

Teaching particular languages

ENGLISH

86–217 Auerbach, Elsa Roberts (U. of Massachusetts, Boston) and **Burgess Denise** (Pajaro Valley Unified School District). The hidden curriculum of survival ESL. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **19**, 3 (1985), 475–95.

This article discusses a new genre in ESL materials – the increasingly popular survival texts designed for newly arrived adults. A wide range of selections from these texts is examined in the light of the stated goals of curriculum writers, as well as the less obvious social implications of these materials. In view of the explicit concern with realistic context, texts are evaluated in terms of both how accurately they reflect the immigrants' reality and the extent to which they may shape that reality. Examination of excerpts reveals that frequently neither the situational content nor the communicative structure of materials reflects authentic interaction. Furthermore, the texts often prepare students for subservient social roles and reinforce hierarchical relations within the classroom by precluding the creation of meaning and the development of critical thinking skills. Finally, Freire's (1981) distinction between problem-solving and problem-posing pedagogies is suggested as a framework for interpreting the shortcomings of the survival genre and for moving toward a more empowering mode of curriculum.

86–218 Baddock, Barry J. The questionnaire interview: an authentic language exercise. *Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund, FRG), **3** (1985), 227–30.

For foreign-language students, opinion surveys based on questionnaire interviews are an authentic means of training important abilities, such as information-getting, summarising, report-writing and discussion. For lower-ability students, multiple-choice questions are least demanding; more advanced students can construct genuine opinion surveys, using open-ended questions, which entails interpreting and summarising responses. The main difficulty in making interviews authentic is the scarcity of native-speaker interviewees. School might approach cultural institutions, English-speaking embassies, or British or American military bases or corporations, which might suggest individuals willing to take part in a questionnaire project. Other sources are native-speaking trainee teachers or assistants, native-speaking *Lektoren*, English-speaking visitors, or even bilingual colleagues teaching in the students' own school.

The questions themselves should relate to a theme which will reveal something of the values or mentality of the target culture, and be of interest to the students. The questionnaire should be constructed by teacher and class working together. The interviews are done by the students on their own or in pairs. The teacher should provide them with the expressions needed for the task, many of which will be colloquial phrases. The teacher's help will be needed for collating the results, discussing them and writing reports or summaries.

86–219 Bublitz, Wolfram. Höflichkeit im Englischen. [Politeness in English.] *Linguistik und Didaktik* (Munich, FRG), **41** (1980) [publ. 1985], 56–70.

The form of utterances is said to be influenced by the use of downtoning expressions which vary according to the attitude of the speaker or the conversational situation in which they occur. Polite formulae or downtoners play an important role in the linguistic literature, e.g. in the analysis of indirect speech acts, tag questions, modal particles (in German), quantifiers and intonation. The author considers the implications of polite expressions for foreign-language teaching seen from the vantage point of functional rather than grammatical categories. He then turns to the function of politeness within the socio-cultural framework of a language community. A list is given of the linguistic means for expressing politeness in English by which both orders and other speech acts (such as statements, questions, requests, etc.) are downtoned. The following features are dealt with: vocatives, particles, epistemic qualifiers, certain kinds of orders, tag questions, indirect speech acts, prosody, etc. In the final sections the author first reviews linguistic and ethnolinguistic research on politeness in communication and social interaction and, secondly, makes a few suggestions as to how to treat the phenomenon of downtoning in foreign-language teaching.

86–220 Cazade, Alain. Lycée-Coll. de Noisy-le-Sec). Travail de groupe et niveaux hétérogènes. [Group work and mixed levels.] *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **78**, 5 (1984), 417–24.

The use of mixed-level groups in teaching English in a school in a disadvantaged area of Paris is described. Group work is introduced after two months of the session, when the teacher has got to know the pupils and the pupils know each other. The reasons for working in this way are explained to the pupils and the teacher makes sure they understand the 'ground rules', e.g. no noise, group discussion conducted in whispers.

As far as possible the groups of three are based on the pupils' friendships. They stay together for the rest of the term and ideally comprise one strong, one weak and one average student. All benefit from working in this way, whereas withdrawing slow learners for special help only reinforces their inferior status.

Pupils work together to revise exercises already worked over in class or they continue with exercises which the class has begun; in the higher classes they may be asked to invent their own exercises. The teacher helps when requested, his role being closer to that of an *animateur*.

86–221 Crow, John T. and Quigley, June R. (North Texas State U.). A semantic field approach to passive vocabulary acquisition for reading comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **19**, 3 (1985), 497–513.

Traditionally, vocabulary study has been based on a word-by-word approach and, as such, has often been criticised as a component in ESL curricula. This study compares a traditional approach to vocabulary instruction with an approach based on the semantic fields of words that appeared in college-level reading texts. Half of the words presented to experimental groups (semantic field approach) were randomly selected and presented to control groups (traditional approach), according to the format used

in current vocabulary texts. The semantic field approach was based on the association between five related words and a keyword that could be mentally substituted in context. Testing revealed some short-term advantage for the control groups, but no significant difference was revealed on long-term testing. Since experimental groups were exposed to twice as many words in the same amount of time, the findings lend support to the use of the semantic field approach. In addition, long-term testing revealed, for the words in this study, a highly significant difference favouring vocabulary taught experimentally over incidental learning that may occur during exposure to academic English.

86-222 Edelhoff, Christoph and Thiel, Wolfgang. Schulfernsehen Englisch im Medienverbund der Nordkette (Norddeutscher Rundfunk, Radio Bremen). [English on schools television – the multi-media package of NDR/Radio Bremen.] *Der Fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, FRG), **73**, 2 (1985), 127–38.

In the last 15 years, English programmes on German schools television have progressed from a structural-audiovisual approach, with artificial dialogues rehearsing specific language points, to a pragmalinguistically based approach, in which the programmes form only one part of a multi-media package, doing that and only that which television does best. They provide authentic and culturally informative material, visual and oral, and are designed to motivate and to develop integrated skills. Learner activities to precede, accompany and follow viewing of each programme, with the aim of fostering productive as well as receptive competence, are suggested in the written parts of the package. [Examples.]

86-223 Hiller, Ulrich. Contracted forms im Englischen. [Contracted forms in English.] *Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund, FRG), **3** (1985), 239–44.

The percentage use of the full and contracted variants of English sequences such as *I am, it is*, etc., was tabulated for five different corpora: informal, intermediate and formal spoken (native-speaker) English, the dialogue of some Osborne plays, and the spontaneous spoken English of German learners in the upper classes of secondary school. For *are, had* and *would*, the use of contracted forms by the German group was far lower than for any native group; for most other verbs, it fell within the range covered by the native groups, but varied erratically between them. More guidance on this subject is needed from pedagogical grammars, which often give incomplete or false information.

86-224 Mohan, Bernard A. (U. of British Columbia) and **Au-Yeung Lo, Winnie** (Vancouver Community Coll. and Kwantlen Coll.). Academic writing and Chinese students: transfer and developmental factors. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **19**, 3 (1985), 515–34.

Organisational problems in academic writing by second language learners are often attributed to interference, or negative transfer, from the first language, but recent

research suggests that developmental factors may be relevant. In the case of Chinese, an examination of classical texts and modern works on Chinese composition found no support for claims that the organisational pattern of Chinese writing differs markedly from that of English. Hence, language transfer seems more likely to help than to interfere. With regard to developmental factors, research in first-language composition indicates that organisation develops late and can be influenced by appropriate composition practices. For the group of Chinese students studied, a comparison of composition practices in Hong Kong and British Columbia indicated that their school experience with English composition was oriented more towards accuracy at the sentence level than towards the development of appropriate discourse organisation. A survey of these students also suggested that they saw their current writing problems as sentence-level problems. These findings point to a need for greater awareness of students' native literacy and educational experience as factors influencing the development of academic writing in a second language.

86-225 Philson, Richard Michael (Chiang-Mai U., Thailand). Distance education and English teaching in China. *Language Learning and Communication* (New York), 3, 2 (1984), 175-85.

China is placing increasing emphasis on learning English. The number of teachers available falls far short of meeting the demand (the number of students is estimated to be approaching 150 million). One answer to the problem is distance education, either formal (provided by the Chinese Television University) or non-formal (available from regular television programmes and from the radio broadcasting services of China, the United States and Britain).

Radio broadcasting is made more extensive by the use of loud-speakers in public places. The Chinese produce 'English by Radio', an elementary programme relying heavily on translation (following the approach used in schools). The BBC's broadcasts are generally considered the most modern and colourful. They include more variety and are mainly directed at higher academic levels. Voice of America broadcasts are aimed at the lower levels of Chinese learners.

Access to television in China has increased dramatically in recent years. [Details of locally produced English programmes.] The BBC's *Follow Me* series has proved very popular, with an estimated audience of up to 100 million viewers. It is not associated with any formal education system. The Chinese Television University (CTU), on the other hand, plays a significant role in the Chinese education system. It creates courses, designs syllabuses, sets examinations, produces television and radio programmes, and designs support materials. The students themselves are controlled by local Broadcasting and Television Universities, which organise classes in workplaces and employ teachers. Some 30 per cent of the country's college graduates are taught in this way. English is only one of 17 subjects offered, but it is probably taken by all students. The English course offered by the CTU presents a structurally oriented view of language learning, resembling the traditional approach. Programmes tend to consist of a lecture by the presenter, with only a blackboard for a visual aid. The programme is extremely popular, none the less.

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Distance education is the only choice in China for teaching so many learners with so few teachers. Television is likely to take over from radio as the primary source of language instruction in China. The incorporation of tutors as a major component of the system helps to introduce two-way communication into what is largely a one-way medium.

86–226 Raimes, Ann (City U. of New York). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: a classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 19, 2 (1985), 229–58.

The article surveys the processes skilled L1/L2 writers use, as revealed by previous research, and maintains that insufficient consideration has been given to discovering how unskilled L2 writers compose. The very problem of defining ‘unskilled’ is highlighted. By means of a case study involving a narrative writing task performed by eight college-level ESL students, the author explores classroom composing behaviours, the influence of audience/purpose specification, as well as the effectiveness of ‘think-aloud protocol analysis’ (i.e. examining tapes of writers as they verbalise their compositional processes) as a valid research tool. Reference is made throughout to Perl’s coding scheme.

The procedures, subjects, measures, coding and findings are described in detail [tabular data], though it is admitted that no clear unskilled L2 profile actually emerged from the study. Audience/purpose specification seemed to exert little influence, protocol analysis was useful, there were few instances of articulated planning, much overt rehearsing of possible content ideas, and little student concern for error correction or editing. It is concluded that acquisition of adequate vocabulary need not precede meaningful writing practice. Moreover, writing on demand can be a worthwhile linguistic activity only if sufficient time is allowed for task completion.

86–227 Speight, Stephen. Aspects of conversation. *Praxis des Neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Dortmund, FRG), 3 (1985), 273–81.

German learners of English are taught ‘spoken prose’ rather than conversational English, despite the fact that the ability to ‘get by’ in conversation is fundamental, and hard to pick up without teaching. The author has developed a didactic corpus of spoken English for language learners, written in ‘acceptable English’, i.e. English which native speakers would not object to (as opposed to fully authentic English, which might not be the most suitable language for learners).

Words actually used in conversation will need to be taught, including ‘fillers’ (*well, uh, I see*), collocations (*you know how it is, I’d like you to meet*), and some elements of grammar which are neglected or taught too late (noun clauses, imperatives, use of *one, so, anything/something, could* and *would*). Some rules of language use (given in German if necessary) may be helpful also; discourse analysis has made some useful information available concerning structure, topics and principles. Some guidelines are: agree if possible, be indirect, use ‘gush’, show interest and sympathy, leave options open if possible. The quantity of material to be learnt would be comparable to what is learnt at present, and much more relevant for use outside school.

86–228 Swales, John (U. of Michigan). English as the international language of research. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **16**, 1 (1985), 1–7.

The annual world output of research papers and scholarly articles is large and increasing, and there is little doubt that English is the medium of publication for the majority of such papers. However, closer analyses of the available data reveal rather few papers from non-native speakers, especially from the Third World. This imbalance suggests that English is only the international language of research in a receptive sense. It needs to become so in a productive sense as well if Third World investment in doctoral scholarship, etc. is to remain justified. Unfortunately, the ESP profession has concentrated on undergraduate teaching programmes and rather neglected the teaching of research English. However, there are now welcome signs of change, which may therefore aid a process of making English a truly international language rather than one over-restricted in terms of publication sources to the Northern Hemisphere.

FRENCH

86–229 Cabut, Hélène and others. Discours didactique scientifique et compétence de communication. [The discourse of science teaching and communicative competence.] *Mélanges Pédagogiques* (Nancy, France), 1981 [publ. 1985], 33–48.

Arriving in Paris in July without a word of French, students want to follow courses in a French engineering college (statistics, computer sciences, mathematics, mining techniques) three months later. What to do during these three months is the question both learners and teachers try to answer. A group of CRAPEL teachers devised exercises based on discursive (linking words, modalisation) analyses of video-recorded lectures. The exercises given to prospective student engineers are designed to help learners determine the problems of didactic discourse and find solutions to them. Learners' objectives include not only understanding lectures and reading handouts but also taking notes, asking questions during classes and writing reports. In addition to specific training in the four language skills, simulations have been organised reproducing situations the students will have to face: note down an exercise, take a text written on the blackboard, reproduce a plan from a slide and annotate it from the lecturer's commentary, write down definitions and sum up reasoning processes, especially their logical sequences and structures.

86–230 Hausmann, Franz Josef (U. of Erlangen). Wortschatzlernen ist Kollokationslernen. Zum Lehren und Lernen französischer Wortverbindungen. [Vocabulary learning is the learning of collocations: on the teaching and learning of French word combinations.] *Praxis des neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Berlin, FRG), **31**, 4 (1984), 395–406.

The difficulties involved in learning collocations in a foreign language (in this case French for German speakers) are illustrated by considering a bad translation from

French to German. The discussion of adjective + noun combinations (e.g. *manières péremptoires*) and verb + noun combinations (e.g. *rentrer sa colère*) provides the basis for a typology of word combinations. Fixed word combinations (idioms) are distinguished from unfixed ones; the latter may be either 'free' combinations ('co-creations'), 'collocations' or 'counter-creations' (unusual or literary). The second section relates this analysis to language learning: beyond the beginner level it is collocations which can cause errors in production. It is helpful to point to the different status of the base word and its collocates in a collocation. Little help is forthcoming for production from dictionaries of French in this area. A final section considers methodology for systematically teaching collocations: one may either begin from collocates (i.e. what words is *bouffée* a collocate of?) or from base words (i.e. what collocates with *tête*?). The bilingual treatment of collocations is advocated. The syntagmatic axis should be primary in vocabulary learning.

86–231 Lübke, Diethard. Der potentielle Wortschatz im Französischen. [The potential vocabulary in French.] *Praxis des neusprachlichen Unterrichts* (Berlin, FRG), 31, 4 (1984), 372–9.

The utility of 'potential vocabulary' in French, i.e. words which learners can understand without having to specifically learn them, is illustrated. Learners can derive meanings from other words they already know in French, from words in other foreign languages or from loanwords in German. In order to demonstrate the scope of the potential vocabulary words beginning with 'B' in *Français fondamental* are analysed. Of the 128 words beginning with 'B', 89 belong to the potential vocabulary and a further 19 can be glossed by using mnemonic techniques, claims the author. Hence, only 16 per cent of the words constitute 'learning vocabulary'. The author stresses the snowball effect of vocabulary learning in French. Four conclusions are drawn: the bilingual element should be stressed more in language teaching; teachers should avoid explaining words which learners can find out for themselves; potential vocabulary should be taken into account in writing textbooks and readers for beginners; and finally, English and French teaching needs to be coordinated.

86–232 Nott, David (University Coll. of North Wales, Bangor). La presse écrite pas à pas. [A step-by-step approach to the press.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), 194 (1985), 59–66.

French-language newspapers and magazines are readily available and can provide more interesting and more authentic material than the collections of articles found in books, which soon become out of date. Items based on interviews, etc., can be recorded and used for listening comprehension.

The teacher acts as an intermediary. Careful preparation is needed, and possibly help with unfamiliar vocabulary, before the class begin to study the text. The items chosen must be of interest to the students. There must be exercises to exploit the text but not so many that they kill it. Students need to be able to get the gist of an article, identify key words and expressions, follow through an argument, be aware of style, register, etc., imitate and then make use of the language themselves. Exercises, written

and oral, are suggested for class, groups, individuals and pairs, to check comprehension, practise grammar (where the text is suitable), summarise, acquire vocabulary, role-plays and follow-up work.] [Examples of texts and of student work.]

86-233 Orth, Karin. Zur Einführung in die Filmanalyse im Französischunterricht. [On an introduction to film analysis in teaching French]. *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, FRG), **73**, 2 (1985), 37-43.

It is claimed that introducing German students of French to the vocabulary and techniques of film analysis will improve both their knowledge of the language and their reception of a powerful linguistic and cultural aid. The experiment was tried out on the basis of Francois Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*.

The framework of analysis is divided broadly into (a) the composition of the picture, (b) the perspective and camera angles, (c) camera movement, (d) montage and editing. Each phase is analysed further with illustrations and a French/German vocabulary of the necessary analytic terms.

GERMAN

86-234 Hummel, Robert D. (U. of Chicago). Some pedagogical implications of speech act theory: the interpersonal function in the first six weeks of elementary German. *Die Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, PA), **1**, (1985), 4-9.

All current beginners' German textbooks neglect Halliday's interpersonal function, but an 'interpersonal strand' can and should be woven into the syllabus by exploiting elements already present in the textbook and adding others. A specimen six-week syllabus is outlined: the language points emphasised include various types of question, epistemic modals, 'subjective' verbs such as *wissen*, *glauben*, *sagen*, and sentence adverbs such as *bestimmt*, *sicher*, *denn*, *doch*. Students also encounter notions connected with the interpersonal function, including, in the first five to six days of instruction, presupposition, illocutionary force, discourse pragmatics, news value and syntactical stress.

JAPANESE

86-235 Backhouse, A. E. (Monash U.). Informal first? On the sequencing of styles in Japanese language teaching. *Babel* (Victoria, Australia), **20**, 2 (1985), 8-12.

Textbook courses invariably introduce the formal style (*teineitai*, *desu/masu-tai*) before the informal style (*futsuutai*). Though most learners of Japanese will probably need to produce mainly in *teineitai*, the ability to comprehend *futsuutai* is no less necessary, both in personal situations and in everyday life. Although the formal forms are more simple and regular, the complex forms will have to be introduced eventually, usually coinciding with the introduction of complex sentences, which creates confusion

for the student. The best approach would be the following: (1) simple *futsuutai* sentences, (2) complex *futsuutai* sentences, (3) *teineitai* sentences. Beginning with informal (plain) forms might mean slower progress at the beginning but it would make progress easier later on. For the native speaker, *futsuutai* is the basic style, but the foreign learner is likely only to feel secure with the formal style.

86–236 Maynard, Senko K. (State U. of New Jersey). Contrast between Japanese and English participant identification: its implications for language teaching. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, FRG), **23**, 3 (1985), 217–29.

Ten adult native speakers of English and ten of Japanese were each shown a two-minute silent comedy film and then asked to describe it in their own language. The data indicate that in Japanese it is the theme/rheme relation, in English the subject/predicate relation, which has a dominant role in the surface organisation of text. In particular, whereas subjects and objects were often repeated several times in the English descriptions, in Japanese they were often omitted entirely in similar circumstances, as thematisation can persist beyond clause and sentence boundaries. Teachers of Japanese need to be aware of such differences, which can explain English-speaking learners' mistakes in over-use of pronominal expressions.