

studies are contrary to the LD concept. The studies demonstrate the importance of providing verifiable evidence to substantiate claims that a student meets criteria for classification as LD. Implications focus on use of the LD label and IQ-achievement discrepancies for determining which students may have problems with FL learning.

99-612 Wang, Chuming (Guangdong U. of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China) **and Lee, Thomas Hun-tak**. L2 acquisition of conflation classes of prenominal adjectival participles. *Language Learning* (Malden, MA, USA), **49**, 1 (1999), 1-36.

There has been an increasing interest recently in studying interlanguage change from a syntax-semantics interface perspective. In keeping with this trend, the study reported here aims to tackle the acquisition of a linguistic subsystem which has received little attention in the second language acquisition field. The study investigates how Chinese-speaking second language (L2) learners of English develop L2 knowledge of conflation classes of verbs in the formation of prenominal adjectival participles. Four groups of 40 learners and one group of 30 native speakers of English participated in the study. They were asked to judge the acceptability of the prenominal adjectival participles placed in four different linguistic contexts. The results showed that the L2 learners displayed sensitivity to conflation classes governing the behaviour of adjectival participles. Their knowledge developed gradually, in keeping with increasing exposure to English.

99-613 Wu, Benhu (Zhejiang Normal U., China). Towards an understanding of the dynamic process of L2 classroom interaction. *System* (Oxford, UK), **26**, 4 (1998), 525-40.

This paper acknowledges studies carried out on second language (L2) classroom interaction by classroom researchers and L2 acquisition researchers, which have mostly aimed to reveal either the nature of verbal exchanges or the relationship between interaction and acquisition. The present author considers, however, that they have given little account of the learner's internal linguistic processing. He argues that it is crucial to explore how the learner processes L2 information because classroom interaction is a dynamic process characterised by the interplay between external verbal exchanges and internal linguistic processing, and L2 acquisition depends on cumulative effects of linguistic processing. The internal mechanism of this processing is, nonetheless, unobservable, and might be better interpreted on the basis of the observable linguistic transmission. Observation-based interpretation is therefore suggested as an approach to the learner's internal linguistic processing in the context of L2 classroom interaction, and a dynamic process model is proposed as its analytic framework to account for both verbal exchanges and internal linguistic processing.

Reading

99-614 Francomacaro, Maria Rosaria (Piedimonte Matese, Italy). Lettura e leggibilità in lingua straniera. [Reading and readability in a foreign language.] *Tuttitalia* (Rugby, UK), **19** (1999), 6-9.

It is suggested in this paper that reading, formerly understood to be simply a passive activity, has been the 'Cinderella' of the four basic skills; however, there has recently been renewed interest in reading since studies in psycholinguistics and cognitive science have shown it to be an active and very complex activity, requiring both linguistic and extralinguistic skills. What makes a text difficult to read would seem to be: difficult vocabulary, a high proportion of subordinate clauses, unexplained content, complex ideas and different types of argument. The importance of the role of schemata is stressed - difficulty in dealing with cultural references also makes a text unintelligible. As a solution to these problems the simplified text is advocated for extensive reading, whether it is a completely new text or is adapted from an already existing one. Different techniques used in adapting texts are discussed. It is suggested in conclusion that adaptations of works of literature may not only encourage students to read other simplified texts, but may also lead to their reading the originals, and will, in any case, greatly contribute to their all-round linguistic ability.

99-615 Koda, Keiko (Carnegie Mellon U., USA). Development of L2 intraword orthographic sensitivity and decoding skills. *The Modern Language Journal* (Malden, MA, USA), **83**, 1 (1999), 51-64.

This study examines orthographic sensitivity among adult second language (L2) learners with diverse first language (L1) backgrounds. The specific purposes are threefold: (a) to determine whether there are differences among adult learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) with alphabetic and non-alphabetic L1 backgrounds in their intraword structural sensitivity; (b) to explore specific ways in which such sensitivity differs among L1 and L2 readers of English; and (c) to examine the extent to which the sensitivity affects decoding performance among ESL participants. The findings suggest that (a) L1 alphabetic experience promotes L2 intraword structural sensitivity; (b) ESL learners, regardless of their L1 backgrounds, are strongly inclined to use visual familiarity as a primary cue during orthographic processing; (c) the ability to detect orthographic constraint violations separates L2 from L1 readers; and (d) qualitative differences in L1 processing experience are directly associated with procedural variations in L2 decoding, but such variations do not always result in quantitative differences in decoding performance.

99-616 Mecarty, Frances H. (U. of Denver, USA). The effects of proficiency level and passage content on reading skills assessment. *Foreign*

Language Annals (New York, USA), **31**, 4 (1998), 517–34.

This study is designed to investigate the use of reading skills by intermediate and advanced learners of Spanish and to determine whether performance on these skills is uniform across learners and across reading texts, and whether there is a gradation of skills from least to most complex. Participants read two authentic unabridged passages in Spanish and were asked to answer questions based on the skills isolated for the study, i.e., (a) locating details including the subskills recognition and paraphrase; (b) simple inferential skills including understanding words in context and recognising cause and effect; and (c) complex inferential skills including recognising main ideas and drawing conclusions. The results showed a significant three-way interaction of level, passage and skill; a significant interaction both of passage and skill, and of level and skill; and a significant main effect of skill. The findings are seen as lending support to a hierarchy of skills. It is argued, however, that reading comprehension cannot be viewed in terms of a discrete set of skills when the nature of reading is so complex.

99–617 Mori, Yoshiko (Georgetown U., Washington, USA) **and Nagy, William**. Integration of information from context and word elements in interpreting novel kanji compounds. *Reading Research Quarterly* (Newark, DE, USA), **34**, 1 (1999), 80–101.

The study reported here examines the degree to which English-speaking students learning Japanese utilise information from word elements and contextual clues in interpreting novel kanji compounds (i.e., words consisting of two or more Chinese characters). Fifty-nine college students inferred the meanings of novel compounds consisting of familiar characters under three conditions – i.e., words in isolation, contextual clues only, and both. Students were most likely to obtain correct answers when both types of clues were available, demonstrating their ability to combine information from multiple sources to interpret unfamiliar words. Furthermore, use of kanji clues and context use are not correlated, and proficiency correlates with context use, but not with kanji use. Thus, morphological analysis is an independent strategy from guessing word meanings from context.

99–618 Rivas, Rosa María Mera. Reading in recent ELT coursebooks. *ELT Journal* (Oxford, UK), **53**, 1 (1999), 12–21.

This paper presents an analysis of the reading component in a representative sample of ELT coursebooks for intermediate level and above published in the last ten years. It examines the way the coursebooks reflect current theories on foreign language (FL) reading in their treatment of the reading skill. Based on the instructional implications of interactive models of reading, the analysis focuses on the attempts to develop both lower-

level processing skills and higher-level comprehension and reasoning skills in EFL (English FL) learners. It is concluded that, although in general the coursebooks seem to reflect current interactive views on reading, they do differ in the number and type of activities included, and that EFL teachers need to supplement deficient reading activities to help learners become efficient readers.

99–619 Roskams, Tim (City U. of Hong Kong). What's a guess worth? Chinese students' inferencing strategies for unknown words while reading. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* (Hong Kong), **3**, 2 (1998), 65–102.

In academic reading classes for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, inferential strategies for unknown words are often emphasised since the extensive reading required by many courses makes it impractical to use a dictionary to check every unknown word – which, in any case, may bind readers to the sentence level and interfere with global text comprehension. Second language (L2) readers' inferential skills, however, are often poor, especially where context clues are not in the immediate textual environment. Research to date has not included the development of a comprehensive model of L2 inferencing. The purpose of the study reported here was descriptive and exploratory: to examine the use of inferential strategies by L2 readers, rather than examining the links between such strategies and word acquisition/learning. The Hong Kong-based study used a think-aloud protocol to examine the use and seeming effectiveness of 17 first-year Chinese university students' inferential strategies for dealing with unknown words while reading in English. The findings differ in certain respects from previous research and show that advanced L2 readers are moderately efficient at using local and discourse context clues, although wrong assumption of knowledge of a word led to many mistakes. Readers appeared to have a strategic 'style' that was partially based on their previous habits and purposes of reading in L2.

Writing

99–620 Corbeil, Giselle (Acadia U., Canada). L'application d'un modèle mathématique à l'analyse de dissertations en langue seconde: utile ou pas? [Testing the usefulness of applying a mathematical model to the analysis of second language dissertations.] *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes* (Toronto, Ont.), **55**, 2 (1998), 260–82.

Although research has indicated the power of metacognitive processes in many disciplines, little is known about the nature of such processes in writing literary essays, less still in second language (L2) essay-writing. A cognitive-metacognitive framework therefore seemed likely to be useful in identifying these processes. As it