
Teaching particular languages

English

91–65 Adegbija, Efurosibina E. (U. of Ilorin, Nigeria). Teaching English in Nigeria: the importance of the pragmatic and sociolinguistic context. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* (Clevedon, Avon), **2**, 3 (1989), 195–202.

English is still taught in Nigerian universities more or less as it is taught in the English-speaking world. The paper examines features of the pragma-sociolinguistic context of English in Nigeria to suggest alternative models more adapted to the Nigerian context. Four features of the use of English in Nigeria are discussed: (1) the ambivalence in Nigerian attitudes to English, which is seen both as a prestigious international language *and* as a colonial language, (2) the lack of environmental support for English, which results in a long period of ‘inter-language’ before standard Nigerian English is

attained and a tendency towards fossilisation of learner forms, (3) the fact that Nigerian social norms, which can differ strikingly from those of Britain or America, must nonetheless be respected in Nigerian English usage, and (4) the distinctive system of registers in Nigerian English. The paper discusses these and other features of English as a second language in Nigeria and makes recommendations about the way it should be taught. In general, it is argued, there should be more teaching *of* English and less teaching *about* it.

91–66 Akyel, Ayşe and Yalçın, Eileen. Literature in the EFL class: a study of goal-achievement incongruence. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **44**, 3 (1990), 174–80.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the present state of literature teaching in the English departments of five selected private higher schools (Lise) in Istanbul, through an analysis of student and teacher responses to questionnaires. The findings of this paper may yield further insights for implementing literature-teaching strategies in non-English-speaking countries like Turkey, whose educational systems are wavering between modern and traditional practices, but whose syllabuses and exami-

nations often include English literature. The survey conducted has shown that a careful analysis of learner needs is usually neglected; that there is limited use of communicative language teaching methodology which brings to the foreground learner–learner interaction; and that, as in another recent survey, students’ attitudes and goals in terms of linguistic and literary competence are not given due importance in curriculum design.

91–67 Barrow, Robin. Culture, values and the language classroom. *ELT Documents* (London), **132** (1990), 3–10.

It is evident that different languages enshrine different beliefs, values and ways of thinking, leading to different cultural emphases, priorities and capacities. The issue of whether in the light of this we should regard the teaching of English as cultural imperialism, imposing different values and beliefs on speakers of other languages, is examined.

Contrary to claims that English language teaching is a form of indoctrination and that it offends against individual rights, it is argued that such teaching offers students the possibility of thinking and seeing

things in different ways. In principle, at least, some cultures may be said to be superior to others, particularly in respect of specific criteria, such as their scientific understanding or their agricultural efficiency. English, it is suggested, has as its strength a diversity and richness and an ability to make fine distinctions that is necessary for subtle and realistic thinking and understanding. Thus fears of cultural domination are misplaced; the teaching of English as a second language should be considered a service and a potential advantage.

92–68 Erbaugh, Mary S. (U. of California). Taking advantage of China’s literary tradition in teaching Chinese students. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **74**, 1 (1990), 15–27.

Chinese students make up the largest foreign student group in the US, and their teachers need to be aware of how China cherishes its literary tradition. Chinese students come from an ethnically homogeneous,

group-orientated society which stresses personal modesty and discourages expression of divergent opinions, and will not react well to language teaching techniques encouraging individualism and

self-expression. It is a popular misconception that the Chinese are 'poetic' but think less logically than Americans. In fact, Chinese rhetoric is as rigorous as it is ancient, but their tradition favours a discursive background. Preoccupation with self-expression can blind US teachers to the political forces which are fundamental to Chinese writing: the personal is political; the written word carries power; the product outweighs the process. Creation should appear effortless. Learning means copying models and memorising textbooks. In China, impersonal exam content protects both students and teachers politically. Classical poetry remains popular, partly because it retains its close relationship with song. Novels and short stories are viewed ambivalently, as trivial and immoral, yet irresistible. Fiction is justifiable only as a medium for social reform, and biography is acceptable if it provides moral models.

The implications of this tradition for classroom English teaching are many. Chinese students expect teachers to lecture, to provide models which will

help them pass exams. They expect frequent correction and intensive drilling, and see teachers who demand dissent as insensitive and naive. The tradition of group problem-solving can be used to advantage to help students move beyond obsession with a single model to acceptance of a variety of good approaches. Teachers can exploit the close link between Chinese poetry and music, and the novelty for students of acting out dramas, protected by their role. The political hazards of asking students to write fiction can be minimised by assigning a historical setting, a ghost story, or science fiction. In history, students need extensive training in documentation to avoid plagiarism or low marks for a perceived lack of originality. In general, they benefit from learning to summarise, and teachers should emphasise the value of such skills for study and business. Students see letterwriting as vital, and appreciate sample modern letters. Teachers find refreshing Chinese students' conviction that good writing is an important pleasure.

91–69 Fand, Roxanne J. (U. of Hawaii). Detecting bias in newspapers: implications for teaching ESL. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **6**, 1 (1989), 315–22.

To determine whether ESL speakers are able to read an English newspaper text as critically as native speakers (NSs), this study was designed first, in Part 1, to ascertain whether selected linguistic variables distinguish biased texts from unbiased ones, in the judgment of native speakers, and second, in Part 2, whether ESL speakers can discriminate between biased and unbiased texts with sensitivity to the same linguistic variables. A review of the literature suggested several linguistic variables to test with the following hypothesis in Part 1: 'The frequency of each of 9 variables (such as Loaded Noun Phrases and Verb Phrases, Superlative/Comparative Adjectives, and Intensifiers) is significantly higher in biased texts than in unbiased texts.' Fifteen native-speaking graduate students rated 45 newspaper

articles on the 1984 presidential election campaign for bias, rating holistically 10 as biased and 10 as unbiased; they also underlined biased language in all texts. The researcher tested the 9 linguistic variables independently and found significant differences for 6 of them between the two text categories, which also corresponded to the NS raters' underlined language. In Part 2, a group of 16 intermediate ESL students judged three texts from the corpus of 20 in Part 1, holistically, and by underlining biased language. The result was that their holistic judgments of bias matched the NS judgments, and their underlining of biased language also corresponded to the NSs'. This demonstrates that teaching critical reading can be founded on using linguistic as well as holistic awareness in non-native speakers.

91–70 Feary, Pamela and Lalor, Olga. English language and culture in Soviet textbooks. *ELT Documents* (London), **132** (1990), 100–7.

The teaching of English in the Soviet Union is beset by the problem of a political ideology which obscures the real nature of English society and culture. The technical/linguistic aspect of the English language is very well presented, but there are serious deficiencies in the knowledge which exists about the English-speaking world. Soviet ideological aims are clearly stated at all educational levels and educational practices and textbooks conform to these aims.

Only a small amount of time is allocated to the teaching of foreign languages for non-specialists.

For example, 10-year-olds are taught four hours of English each week and 14- to 17-year-olds have one hour each week. Texts often refer to Soviet people, and references to English culture often discuss such issues as May Day, demonstrations and the replacement of capitalism. Generally, the view given is of Russian culture and society and not that of the Republics. An exception can be found in educational texts from the Baltic Republics. Recent Anglo-Soviet cultural exchanges have provided new opportunities and have enabled greater understanding of the problems of Soviet teachers.

The teaching of English literature reflects similar problems. Fundamental aspects of English culture are omitted and Soviet perceptions of life tend to dominate.

91–71 Hellwig, Karlheinz. Anschauen und Sprechen – freie und gelenkte Sprachwirkungen durch künstlerische Bilder bei Lernern des Englischen. [Looking and speaking: the effectiveness of paintings in stimulating free and guided composition by learners of English.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **89**, 4 (1990), 334–61.

This article presents a project based on the hypothesis that pictorial art stimulates creative writing among advanced learners of English. The introduction, which describes new interdisciplinary approaches to pictorial art in foreign language teaching, is followed by a section devoted to a discussion of the background of the project from the standpoint of theories of art and perception, on the one hand, and psycholinguistics and new hermeneutics, on the other. The third section outlines the objectives of the project, describes the selection of learners (133) and paintings (6) as well as the collection of data by means of free or guided composition. The final evaluation consisted of an analysis of the students' papers in terms of qualitative, rather than quantitative linguistic criteria (types of texts, speech functions, subject matter, emotional reactions, varied and creative expression, etc.). The results verify the hypothesis for the most part, supporting the recommendation that pictorial art be used in foreign-language teaching at the advanced level, either as a motivational supplement or as part of thematic projects.

91–72 Hewings, Ann. Aspects of the language of economics textbooks. *ELT Documents* (London), **134** (1990), 29–42.

A study of three standard economics textbooks [examples with discussion] reveals the difficulties that these texts present for learners of English for Academic Purposes. The frequent shifts made between the real world and the idealised abstract world in which economic models are manipulated are not always signalled and are a source of potential confusion. Such writing also has a tendency to overuse hypothetical examples and to assume too much background knowledge on the part of the reader, leading to vagueness. It is thus necessary that students encountering such textbooks must learn an awareness of the role of model-building within the discipline, and learn to locate such models in the use of language. Moreover, the mixture of real and hypothetical examples may require some adjustment in students' expectations of textbooks as books of facts.

Two teaching approaches have proved successful: the first, a variation of team teaching by subject tutor and language tutor encourages group examination and discussion of a passage, concentrating on areas of difficulty. The second emphasises the necessity of looking things up, whereby the students recognise the gap in their own knowledge and actively seek out meanings for themselves by making use of the index and other explanatory sources.

91–73 Isenberg, Nancy. Literary competence: the EFL reader and the role of the teacher. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **44**, 3 (1990), 181–90.

This paper takes as its point of departure the problems which face EFL students of English literature when confronted directly with the reading of a literary text and which stem from a basic 'literary inadequacy'. This, when combined with the difficulties posed by a very partial knowledge of the foreign language (with all its linguistic and cultural implications), can make the problem of 'understanding' a literary text seem an impossible task to the student. Many secondary and university-level EFL teachers feel the need to help students develop study strategies to improve literary competence. Study strategies aimed at developing the reader's awareness of how he or she should approach the reading of a literary text can be seen as a useful integration into the syllabus even by teachers in countries where tradition advocates a historical approach to the study of literature. Increasingly, it is the case that teachers in these countries, whether they be native or 'imported', would like to put more emphasis on the reading of the literary text to help students use more intelligently the historical-critical materials on which they tend to rely too heavily. The question of 'literary competence' is considered here in terms of intellectual performance. Having in mind those EFL teachers who work with young adult students, suggestions are offered for improving EFL literary competence through in-



intervention at the procedural level. The suggestions are based firstly on the idea that the reading of a literary text can be seen as a form of information

processing, and secondly on a consideration of the thought processes involved in the understanding of a literary text.

91–74 Krück, Brigitte and Tietze, Tanja. Führung kooperativer Lerntätigkeit im Englischunterricht. [Handling co-operative learning activities in English classes.] *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin, GDR), **2/3** (1990), 103–11.

Communicative language teaching entails a much more practical and life-like approach to everyday concerns, especially in the area of personal interactions, social relationships and the solving of communicative tasks, the latter being of central importance in ELT methodology. Learners bring different abilities and personal experiences to the classroom and a vital task of the teacher is to exploit these differences and create co-operative learning

situations to develop linguistic as well as more general cognitive skills. Group work is one way to achieve these aims [several examples are given of problem solving by group work and how to handle and control such situations in the classroom]. Advantages and disadvantages of group work are listed, but in general learners are more motivated by group work than not.

91–75 Lennon, Paul (U. of Birmingham). The bases for vocabulary teaching at the advanced level. *ITL* (Louvain, Belgium), **87/8** (1990), 1–22.

It is of prime importance to help the advanced learner to expand his vocabulary and use it appropriately. Traditional word-list vocabulary learning is both inefficient and inaccurate. When the organic complexity of the lexis is perceived, opportunities arise for a more imaginative and ordered presentation of vocabulary. The lexis has been subjected to increasing scrutiny by linguists since the 1960s, but language teaching has been slow to exploit this work, and the interest in 'core' vocabulary has tended to restrict the range of lexis to which the learner is exposed. It is likely that a cyclical approach is appropriate, whereby at first the learner will meet core meanings which will be progressively extended at future stages, increasing the range of use of already encountered words.

Scholars have discerned structure in the lexis, often incomplete and sometimes illogical, but nevertheless providing a basis for the systematisation of vocabulary teaching. Lyons' work on sense relations, e.g. incompatibility (*aunt – son*), converse-ness (*aunt – niece*), antonymy (*faithful – treacherous*), lends itself well to pedagogical exploitation. It is

useful for the advanced learner because 'lexical holes' in the language are exposed in this way. Often a word does not exist where patterning leads one to expect it. Many learner mistakes at the advanced level derive from overextending the processes of word formation. The area of synonymic overlap is also important; partial synonyms may differ along a variety of dimensions (e.g. general – specific; intense – mild; literary – non-literary; childish – adult). Even metaphors are not totally recalcitrant to systematisation.

There is ample psycholinguistic evidence that the structure in the lexis represents, however imperfectly, the neural correlates of lexical storage. Memory is concerned with the categorising of information, and items are best remembered when contextualised and interconnected. The traditional teaching of vocabulary by word-lists, or in terms of single occurrence in a specific context, ignores the structural relations in the lexis, thus making the learner's task more difficult. [A variety of English vocabulary exercises illustrating this approach accompanies the article.]

91–76 Nore, Gordon. Peer tutoring in vocational literacy skills. *TESL Canada Journal* (Montreal), **7**, 2 (1990), 66–74.

This article provides an overview of the first year's operation of the Frontier College/Learning in the Workplace (LWP) project. Operating under a contract with the Innovations Branch of Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC), LWP's mandate is to develop industry-specific training materials and model programmes that can be used to help employees develop the

literacy skills needed to function in the changing workplace. One component of Learning in the Workplace is the use of peer tutors who meet with co-workers who are interested in improving their skills. This paper is concerned with showing that the peer tutoring model is a useful component for identifying and meeting worksite literacy needs of non-native speakers.

91–77 Parkinson, Brian (IALS, U. of Edinburgh). What, if anything, is English for Literary Studies? Native/non-native comparisons in responses to poetic deviance. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* (Edinburgh), **1** (1990), 25–34.

This article considers what needs to be learned by non-native students of English literature, and advocates an approach based on the concepts of deviance, regularity and mimesis, the first of which is explored in detail. Data are considered from a questionnaire asking native and non-native speakers to locate, categorise, ‘translate’ and explain deviance in six extracts from poems. Only in the locating task could a satisfactory native-speaker norm be established for evaluating non-native responses. Preliminary non-native responses show a sharp division between specialists and non-specialists.

91–78 Valdes, Joyce. The inevitability of teaching and learning culture in a foreign language course. *ELT Documents* (London), **132** (1990), 20–30.

There is no way to avoid teaching culture when teaching language, as every language lesson must be about something, and almost invariably that something will be ‘cultural’ in some way. Lado’s (1957) definition of culture as the ‘ways of a people’ is as satisfactory and succinct as any. In today’s communicative language learning, the focus of a lesson may be on syntactic or phonetic features, but the content will be cultural, and this ‘incidental approach’ is likely to be as effective as any, particularly if it prompts students’ questions. A teacher aware of the cultural nature of what is taught can increase the usefulness and appeal of a lesson by introducing interpretation and explanation of underlying values alongside word order, tense, etc. That now frayed sentence, *I went to the library last night*, unintentionally conveys a mass of cultural information about student life on a US campus. Some published language courses deliberately include cultural briefings about the country of the target language.

For students actually living in that country,

culture permeates everything, from eating out and shopping to radio, television and billboards. A class learning English in, say, France will not have the same exposure, but the social distance between the two Western cultures involved is not great, and a feeling of closeness to the speakers of the target language can be very motivating. Even learners more remote from the culture of the target language can, however, find that cultural material makes their learnings tasks more interesting, and therefore more learnable. A cultural component might seem unnecessary in a course in reading technical material in English, but in fact a grasp of English rhetorical forms and styles will be essential if learners from cultures used to more elaborate systems of expression are to retain their respect for English writers. A country’s culture and its literature go hand in hand, and each may be studied for a better understanding of the other. The process of studying foreign literature is a constant oscillation between applying the culture one has previously learned, and finding new cultural information needing further study.

91–79 Werner, Annette. Zur Geschichte der Lyrikbehandlung im Englischunterricht. [The development of the use of the lyric in English teaching.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt-am-Main, FRG), **89**, 2 (1990), 104–25.

This article sketches the didactic discussion about poetry in the German EFL classroom after 1945, as deduced from general publications as well as from articles in didactic journals. The first part deals with definitions of poetry and their impact on educational goals. The second part surveys methodological approaches to presenting poetry in the classroom. A historical perspective on such definitions and methodological approaches should help the reader better to evaluate the way in which poetry is dealt with in the German EFL classroom today.

French

91–80 Bagguley, Philip (U. of Nottingham). From school to university – ‘rites de passage’. *Francophonie* (Rugby), **1** (1990), 4–7.

This is a description of a study to find out what teachers of French in higher education thought of the preparation of their first-year students prior to entry, and what first-year students thought of their preparation at school and the steps taken in higher education to meet their needs in their first year.

Questionnaires were sent to lecturers and students in these two groups, and also to teachers of French to 16–19-year-olds in various institutions. The most significant result was that both higher education staff and first-year students complained that students in schools, sixth-form colleges, etc., are not trained to work independently and are not sufficiently

prepared in language skills. Account of this has to be taken in the preparation of first-year higher education courses. It is concluded that more research is needed, but the findings of this study show that there is a serious need for much closer co-operation between pre-higher education and higher education institutions.

91–81 Esarte-Sarries, Veronica and Byram, Michael (U. of Durham). The perception of French people by English students: findings from the Durham Cultural Studies Project. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* (Clevedon, Avon), **2**, 3 (1989), 153–65.

The paper presents preliminary results of a research project on the effect of language teaching on young people's perceptions of other cultures. Interview data on the alleged appearance of French people are presented and discussed under the headings (1) physical appearance, (2) facial expressions and behaviour, and (3) dress. Some correlates of general attitude are also reported. Girls generally have a more positive attitude towards the French than boys, and the attitudes of younger students tend to be more extreme and stereotyped than the attitudes

of older pupils. School and class variables, including the teacher, appear to be of considerable importance, although achievement in French does not correlate with positive attitude. It is argued that the educational strategy of reaffirming the basic similarity of all peoples, however well-intentioned as a counter to prejudice and stereotypes, is not an effective basis for a programme of Cultural Studies. Differences must be recognised and situated in a coherent description of the foreign people and their culture.

91–82 Franklin, Carole E. M. (U. of Edinburgh). The effect of co-operative teaching on the quantity and quality of teacher foreign language discourse in the French classroom. *Edinburgh Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* (Edinburgh), **1** (1990), 79–90.

The findings of empirical studies into foreign language learning suggest that, to provide sufficient foreign language input in the context of secondary school language classrooms, learners must be taught through the medium of the target language. New data (gathered by means of a postal survey during session 1987–88) show that non-native secondary school teachers of French in the Strathclyde Region of Scotland believe that this is very difficult to achieve. In an attempt to find a solution to the

problem, this paper investigates claims made by practising teachers in Strathclyde that teaching co-operatively with a second fluent target-language speaker helps them maintain the use of French as the medium of instruction. Using survey and observational data the paper concludes that co-operative teaching can both increase the quantity and improve the quality of foreign language input to which learners are exposed.

91–83 Jeon, Kyong-Rool and others. L'utilisation du contexte culturel et l'enseignement du français dans les grands groupes. [The use of cultural context in the teaching of French to large groups.] *Dialogues et Cultures* (Paris), **34** (1990), 27–38.

Korean language and society provide for minute distinctions according to social status, which calls in question the suitability of the large group as a milieu in which to learn foreign languages. French is one of a choice of second foreign languages open to Korean students in secondary schools and tends to occupy third place, after optional German and compulsory English. Nevertheless, the numbers studying French in school has doubled since 1980 to 345,000 pupils in 1030 schools occupying 545 teachers of French. To these should be added over

14,000 tertiary students plus thousands more in voluntary part-time study. Yet French is seen as a difficult language, elitist and less necessary than Japanese, German or English.

Textbooks are renewed every year on the advice of a ministerial committee and five are chosen. They tend to stress grammar and the written language along traditional lines and have been slow to incorporate communicative teaching, which in its turn has affected the training of French teachers. Quite apart from their subject knowledge, Korean

teachers are expected to be exemplary citizens, passing on the best civic virtues to their students. There is therefore little pressure towards communicative competence either in the classroom or in teacher training, and modern methodology seems alien. Large group teaching is counterproductive as the traditional social ethos of Korea discourages students from speaking individually, talking to each

other, taking personal initiatives and standing out from the crowd. Nevertheless, discipline is no problem, learning and the teacher are revered, and students expect to be passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge. They do not look for fun or interesting departures from the textbook. These factors should be taken into account and exploited in the teaching of French.

91–84 Léon, Pierre and Tennant, Jeff (U. of Toronto). Bad French and nice guys: a morphophonetic study. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **63**, 5 (1990), 763–78.

Samples of speech were taken from 34 speakers of standard, i.e. non-dialectal, French who were participating as guests in an up-market literary TV chat show. All the speakers were outstanding in the world of literature and/or the arts (some were members of the French Academy). The samples were transcribed and analysed by a computer, together with samples of the presenter's speech, in order to discover how often linguistic variables (morphological and phonetic variables, phonetic

latencies and optional liaisons) usually considered typical of 'familiar' or 'popular' speech, occurred.

Significantly all these forms were found to occur in an unstressed position, and their relatively high frequency suggests that they should not be regarded as markers of education or social class but rather as being characteristic of rapid spontaneous spoken French. Students need to be made aware of these features.

91–85 Neville, Grace (University Coll., Cork). Teaching civilisation through cartoons. *Teanga* (Dublin, Eire), **10** (1990), 25–38.

Irish secondary-school students of French do not study literature. They feel cheated when expected to study literature at university, but by calling literature courses '*cours de civilisation*', one can furnish academic skills which provide a stimulating background to literary studies. Claire Bretécher's cartoons about the Parisian intelligentsia are useful. This article is based on *Les Frustrés* and *Les Mères*.

A useful introduction to studying this society is to analyse its vocabulary systematically. Six main areas are identified: political analysis, feminism, psychoanalysis, medicine, literary analysis, and linguistics. Marx and Mao figure prominently in the first, and the vocabulary of all is generally one of discussion rather than action. The language of

psychoanalysis is no longer esoteric and is filtering into everyday conversation. The obsession of the intelligentsia with the medical world, like psychoanalysis, reflects their narcissism. Literature, theatre and cinema must be steeped in '*distanciation*' and '*brechtisme*'. Art must be '*la contre-peinture*'. Linguistics is a constant target for Bretécher. The *Frustrés* speak as they do not so much in order to communicate as for socio-cultural reasons. What matters is not what they say, but the way in which they say it. The targets of this satire are, paradoxically, the people who tend to buy the books. Apart from being useful in the study of a particular section of French society, these cartoons bring the reader pleasure and amusement.

91–86 Rattunde, Eckhard. Kreativer Umgang mit poetischen Texten in der Sekundarstufe I (Beispiel: Französisch). [The use of creative methods with poetic texts at secondary level, taking the example of French.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, FRG), **89**, 2 (1990), 179–95.

Although publications on the treatment of poetry as well as poetry collections for pupils reflect an awareness of the fact that poetic texts have a different function in foreign language teaching, interpretations of poems and creative exercises are discussed for the most part with learners at the advanced level in mind. The article is aimed, on the one hand, at introducing a *réécriture poétique* as

a creative language game which should already be employed as a special, independent phase of application when language-learning begins in the lower grades of secondary school. Suggestions for the use of *réécriture*, especially in connection with the first lessons of a textbook, offer specific ideas which can serve as a basis for designing such creative learning phases.

91–87 Vigner, Gérard. *Activité d'exercice et acquisitions langagières.* [Classroom exercises and language acquisition.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number Feb/Mar (1990), 134–46.

The author sees a place for exercises within his own (1989) model of communication, which has six different levels from planning of message to putting into words. Facility at the lower levels is necessary for smooth communication, and exercises may help with this. But the same exercise may demand, and also develop, different cognitive abilities for learners with different first language and cultural backgrounds: what for a British learner is a simple

replacement of English by French forms may for a North African pose high-level problems due to the greater difference between languages and the unfamiliarity of the text type used in the examples. An exercise should enable learners to discover, by manipulation of language, regularities not only in the language system but also in the conditions of its use.

German

91–88 Lalande, John F. II (U. of Illinois). Inquiries into the teaching of German grammar. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* (Dortmund, FRG), **1** (1990), 30–41.

This paper summarises data collected, primarily by questionnaire, from 11 teachers and 219 learners of German at seven high schools in Illinois. Responses seem to disprove Terrell's assertion that methods have changed drastically from grammar-translation to communicative approaches: teachers wanted to change, but had not done so, and felt that they were constrained by textbooks and syllabi and taught grammar more than they should. Comprehension-based and 'natural' approaches were not used. Students, however, overwhelmingly approved of

the teaching of grammar, and wanted even more, including grammar explanations in German. Lack of adequate teacher training was suggested by the rarity of form-to-function explanations, and of use of computers and audio-visual equipment.

The questionnaires were supplemented by informal interviews and videotaping of lessons at six schools, which revealed differences of interpretation: one teacher appeared to have taught grammar for a whole lesson, but claimed to have also been teaching spoken communicative competence.

91–89 Singleton, David (Trinity Coll., Dublin). Support for the self-instructional language learner: the case of the TCD engineers. *Teanga* (Dublin), **10** (1990), 39–52.

Providing support for the L2 learner which goes beyond activities focused on the object of learning (the target language) and concentrates on aspects of the learning process as well, is referred to as 'counselling', 'guidance', 'advice' or 'help'. The classic model for such counselling is supplied by CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues) at the University of Nancy II, where *autonomes*, or self-instructional learners, have been greatly assisted by a helper whom they see on a one-to-one basis and who advises them about materials, and organisational and learning strategies, and who will discuss their difficulties and successes with them.

The paper describes an alternative scheme of group counselling which proved successful in a situation where provision could not be made for a

full-time counsellor. Students of Engineering Science were taking a course in German based on a self-instructional package. Regular group meetings were arranged throughout the course, ostensibly for extra practice and to monitor progress; it was found time was regularly devoted to (a) contextualising arrangements and procedures with reference to learners' backgrounds and progress, (b) exchanging information and comment about the course, and (c) discussing particular learning problems and strategies. Group practice sessions can therefore be seen to resemble in important respects the individual counselling sessions described in the literature, and offer an alternative worthy of consideration, especially where one-to-one counselling is logistically impossible.

Italian

91–90 Stoltenberg, Theo and Kayser-Hölscher, Christa. Lyrik im Italienischunterricht. [The lyric in Italian language teaching.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), **89**, 2 (1990), 125–49.

Lyrical texts in the form of poems and *canzoni* are an established part of Italian language teaching, both in the textbook phase, where they primarily serve a pedagogic function and enhance motivation, and in the intermediate phase, in which they are a component of a mixed curriculum (i.e. culture studies). Moreover, because Italian ranks as a third language which is allocated a relatively small number of course hours, there are as yet very few textbook series devoted to imparting a knowledge of poetry

in terms of specific genres and/or literature as a discipline. General remarks on working with lyrical texts in Italian language teaching are followed by an example taken from classroom practice which gives an insight into a series of teaching texts on Venice. The two poems *Settembre a Venezia* by Vincenzo Cardarelli and *Riva di pena, canale d'oblio* by Diego Valeri form part of a course curriculum geared to culture studies.

Russian

91–91 Malcheyevska, V. Развитие навыков и умений аудирования (о структуре урока русского языка как второго иностранного). [The development of practices and skills for listening purposes (concerning the structure of a lesson for Russian as a second foreign language).] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **3** (1990), 47–50.

The ability to understand spoken Russian correctly is not automatically developed by a student – it needs to be systematically taught. Students rarely hear Russian spoken in its natural setting and therefore tapes and recordings are an invaluable aid, although problems can occur, such as not being able to make a recording slow down or speak more clearly. Subject texts for listening purposes should not be the same as those for reading. Various practices and skills essential for understanding the

spoken language are summarised: the distinguishing of separate sounds and sound combinations, and basic types of intonation; recognising the main ideas; understanding the content. Short texts for listening to are recommended, and three stages of instruction envisaged: (1) the main idea is recognised; (2) there is a series of exercises to train different practices and skills; and (3) the understanding of the whole text. [A story text is presented and 12 exercises suggested.]

91–92 Vlasenko, N. M. Изучение предложения со значением опасения на начальном этапе. [The study of sentences with the meaning of ‘apprehension’ at an elementary stage of teaching.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **1** (1990), 28–31.

The nature of expressions with a meaning of ‘apprehension’ and the way this concept can be mastered by foreign students at an elementary stage of learning the Russian language is discussed. The expression of ‘apprehension’ in a sentence supposes the possibility of an undesirable event, action, state or indication. Various features of such sentences are described – the use of intonation, the syntax and the vocabulary, whereby verbs such as ‘to be afraid’, nouns and phrases, can suggest ‘apprehension’.

There are many different ways in which a meaning of ‘apprehension’ can be suggested. These sentences are generally found in speech, although they can also be seen in literature. Educational textbooks introduce such expressions at elementary levels. Difficulties can arise on hearing such expressions; to resolve them it can be useful to substitute synonyms or consider the context. Exercises are given to help the student understand the nature of such expressions.

Spanish

91–93 Chastain, Kenneth (U. of Virginia). Characteristics of graded and ungraded compositions. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis). **74**, 1 (1990), 10–14.

Expecting students to submit grammatically perfect papers results in frustrated teachers and alienated students. The focus should be on the process rather than the product, though students agree on the importance of error correction.

The author tested whether the anticipation of a grade causes students to produce papers with different characteristics. A study was done with 14 students in Spanish Composition. Three papers

were written, only the third being graded. When expecting a grade, students wrote longer essays, with longer and less simple sentences. The trends were not discernible or consistent in the ratio of errors to total words, the ratio of vocabulary errors to total errors, and the ratio of morphological errors to total errors. There were few syntactical errors. Results tended to support not grading all written work, thus benefiting both teacher and student.

91–94 Ramirez, Arnulfo G. (Louisiana State U.) and **Hall, Joan Kelly** (State U. of New York, Albany). Language and culture in secondary level Spanish textbooks. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis). **74**, 1 (1990), 48–65.

Continuing investigations previously undertaken, the content of five Spanish textbooks used in New York State secondary schools is analysed with respect to sociocultural and sociolinguistic factors and those involved in curriculum design. Only the first level textbooks of the five series were examined, and of those studied only 60% of the total number of chapters were studied. Results showed that socioculturally the background was most frequently that of middle-class Mexico and Spain, and sensitive subject areas like politics and government were omitted. On the sociolinguistic side, the topics treated were patchy and a large number highly relevant to the students' everyday background were

omitted. Greater emphasis was given to the socialising and informative uses of language than to the expressive and directive (suasive) functions. The curriculum development implication of each textbook is different from the others, as are their sociocultural and sociolinguistic emphases, but all try to combine dialogue and cultural background with explicit or implicit teaching of grammar and other linguistic features, followed by practice exercises and role plays.

Tables of the results are presented and the conclusion drawn that the books present a picture of Hispanic culture outside the USA sanitised for the needs of middle-class anglophone adolescents.