

## Teaching particular languages

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### DUTCH

**84–75 Collins, Beverly and Mees, Inger.** A guide to the pronunciation of Dutch for English speakers. *Levende Talen* (The Hague), **377** ((1982), 888–97.

This article summarises the main points of Dutch (ABN) pronunciation, emphasising particularly points of difficulty for English speakers. The consonant and vowel systems of Dutch are described and the relationship between sound and spelling is outlined. Phonetic differences between the sounds of English and Dutch are considered, and rules of assimilation are presented. The article concludes with a discussion of stress in words and at sentence level, and the distribution of weak forms in Dutch.

### ENGLISH

**84–76 Godman, Arthur** (U. of Kent). Teaching verbs using a hierarchical system. *RELC Journal* (Singapore), **13**, 1 (1982), 37–49.

The mastery of the meaning and use of verbs is the most difficult area of language learning. The accurate meaning of a verb is fully comprehended only when it is placed in a set of verbs with similar meanings and differences of contextual features. The case is argued, using specific references, for the verb as the centre of importance in syntax. Evidence is also given to indicate that the concept denoted by a verb rarely has a full equivalent from one language to another. Each verb has a denotation, connotations, and, possibly, uses in idiom. A diagrammatic representation of verbs shows the hierarchical arrangement with the set of verbs divided into families, groups and clusters. Diagrams can show a two-dimensional system of relationships. Language, however, does not follow an exact taxonomy, and the relationships are often blurred. An explanation of this is given and it is shown that a multi-dimensional representation is required for a true description. The method of overcoming this difficulty is described. A semantic field chart illustrates the relationship between verbs in a group of clusters. The chart has to be supplemented by a written definition of a verb in order to ascertain the focus and collocations of the verb. The development of teaching verbs is then outlined. The first 250 verbs, in order of frequency of use in English, can be arranged in twenty-two groups [example].

**84–77 Haycraft, John** (International House). The pre-beginner phase. *ELT Journal* (London), **37**, 1 (1983), 48–51.

A case is made out for an extra phase of training for adult students beginning to study a foreign language. Such students profit greatly from an introduction to the types of activity and study attitudes that will be expected of them in the language course, as their own experiences of the classroom may be radically different from what the

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language teacher intends. Components for such a phase are outlined: discussion of why pupils are learning the language, the methodology to be used, brief introduction to English structure, vocabulary and pronunciation, the textbook, acting out dialogues, the need for guessing in comprehension. [Sample programme of seven 50 minute periods.]

**84–78 Kaplan, Lester** (Language Training Centre, Vienna). Intensive tutoring based on 'Superlearning'. *Journal of the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching* (Iowa, USA), **6**, 4 (1981), 245–54.

The author describes in detail his recent experience in intensive tutoring based on the book *Superlearning* with one Austrian student in English as a second language. Vocabulary tests were given at the end of each 2½ hour tutoring session; the student learned about 2,000 words and phrases in 22 sessions and was able to communicate effectively in English.

**84–79 Medgyes, Péter**. The schizophrenic teacher. *ELT Journal* (London), **37**, 1 (1983), 2–6.

Non-native teachers of English invariably feel unsafe about using the language they have to teach. To offset this sense of inherent uncertainty, they seek refuge in adopting either a deeply pessimistic or an aggressive attitude to ELT. The pessimistic type of teacher is more common; such teachers are obsessed with grammar, while taking little heed of pronunciation and lexis, and almost none of linguistic appropriateness.

Instead of insisting on mistaken beliefs, non-native speaking teachers should openly acknowledge that they are students of English, no less than the students they are teaching. With their conscience soothed, they will now be able to take a more confident stance in the classroom.

**84–80 Preston, William** (Experiment in International Living, Galang, Indonesia). Poetry ideas in teaching literature and writing to foreign students. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **16**, 4 (1982), 489–502.

The scarcity of references to poetry writing in ESL/EFL literature suggests that little has been done by either literature or writing teachers to tap this potentially valuable resource as a means of directly and actively involving foreign students in communicative, creative use of English. In this article the author draws upon the experience and insights of Koch to illustrate a way of adapting two poetry ideas for teaching poetry writing to a group of intermediate-level Thai secondary English teachers. Rather than subjecting model poems to extensive analysis, or selecting poetry for imitation based on strict attention to formal elements like rhyme and repetition as more typically practised in literature and writing classes, poetry ideas are designed and presented which allow students to find and re-create within themselves the main feelings of the poems they read. By providing students with a vehicle for participating in the process of poetry writing, opportunities are made possible for enhanced literary appreciation, fresh self conceptions, and creative language responses.

**84–81 Smith, Larry E. and Bisazza, John A.** (East–West Center, Honolulu). The comprehensibility of three varieties of English for college students in seven countries. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **32**, 2 (1982), 259–69.

Non-native English speakers are almost always tested on their comprehension ability by listening to native speakers and answering questions based on what they have heard. Their comprehension of other non-native speakers is seldom if ever tested. Non-native speakers, however, do not limit their use of English to native speakers alone. Indeed they are increasingly using English with other non-native speakers as well. The functional use of the term ‘comprehensibility’ must therefore be broadened to include the evaluation of native and non-native speakers. This paper reports the results of a study to test the comprehensibility of one native and two non-native varieties of English with native and non-native users of English in seven countries.

## FRENCH

**84–82 Leeman, Daniëlle** (U. of Paris X). *Grammaire générative et pédagogie du français*. [Generative grammar and the teaching of French.] *LINX* (Paris), **3** (1980), 81–137.

This paper describes earlier work on adapting grammars for the use of pupils in French primary schools, and considers the possibilities for using several recent generative descriptions of French in the teaching of grammar to native speakers. The general relationship of generative grammar to pedagogy is discussed. For example, how can a teacher judge an utterance as ungrammatical, perhaps by saying ‘That is not said’, when in fact it has just been said?

The concrete example of accounts of pronominalisation is taken, and co-reference problems similar to those already familiar in the literature on English are given, such as *Tu as eu ton costume aux Galeries? Moi, je l’ai eu au Printemps* (‘You got your suit at the Galeries, I got it at Printemps’) where *ton costume* ≠ *le*. A discussion of correctness of pronominalisation in (and out of) context is followed by the example of a pupil’s composition in which the pronominalisations are, in the discourse, incorrect to the point of unintelligibility, but, when each phrase is isolated, perfectly grammatical. These pedagogical problems raise questions as to the empirical validity of generative grammars.

**84–83 Turner, G.** (St Edmund Campion High Sch., Preston). Teaching French vocabulary: a training study. *Educational Review* (Birmingham), **35**, 1 (1983), 81–8.

Seventy-nine first-year pupils and 85 third-year pupils from a comprehensive school took a series of tests which involved remembering the meanings of French words from vocabulary lists. After an initial test 20 per cent of each year were taught strategies designed to assist their memory; 20 per cent were taught the strategies and given guided practice in their use and 20 per cent practised learning vocabulary lists without any aid. The remainder received no ‘treatment’.

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It was found that first-year pupils who had only been taught the strategies did significantly better on the following tests than control pupils. However, the same was not true of first-year pupils who also practised the strategies – perhaps because they were so preoccupied with executing the strategy programme that they failed to learn the actual vocabulary. Third years gained little from the strategies (with or without practice) but they were probably insufficiently motivated. Of the strategies tested probably the most effective one was to make interesting and unusual connections between the French and English.

**84–84 Zarate, Geneviève (BELC).** Du dialogue des cultures à la démarche interculturelle. [From a dialogue between cultures towards an intercultural approach.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **170** (1982), 28–32.

The term '*francophonie*' with its connotation of a hidden dominance or at least normative influence by metropolitan France, transmitted through literature and the cinema and thus accessible only to the few, is increasingly being replaced by the term 'dialogue between cultures'. This is a step forward and is in line with the appreciation of language variation inside France. Yet one needs to go further and proceed towards an intercultural approach. In foreign-language teaching, this involves inducing in pupils a conscious awareness of their own and other people's cultural value systems. Otherwise, even authentic documents used as teaching materials may be misinterpreted. Attitudes to the language being studied may be significantly influenced by out-of-school contacts of pupils, e.g. foreign travel, pen friendships. In the intercultural approach, themes and issues that throw light on the value system of a society are more important than mere wealth of information.

## GERMAN

**84–85 Apeltauer, Ernst.** Arbeit mit ausländischen Eltern. [Working with foreign parents.] *Deutsch Lernen* (Mainz, FRG), **4** (1981), 22–40.

There are surprisingly few reports about contacts between German schools and the parents of their foreign pupils. Despite official encouragement and the obvious value to the teacher of knowing about his pupils' background, the expenditure in time and hesitation on both sides act as obstacles. The teacher is in a better position to initiate contacts. These can start informally, be followed by a home visit, preferably by two teachers, and lead to links with the ethnic community and ultimately to the participation of parents in school activities. [Detailed suggestions are given on how to behave during a visit and how to involve parents.]

**84–86 Hegele, Irmintraut.** Deutsch als Zweitsprache: Sprachstandsdiagnose und Sprachförderung von Ausländerkindern. [German as a second language: diagnostic testing and language improvement programmes for foreign pupils.] *Deutsch Lernen* (Mainz, FRG), **4** (1981), 41–56.

The proficiency in German of children of Italian origin in a German primary school was tested. Even though the majority of the children were born in Germany, Italian

had remained the dominant language of the home and neighbourhood and almost half the lessons were taught in Italian. Texts written by the pupils on the basis of pictorial stimuli were analysed for inflection, tenses, word order, word formation, semantic and stylistic features. Italian-born children made more errors than a German control group, particularly in areas where the two languages contrast, e.g. gender, case, personal pronouns. Remedial exercises set in communicative situations, e.g. games and simulations, together with explicit discussion of grammar, led to improvement. Both communicative and grammatical learning are thus seen as important.

**84–87 Jones, Alan G.** (Hatfield Poly.). Teaching employment-related vocabulary with 'authentic' materials. *Incorporated Linguist* (London), **22**, 1 (1983), 32–3.

The author spent a term's sabbatical leave making audio-visual materials based on authentic interviews with Germans talking about their work. The visual element consisted of tape–slide sequences, made with an auto-focus camera and a domestic radio recorder with a directional microphone. Help in making contacts came from Siemens and the Goethe-Institut, but mainly from chance contacts with a hairdresser, a chairlift worker, a violin-maker, etc. For teaching purposes, ten interviews were edited down to one typewritten page each. Student workbooks were devised for class use, containing German–English vocabulary, questions on tape–slide sequences, and a variety of exercises for oral and written practice. Transcripts are available in a separate booklet if required.

**84–88 Lalande, John F., II** (U. of Missouri) and **Taylor, Heimy F.** (Ohio State U.). Planting the seed: German at the Kindergarten level. *Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **15**, 2 (1982), 254–63.

Volunteer teachers taught kindergarten classes in suburban schools in Ohio for two 15-minute sessions per week for between five and seven months. The main aim was to create a mind-set favourable to foreign-language study among pupils, parents, teachers and school administrators. Kindergarten level was chosen because of its more flexible curriculum and the generally positive nature of its learning experiences. The initial approaches were made to kindergarten teachers themselves. Sessions should be short and varied. Suggestions are made for class activities: songs, numbers, colours, clothing, parts of the body, time, family, animals, etc.

A questionnaire to parents after five months of teaching revealed that children had talked frequently and enthusiastically about German at home.

**84–89 Raikhshtejn, A. D.** Лингвистика и страноведческий аспект в преподавании иностранного языка. [Linguistics and geographical/cultural factors in the teaching of a foreign language.] *Иностранные языки в школе* (Moscow), **6** (1982), 13–19.

Starting from the position that geographical and cultural factors are a major hurdle in the learning of a foreign language, it is proposed that linguistics should be concerned with the formulation of contrastive analyses of languages based on such factors.

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The core of the article is a typology of such factors based on German (particularly that of the GDR) and the problems it poses for speakers of Russian. The major focus of attention is words and phraseological expressions; it is recommended that lexical fields should be compared in relevant areas, and texts used exemplifying the different cultural usages. The major historical and political events and personages are crucial both to the understanding of certain types of text and, more indirectly, to the evaluative load of many types of expressions.

**84–90 Weber, Berta M.** (Gannon U.). German composition through letter writing. *Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **15**, 2 (1982), 224–31.

A course in German conversation is described which utilises topics relating to students' personal experience and needs at intermediate level. It covers customs to be observed in German written communication, the message itself, informal versus formal style, business letters, job applications, descriptive topics, and observations and personal opinions.

## ITALIAN

**84–91 O'Connor, Desmond** (Flinders U. of S. Australia). A survey of some twentieth-century Italian pocket dictionaries. *Italica* (New Brunswick, NJ), **59**, 3 (1982), 175–81.

Pocket dictionaries (for students, Italian immigrants to English-speaking countries and English-speaking tourists in Italy) are often reprinted and rarely brought up to date: Hugo's 1971 edition is exactly the same as the 1937 edition. *Collins Italian Gem Dictionary*, first published in 1954, is now also considerably out of date – *aeroplane* and *television* are not registered – but it contains a useful list of 'false friends'. The Berlitz pocket dictionary has been revised regularly and contains useful information for tourists. Robert Hall's *Italian Vest Pocket Dictionary* (New York, 1957; Edinburgh and London, 1962) has a particularly good concise guide to pronunciation. The *Hamlyn Pocket Dictionary* (1969) is designed mainly for Italian, not English, speakers. The best known and largest pocket dictionaries are the one designed by Tedeschi and Fantonetti (first published in 1959), and Melzi's *Bantam New College Dictionary*. The T.F. now requires some updating, and frequently fails to discriminate target language meanings, wrongly assuming that its main task is to jog the memory rather than instruct in correct usage. The latter Melzi meticulously does. The word list on both sides is modern and ample for a dictionary of this size.

**84–92 Trivelli, Remo J.** Sentence combining in Italian. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **39**, 2 (1983), 237–42.

Using Italian as the model language, the article demonstrates how the sentence combining technique can play a significant role not only in developing the writing skill, but also in making the students more aware of their creative ability and in heightening

their sense of stylistic preferences. After a brief theoretical introduction, the article provides a range of combining exercises, e.g. complementation and embedding, which facilitate the attainment of competency in writing at the intermediate and early advanced levels.