subject matter language course. *Bulletin CILA* (Neuchâtel), **46** (1987), 95–100.

An experimental course which aimed to improve students' English through discussion and examination of pop, rock, folk and classical music. Little direct language instruction was given. Many different teaching techniques concerning music were adopted and the students were asked to comment on their usefulness. The students enjoyed the course, and were able to forget their difficulties with language and grammar in concentrating on the subject (music). The ability levels of the students

were very different but because the focus was on their opinions this did not matter. Because the teacher was interested in their ideas and not setting up as an authority on the subject, an equal encounter situation was created (as in normal adult communication).

The conclusion is that teaching English for Special Purposes is the best way to simulate normal communicative activity.

88-337 Reschen, Sieglinde. Stiefkind Aussprache: zur Aussprache- und Intonationsschulung im Fachbereich Anglistik. [Cinderella subjects: the teaching of pronunciation and intonation in university-level English.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), **86**, 6 (1987), 499–507.

The current situation with regard to the practical aspects of teaching phonetics and phonology in university English departments is less than satisfactory. On the one hand, new students often exhibit quite basic deficiencies in pronunciation and are scarcely capable of achieving any marked improvement, even by the time they leave university. On the other hand, consistent, systematic training of pronunciation is provided only in the rarest of cases. Based on many years of university

teaching, the author's observations point to a number of factors which could help to improve this situation: making students more aware of the importance of proper pronunciation and intonation; a more conscientious attitude on the part of teachers with regard to correcting, advising and monitoring student's work; and integrating pronunciation and intonation exercises into all classes which involve active use of the language.

88-338 Swales, John (U. of Michigan). Utilising the literatures in teaching the research paper. *TESOL Quarterly*, (Washington, DC), **21**, 1 (1987), 41-68.

Teaching research English, particularly the writing of papers, to non-native speakers (NNS) has not been given the attention it needs. Available evidence points both to the overwhelming role of English as a medium of communication in the international research literature and to the low level of NNS contributions to that literature. This article outlines and illustrates an approach to the teaching of research English (on a group rather than an individual basis) which derives from four bodies of literature: (a) the sociology of science, (b) citation analysis, (c) technical writing, and (d) English for

academic purposes. It is argued that this approach gives the ESL instructor insight into research writing processes and products, increases instructor confidence, provides accessible content, and produces texts from the literatures that can be used directly in class. The discussion reviews present knowledge of the research paper; considers the issues of genre, schema, and rhetorical structure; and relates the orientation taken in this article to the current debate about 'process' and 'product' approaches to ESL writing.

88-339 Ulijn, Jan M. (Eindhoven U. of Tech., The Netherlands), and **Strother, Judith B.** (Florida Inst. of Tech.). Interlanguage and EST writing: some syntactic evidence. *English for Specific Purposes* (New York), **6**, 2 (1987), 99-112.

Writers must choose specific syntactic structures when writing text. Will someone who writes about scientific or technical (ST) subjects choose the syntactic structures which characterise scientific text? Do second-language students prefer the supposedly less difficult common language syntax? Is scientific background a significant factor in making syntactic choices? Four groups of students were tested: 48 American (L1) and 48 Dutch (L2) –

half of whom had computer science backgrounds and half of whom did not. According to this experiment, neither ST knowledge nor language knowledge appeared to affect the choice of ST structures. Even without knowledge of the ST text's content matter, both L1 and L2 technical writers – experts significantly more than novices – tend to write in the ST register.

French

88-340 Herman, Gerald (U. of California). Teaching the skills of French business correspondence to American undergraduates: problems and techniques. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **61**, 1 (1987), 12-20.

Language graduates are not necessarily equipped to write business letters in French. Grammatical competence and familiarity with American commercial correspondence are not enough. The problem lies in the cultural differences between French and American English. The opening and concluding of letters is a particular area of difficulty. Students

must learn to think in French and not attempt to translate literally. In order to motivate students, a course in French commercial correspondence must be based on real-life situations. [Appendices include a syllabus, selected sample vocabulary and model letters.]

88-341 Lavault, Elisabeth (ESIT, Paris). Traduction pédagogique ou pédagogie de la traduction? [Translation as a teaching aid or teaching translation?] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number 8/9 (1987), 119-27.

Translation in the school situation is far removed from real-life translation as a craft practised by professional translators. Although, with the disappearance of the translation-based approach to language teaching, the old-style *thème* and *version* are fortunately no longer to be found, there is still a

limited place for translation within the new communicative approach. Teachers in the *lycée* can learn from the practice of schools of translation: both from the interpretative translation approach (translating not the words of the text but the meaning these convey to the person addressed) and also from



the ways in which translation is taught there. Some exercises, based on ESIT experience, are suggested.

Translation also has a role in deepening under-

standing and command of the mother tongue – and even under certain circumstances in its conservation.

88–342 Schuler, Marilyn V. (U. of Louisville). 'La ville et le cours': bringing community resources into the French classroom. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **61**, 1 (1987), 21–32.

Foreign language teachers should become more active in using and creating community resources. This paper shows how such resources have been identified and used in one specific urban setting over a 10-year period. They may be categorised as funds, people, materials, sites, agencies or activities. A typical American urban community like Louisville usually has access to the following in creating a French 'environment': (1) the urban university (intensive summer courses, French art, plays and

music); (2) the municipality as a social, cultural and political entity (library, art gallery, music library, planetarium, work-exchange programme); (3) the city as a linguistic repository (local French native speakers, a volunteer language bank, Alliance Française); (4) the city as history (Louisville was named after Louis XVI); (5) the community as a professional and collegial network (college Scrabble League, talks with business people on careers using languages, workshops for teachers).

Italian

88–343 Danesi, Marcel (U. of Toronto). Practical applications of current brain research to the teaching of Italian. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **64**, 3 (1987), 377–92.

Neurologists have known for two centuries that the two hemispheres of the brain have different specialised functions. Recent research, however, has demonstrated that both are involved in higher cognitive functions. The brain has been shown to work as a unit, reconciling two clearly differentiated modes of perception and information processing, its two hemispheres constituting complementary not antagonistic components of one cerebral system, thus undermining theories based on left-hemisphere dominance.

Both hemispheres work together in verbal

processing, and hence in language learning: the left analyses, the right integrates and moulds into discourse units. By establishing that language learning is bimodal, neurologists have confirmed what good teachers have always intuitively known: that students learn in many ways and that the more ways one can present information the better. A balanced bimodal approach involves: contextualisation, visualisation, diversification and personalisation. The implications for classroom teaching are discussed with particular reference to Italian [examples].

88–344 Di Pietro, Robert J. (U. of Delaware). The scenario principle in the teaching of Italian. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **64**, 3 (1987), 365–76.

The customary view of literature in foreign language courses is that it is content matter; any language difficulties are considered incidental. Consequently literature only finds its place when the higher levels of coursework are reached. The scenario principle (defined as 'a strategic interplay of roles functioning to fulfil personal agendas within a shared context') is designed to reinstate literature into the basic programme by providing learners with a literary experience comparable to that of

native readers. The scenario involves the class in an experience which closely parallels the theme of the literary work to be studied; it differs from the usual language classroom role-play, which focuses on displaying the target language and does not allow for improvisation or experimentation. Once students are able to relate to the text, difficulties of grammar, style or vocabulary can be dealt with in context. [A model lesson comprising a scenario used with first year Italian students is described].