
Teaching particular languages

English

88–190 Blanton, Linda Lonon (U. of New Orleans). Reshaping ESL students' perceptions of writing. *ELT Journal* (London), **41**, 2 (1987), 112–18.

ESL students bring to their courses perceptions about writing that work against their becoming proficient writers. They often respond to each act of writing as if it were a test, thereby denying themselves psychological and intellectual 'space' to work with written language. Students impatiently await the time when they can get it 'right'. One of the jobs of ESL composition teachers is to interact with students in a variety of roles to allow them to perceive the development of their ability to write as the multifaceted, gradual, and organic process that it is. This article outlines a multi-step writing programme in which students participate in the writing process and relate to their fellow writers (both classmates and teacher) in a number of different ways. Each of these ways is described in terms of the activities involved, and the degree to which writing proficiency is increased and students' anxiety about themselves as writers is reduced.

The activities (which are concurrent) are journal

writing, logs and essay writing. The students and the teacher keep individual journals – each class begins with five minutes of writing. The journals are kept private and seem to promote fluency. Making errors with impunity is essential to writing development. Learning logs are written once a week at home and concern the ESL class and writing itself; they are written for the teacher to read, so the main aim is communication, not correctness. The teacher writes a log in response, commenting on the students' own logs and discussing how the class is progressing. The composition is written weekly, and is preceded by reading on that particular subject, class discussion and analysis of how other writers have written on the topic. Drafts are made and a partner listens to each one; after discussion and editing, the original is re-drafted and handed in to the teacher. Only after a further, final draft are grammatical errors pointed out.

88–191 Coleman, Hywel (Lancaster U.). Teaching spectacles and learning festivals. *ELT Journal* (London), **41**, 2 (1987), 97–103.

In Indonesia, the university English lesson, the shadow-puppet performance, and the public address all fall into the category of 'spectacle'. The performer is active, the spectators passive and uninvolved. In contrast, the 'festival' brings together participants normally separated by social rules. It is suggested that the teaching 'spectacle' should be abandoned and the 'learning festival' instituted in its place. This would have the following results: (1) all participants would be equally active for the duration of the event, (2) the activity would necessarily be interactive, and (3) the distinction between teacher and student would be minimised.

An experiment is reported which replaced a conventional English-teaching spectacle with an English-learning festival. It was concentrated on a foundation course for first-year undergraduates and aimed to provide an introduction to basic study skills. The average class size was 55, though classes of up to 100 members were not uncommon.

Background notes for each class were handed out with instructions for each activity given in the national language (description of one series of activities concerning the Western system of personal names – each series required that a problem should be solved, often using information gap procedures).

The students were nervous about using English. Much of the conversation which was generated by their interactions was not in English, but the information which they were manipulating was at least formulated in English, so this boosted the students' confidence. The teacher was always available to help individuals and groups, and drew each session to a close with a brief discussion. Tests showed that students were better at performing specific study skill tasks by the end of the course, and were more confident about their own language abilities. In general they were enthusiastic about the learning festival.

88–192 Davies, Eirlys E. Politeness and the foreign language learner. *Anglo-American Studies* (Spain), **6**, 2 (1986), 117–30.

Some of the problems posed by the phenomenon of politeness for the EFL learner and teacher are considered here. It is sometimes assumed that the

rules of politeness associated with the learner's first language can simply be transferred to the L2, but what is perceived as polite by different cultural

groups may vary considerably. Politeness needs to be taught early on, since errors of politeness can cause as much irritation to an addressee as actual unintelligibility. Failure to adopt an appropriate level of politeness may lead to communicative misunderstandings. Understanding of politeness strategies in another language can improve learners' understanding of another culture. Because the FL students are adults, the teacher must draw the fine line between offering advice and imposing norms which restrict the learner from expressing his personality. The subject should be approached not as a set of rules but as a set of choices. Learners should also have a receptive grasp of the norms of politeness in the foreign language, so that, for example, they recognise when their interlocutor is being conventionally polite, rather than sincere. The effects of particular choices depend on very complex interactions between many factors, in-

cluding the social context. Elaborate rules, however, would be too daunting and would probably lead to inaccuracies anyway. Theoretical approaches have included Lakoff's three general rules (Don't impose; Give options; Make A feel good 'be friendly). Brown and Levinson base a more elaborate set of principles on Goffman's notion of face (positive – desire for approval/negative – desire to be unrestricted and not to impose on the addressee). Leech's Politeness Principle is made up of various Maxims (tact and generosity, approbation and modesty, agreement, and sympathy). All these approaches aim at establishing purportedly universal principles, but from the foreign learner's point of view, contrasts are more important. Learners need to be shown not merely what the differences are between cultures but the reasons for those differences. General discussion of universal principles can therefore be helpful. [Examples.]

88-193 Dickerson, Wayne B. (U. of Illinois, Urbana). Orthography as a pronunciation resource. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **6**, 1, (1987), 11–20.

Of the newest trends in English pronunciation teaching – the emphases on fast-speech phenomena, phrase rhythm, word stress, and the use of orthography as a learning tool – only this last is calculated to produce independent, self-sufficient learners, capable of increasing in oral proficiency outside the classroom, away from textbooks, and beyond the influence of teachers. This article draws together

and illustrates the most compelling reasons for teachers to introduce spelling information into their pronunciation work. Highlighted throughout are two points: (1) the significant benefits to students from a systematic exposure to spelling-based prediction patterns, and (2) the nature of learner-orientated rules of pronunciation, often less familiar to teachers than rules of grammar.

88-194 Goodell, Elizabeth W. (U. of Connecticut). Integrating theory with practice: an alternative approach to reported speech in English. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **21**, 2 (1987), 305–25.

Standard characterisations of reported speech in English grammars and ESL textbooks are incomplete. A more explicit description is proposed emphasising (a) a clear differentiation between direct and indirect speech using prosodic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic criteria; (b) the role of deixis in explaining the internal syntactic adjustments in indirect speech; and (c) the importance of

semantic concerns. A checklist based on this more complete analysis of English reported speech is provided for evaluating the presentation of English reported speech, as well as a short critique of the coverage of English reported speech in six current ESL textbooks. Finally, a more explicit characterisation of English reported speech – intended for the ESL classroom – is presented.

88-195 Hull, Glynda (U. of California, Berkeley). The editing process in writing: a performance study of more skilled and less skilled college writers. *Research in the Teaching of English* (Urbana, Ill), **21**, 1 (1987), 8–29.

Two groups of college writers (more skilled and less skilled editors) corrected and commented upon the sentence-level errors in two tasks (a self-written essay and three essays written by others), under two conditions (no feedback and feedback on location of error). Analyses of students' corrections showed that, while the more skilled writers almost always corrected more errors than the less skilled, the two

groups performed similarly on the self-written essays where neither corrected many errors at all. Both groups performed better on the standard essays and better with feedback. Analyses of students' protocols showed that three strategies which were used for correcting errors (consulting, intuiting, and comprehending) varied with task and condition.

88-196 Liebman-Kleine, Joanne (U. of Arkansas). Teaching and researching invention: using ethnography in ESL writing classes. *ELT Journal* (London), **41**, 2 (1987), 104-11.

A study is described which aims to demonstrate the benefits of the use of ethnographic research methods by ESL teachers of writing. Ethnographic research studies people in their natural environments and is qualitative rather than quantitative. It examines data from a variety of sources to obtain some measure of validity. Such research is suited to process teaching methods, which assume that learners all have different approaches to writing. Teachers should perceive these differences then assess each student's needs. They therefore need to become researchers themselves.

The author carried out a study of the strategies her students preferred when exploring, developing and creating ideas for writing (invention strategies). Conclusions were based on observation of the

students' papers and notebooks, the students' stated preferences, and the results of a psychological personality preference test (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). A variety of invention techniques were tried, including (1) open-ended exploratory writing (brainstorming, rushwriting, looping, listing), (2) systematic heuristics (tagmemics, reporter's questions, classical invention – organised ways to ask questions to generate data for writing), (3) hierarchical treeing – a visual way of organising and generating data, or for brainstorming diagrams. In general, the students were most successful with hierarchical treeing, least successful with systematic heuristics, and moderately successful with open-ended exploratory writing.

88-197 Morrow, Phillip R. The users and uses of English in Japan. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **6**, 1, (1987), 49-62.

This paper describes several aspects of the current use of English by Japanese speakers. First, a brief sketch is presented which outlines the historical circumstances that influenced the current use of English. The following section examines the use of English loanwords in terms of their phonological, orthographic and semantic properties. It also discusses the formation of loanwords, speakers' attitudes toward them, and motivations for using them. The use of loanwords is related to theoretical issues of code-mixing, code-switching and bilingualism, and

these issues are explored in relation to the case of Japanese English. The next section describes the teaching of English in the education system and the extent to which teaching methodologies and materials have been determined by the form of school entrance examinations. Finally, there is a section which discusses the status of English in terms of official support and recognition, and investigates the typological classification of Japanese English as a performance variety.

88-198 Thomières, Daniel. L'art de la colle. [The art of 'la colle'.] *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **81**, 5 (1987), 59-69.

Every fortnight pre-university students are asked to read an article in English, give an oral summary (also in English), and discuss one of the points raised by the article – all in twenty minutes. This is 'la colle'. The strict time limit concentrates the students' minds.

They benefit from learning how to mobilise and use, in a semi-real situation, the language and information absorbed during their secondary years.

The teacher notes the students' errors and discusses them individually, endeavouring to get students to think about their mistakes and to assume responsibility for their own improvement. Analysis of the errors most commonly committed is helpful to the teacher and also throws light on what this kind of student needs to acquire at the *lycée*, i.e. a sound grammar basis.

88-199 Urzua, Carole (U. of the Pacific). 'You stopped too soon': second language children composing and revising. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **21**, 2 (1987), 279-304.

This article reports a 6-month observational study of 4 Southeast Asian children as they wrote and revised various pieces in English, their second

language. Transcripts of peer response sessions, weekly compositions, and twice-weekly dialogue journals show a surprising amount of cognitive,

social, and linguistic skill. Through the process of writing and revising with trusted peers, the children appear to have developed three areas of writing skill: (a) a sense of audience, (b) a sense of voice, and (c) a sense of power in language. The means by

which development in these areas took place appear to be the same ones which native English-speaking children find effective, including regular and frequent writing, expectation of revision, peer response, and confidence in oneself as a writer.

88-200 White, Ronald V. (U. of Reading). Managing innovation. *ELT Journal* (London), **41**, 3 (1987), 211-8.

The author proposes procedures for carrying out innovation based on the Coverdale approach to management. He stresses the need for finding out details of and reasons for present practice; for explicitness about the nature of the intended innovation, the meaning of the terms used, who/

what it is for and whether it is needed; for a plan which is purposeful, task-specific, temporal, integrated, adaptable and cost-effective; and for an 'illuminative' (Parlett and Hamilton) evaluation phase. At all stages communication and a co-operative, supportive approach are essential.

88-201 Wolfram, Walt (Centre for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC). The English of adolescent and young adult Vietnamese refugees in the United States. *World Englishes* (Oxford), **5**, 1 (1986), 47-60.

Since the fall of Saigon in 1975, significant numbers of Vietnamese refugees have been arriving in the United States. The current situation provides a unique laboratory for observing the development of a variety of English, given the social circumstances that led to the abrupt influx of refugees. Based on sociolinguistic interviews with over 90 subjects in Northern Virginia, Christian *et al.* (1983) have described the ethnographic aspects of language usage and maintenance and the development of particular phonological and grammatical features of English among four different age groups (10-12, 15-18, 20-25 and 35-55), and two different lengths

of residency groups (1-3 and 4-7 years of residency) of Vietnamese immigrants. Language values and attitudes encourage both the use and maintenance of Vietnamese in some situations as well as the development of English proficiency. The specific investigation of English structures such as plural, third person singular absence, multiple negation, and unmarked tense indicates that the emerging variety is resisting diffusion from the nonstandard dialects of English while perpetuating some modification of English structures that may give rise to a unique ethnic variety of English.

French

88-202 Capelle, Marie-José (BELC, Paris). Un pas vers la traduction interprétative. [A step towards interpretative translation.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number 8/9 (1987), 128-35.

Translation work, for final year secondary classes, usually consists of searching for the meaning of linguistic forms in one language and finding the exact copy of it in another language. It is suggested that the functions and forms of this method of translating should be reconsidered.

Daily life affords examples of interpretive activities, for example, of sounds or sign which convey meaning. Educational translations can also make use of similar ways of suggesting meaning. Current

methods of teaching translation are reviewed and ways are suggested of changing and improving them. Signs, symbols or gestures can be used for discussion, then translated into a foreign language. Use can be made of texts whose subject matter is already well known to the students, in fields such as science or technology. Emphasis is placed on understanding the meaning of a text, rather than simply reproducing it in a different language.

88-203 Cristea, Teodora (U. of Bucharest). Valences didactiques de la traduction. [The pedagogic potential of translation.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **211** (1987), 113-18.

The use of translation in teaching, for some time thought undesirable, is regaining favour, and the author claims that it can help learners to 'avoid the reefs of interference'. Examples relate to Romanian learners of French. Three areas of application are mentioned: first, the teaching and testing of lexis and grammar; second, 'cognitive techniques' raising

awareness of interlingual differences; third, 'performance' translation making the ideas in literary and other texts available to non-readers of the FL, taking account of idiom and sociolinguistic/pragmatic perspectives. In the last area, extra-curricular competitions and contact with working translators were found highly motivating.

88-204 Jaussaud, Françoise (American Sch., Madrid). Et si...on apprenait à conjuguer? [Just supposing we taught how to conjugate the verbs?] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **211** (1987), 41-6.

A system is suggested for teaching and learning the present tense of all French verbs, which goes beyond the traditional division according to infinitive ending and proposes two main categories: one consisting of all *-er* verbs and five *-ir* verbs; and another, comprising all the remaining verbs, which is further subdivided into three sub-groups. Once

the present tense has been mastered, the other tenses can be introduced in a logical sequence based on the proposed classification, which is made explicit to the learners. A series of games and exercises has been devised to assist them in acquiring the verbs. [Diagrams; tables; illustrations.]

German

88-205 Albers, Hans-Georg. Textwahrnehmung und Texterfahrung. [Text appreciation and experience of texts.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **18**, 3 (1987), 9-21.

The culture-specific nature of the understanding of visual signs, including writing, is illustrated by cartoons, two of which are taken from Arabic sources. In order to interpret these cartoons several important facts have to be supplied, e.g. the shortage of eggs in Algeria and the fact that everything moves from right to left. Apart from the problem of the direction of writing, the Arab learner of German may also encounter problems with long strings of consonants (in Arabic vowels and consonants generally alternate, but short vowels are not written: an Arab may therefore be tempted to supply them in German where they do not belong). Numerous other aspects involving grammar (the

tense system), semantics and pragmatics may be problematical. As far as experience of texts is concerned it should be noted that traditional Islamic texts have a different function from texts in modern Germany. Some learners may therefore need to be taught that there are different kinds of text in German, some of which, such as laws, instructions, religious texts, literary texts, are like Islamic texts unalterable, while others are not 'sacred' and can be worked on. By thus introducing the learner to the different functions of texts it should be possible to enable him to work with German texts whilst not destroying his existing cultural attitudes.

88-206 Green, Peter S. (U. of York) and **Hecht, Karlheinz** (U. of Munich). The influence of accuracy on communicative effectiveness. *British Journal of Language Teaching*, **25**, 2 (1987), 79-84.

In the first of two experiments described in this paper, English pupils were asked to indicate preferences concerning three penfriend letters written in English by German pupils. The letters had been selected, following marking by teachers, to represent good, average and weak performances. A

high correlation was evident between preferences of pupils and teachers: the former probably influenced by interesting content, the teachers by accuracy. From this it was inferred that the most interesting letter was also the most accurate.

In order to test the supposition that accuracy has

an influence on communicative effectiveness, the accuracy of the letters was manipulated and the letters then submitted for assessment to a new but comparable group of pupils. The results, which showed that despite the changes, the same letter was again the most popular, refuted the supposition. Asked for reasons for their preference, pupils suggested mainly three criteria: what the letter revealed about the personality of the writer, its content, and its style.

88–207 Neuner, Gerhard. Fachtheorietexte in der Berufsausbildung ausländischer Jugendlicher – Verstehensbarrieren, Verstehenshilfen, Verstehensstrategien.

[Theoretical texts in the vocational training of young foreigners – barriers to understanding, aids to understanding, strategies for understanding.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **18**, 3 (1987), 36–49.

Foreign students were found to have a number of problems when faced with a typical theory text. Linguistically, the metaphorical use of words from everyday German, such as *Mutter* and *Zunge*, in a technical sense can, for example, create problems because the metaphor may depend on culture-specific elements. Culturally there may also be a conflict between the learner's way of thinking and the analytical-deductive way of thinking in technical texts. A textbook should be clearly organised, the text divided into short, easily scanned sections with the important points printed in bold type, important

Although effective communication depends on accurate form and stimulating content, in this study formal accuracy was not an important factor. This suggests that teachers should feel encouraged to adopt a communicative approach to language teaching, allowing content to have precedence over form, and paying less attention to formal accuracy.

passages should have a coloured background, the important points should be summarised at the end of each chapter, and practical examples should be given. Sentence structures should not be linguistically too complex, long word combinations should be avoided, as should abstractions. In addition there should be plenty of visual aids. [Good and bad examples are given.] Strategies for tackling a text are outlined. These involve picking out the most important words and breaking complex words down, through to understanding the relationship between sentences.

Italian

88–208 Danesi, Marcel (U. of Toronto). The pedagogical implications of teaching Italian to dialect speakers: a Canadian perspective. *ATI Journal* (Beccles, Suffolk), **50** (1987), 72–84.

Italian is taught at all levels of education in Canada, and as the majority of students are the children of emigrants, it is taught as an ancestral or heritage language. The psycholinguistic profile of the Italo-Canadian student is highly complex, according to findings of the experimental language programmes set up in the 1970s in Toronto, the city where most Italian emigrants to Canada have settled. The use of Italian in a primarily English-speaking milieu has resulted in the emergence of a *koinè*, that is, a language borrowing a large number of English words and adapting them phonologically and morphologically to the home language (nativisation). The adaptation mechanisms are generally dialect-based, but a common 'lect' has sprung up, usually referred to as Italo-Canadian, as a consequence of the many communicative interactions taking place outside the home environment. Since in the Canadian setting the common sociolect is perceived by the emigrants themselves as a marker of ethnicity, it can be designated an 'ethnolect'. A plethora of English loanwords has been assimilated

into this ethnolect, such as *loncia* 'lunch', *garbiccio* 'garbage' and *squisare* 'to squeeze'. The ethnolect is used primarily in the community, whereas the dialect of origin, similarly laden with borrowings, is the characteristic language of the home. The degree of competence in the home language depends on the stage of acculturation and on age.

Pedagogically, the learners requiring the most specialised attention are the second generation, i.e. those with an active knowledge of their heritage language. It has been found that the formal study of one's heritage language promotes positive attitudes to it, and produces a transfer effect that is pivotal in counteracting semilingualism (fossilised lack of proficiency in both one's languages). The knowledge of a dialectal or ethnolectal variant of Italian on the part of students of all ages result in a complex interlanguage system which, if ignored, will inhibit learning. In order to combat negative feelings that emigrant children might develop towards their home lect, the teacher must assume a tolerant attitude to that lect, and incorporate it into classroom

activities. The learner should be made aware that the course is not remedial; a non-threatening environment will stimulate the learning process. He/she must also be made aware of the nature of the interlanguage system, and the reasons underlying errors he/she is bound to make because of it. Given the lack of suitable pedagogical materials for this

type of learner, the teacher will probably have to construct them on the basis of classroom experience. In the teaching of Standard Italian to second-generation dialect speakers, it should never be forgotten that the ultimate goal is communication in the target language.

88-209 Lafford, Barbara A. (Arizona State U.) Providing comprehensible input for advanced conversation classes in university settings. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **64**, 2 (1987), 278-97.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis states that we acquire (not learn) language by understanding input that is a little beyond our current level of acquired competence ($i+1$); listening comprehension and reading are of primary importance in language learning, and the ability to speak or write fluently will follow in good time. An effective second language classroom with communicative goals will provide the student with (aural and written) comprehensible input at the $i+1$ level in an anxiety-free environment. These principles have been successfully applied at lower levels of university language teaching, but little attention has been paid to the development of comprehension and communicative skills with this approach in more advanced university classes. The development of listening skills can be encouraged by exposing advanced students to a wide variety of television and radio programmes of different genres, in addition to teacher-generated input. Since many advanced conversation courses are rather heterogeneous in nature, providing finely tuned $i+1$ input for each student seems impossible and perhaps not even desirable. The teacher should strive instead simply to make herself understood, and in so doing will 'cast a net' of structure which includes appropriate input for each student. The importance of encouraging students to obtain input

outside the classroom cannot be overestimated: sources include films, radio, and native speakers.

The listening skill is developed in class as follows: prelistening activities precede the listening passage; aural 'skimming' and 'scanning' (listening for the main idea or for specific information) may take place as the passage is repeated several times; decoding/intensive listening occurs when the teacher stops the passage at appropriate intervals for discussion; comprehension and application activities complete the sequence. Reading is also a major source of comprehensible input contributing significantly to second language competence. Different reading strategies are needed for various sorts of material: scanning (seeking specific information at a quick overview); skimming (looking for the general gist); extensive reading (rapid reading of a large amount of text); intensive reading of an entire text for complete understanding. Students should be afforded contact with the widest possible range of reading material. Discussions about listening and reading passages should engage the students' intellectual curiosity: they acquire a second language by using it in a communicative situation in which they focus on ideas rather than on form. The article concludes with an example of an Italian reading text adapted for advanced conversational purposes.

Russian

88-210 Rosengrant, Sandra F. Error patterns in written Russian. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **71**, 2 (1987), 138-46.

Nine third-year university students of Russian, mainly native English speakers, were assessed orally during 1985/86 by means of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Seven students then wrote compositions similar in nature to the oral tests. The grammatical accuracy of the compositions was compared with the verbal accuracy expected of the students, from the results of the oral tests. The reasons for making such a comparison were that (1) students are more aware of the need for grammatical accuracy in written, rather than oral, work and that inaccuracy may be more disruptive in writing than in speaking

and (2) grammatical accuracy becomes increasingly important at advanced levels.

The study concludes that a relationship exists between the students' oral proficiency ratings and the grammatical accuracy of their written compositions. The type of mistakes made was also consistent with the oral evaluations. The students with the highest oral proficiency ratings made more spelling and case usage mistakes and fewer mistakes in their choice of words, and were therefore more efficient in expressing their meaning.