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# Teaching particular languages

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## English

**89-485 Anani, Mohammad** (U. of Jordan). Incorrect stress placement in the case of Arab learners of English. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, FRG), **27**, 1 (1989), 15-22.

Learners tend to be influenced by the underlying phonological structure of the native language when pronouncing the target language. Arabic is characterised by fixed word stress placement and restricted syllable structure illustrated by three common stress patterns, on the final, penultimate and antepenultimate syllable. In order to test this observation, six Jordanian and six American students were requested to read out three lists of English words corresponding to the three common stress patterns

in Arabic. The two groups differed considerably as to where they placed the stress. In list one, consisting of bisyllabic words, all Arab learners stressed the second syllable, (*concrète, phospháte*). In list two, trisyllabic words, most Arab learners stressed the final syllable (*modernise, indicáte*) and in list three of trisyllabic words with the structure CV-CV-CV or CVC-CV-CV, most Arab learners stressed the antepenultimate syllabus in accordance with Arabic rules (*músician, bégíning, climatic*).

**89-486 Baptista, Barbara O.** (U. Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil). Strategies for the prediction of English word stress. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, FRG), **27**, 1 (1989), 1-14.

Given the relatively complicated stress rules of English, the author established a hierarchy of 16 stress rules and six student prediction strategies. A test consisting of six regular words and two exceptions for each rule, contextualised in short sentences, was administered to 32 Brazilian students of English. The percentage of responses with correct stress ranged from 31% to 90%. However, the identification of prediction strategies proved more

important in indicating where the hierarchy of difficulty is misleading and why some rules are more difficult than others. The results were analysed to establish the extent to which they were affected by positive/negative transfer from Portuguese cognates, tertiary stress and pronunciation of derivatives. Prediction strategies have implications for the teaching of English word stress.

**89-487 Brown, Adam** (Aston U.). Functional load and the teaching of pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **22**, 4 (1988), 593-606.

The concept of functional load (f.l.), while it has received many differing definitions, may well be relevant in assessing which phonemic contrasts should be given priority in pronunciation teaching. Scholars have pointed to frequency, environment and acoustic and articulatory similarity as important factors in assessing f.l. A practical teacher will also take into account: which contrasts are habitually conflated by students; cumulative text frequency of pairs and their relative probability of occurrence (where /æ, e/ score high and /u:, ʊ/ score low); whether pairs are already conflated in dialects other than the target, here RP (e.g. Scottish dialects do not distinguish /u:, ʊ/); structural distribution (e.g. /ŋ/

does not occur after a long vowel and is therefore not in contrast with /n/ in that position); the number of lexemes in which particular phonemes occur (/ʊ/ occurs in very few) and which are distinguished by particular contrasts (/u:, ʊ/ show only four minimal pairs); the parts of speech to which members of pairs belong; the semantic sets into which lexemes of similar pronunciation enter. Judicious weighting of these factors will establish a scale of importance along which to place the contrasts of a language; the scale for RP would be /p, b; e, æ; i, ī; ð, d; n, ŋ; ʃ, ʒ; u:, ʊ; ɪə, eə; ɔ:, ɔɪ/, it is suggested.

**89-488 El-Sayed, Ali Mohammed.** An investigation into the current status of English instruction to the Gulf: some comments on the problems and suggestions for solutions. *ITL* (Louvain), **81/2** (1988), 47-72.

For ideological, cultural and nationalistic reasons, Arab students regard Arabic as superior to other languages. They learn English for its utilitarian value only, and have a psychological block towards

English and the native-speaker teachers employed by Arab educational authorities. English is a product of imperialism, fit only for scientific and technological writing.

The writer discusses English instruction in the Gulf and the problems facing it. English is looked upon as a mere subject and the proficiency of school leavers falls short of that required for university studies in English.

The cultural characteristics of the learner should be considered in the development of reading materials and instructional methods. Arabic novels and stories should be translated into English.

Learning should be related to the local values, culture, customs and traditions of the students.

Knowledge of the language concerned is not enough to make an efficient and effective teacher. Native Arabic-speaking English teachers can use contrastive analysis to do a better job than their native English-speaker counterparts. They can better understand the problems facing Arab students learning English.

**89-489 Furneaux, Clare and others** (U. of Reading). Making friends and influencing tutors: strategies for promoting acculturation in the EAP classroom. *ELT Documents* (London), **131** (1988), 88-99.

Acculturation is defined as adaptation to another culture. It is valuable, indeed necessary, for an English language learner in an English-speaking environment to adapt to the host culture, and it is important for the teacher to facilitate this. Brown's Acculturation Model involves four stages: (1) excitement and euphoria, (2) culture shock (estrangement, homesickness), (3) 'culture stress stage' characterised by a partial recovery, and (4) assimilation or adaptation. Surveys have shown that problems of social and cultural adjustment may be more important than language proficiency in contributing to academic success or lack of it. Most of the studies suggest that acculturation is important in success in learning English and in studying an academic subject.

A project at the University of Reading attempted to identify areas of life where cultural distance might exist, e.g. social encounters, academic encounters, service encounters, the media, and attitudes, and interviewed foreign students (mainly Algerian). A schedule of problems of culture adjustment was then drawn up, categorised according to speech acts, setting, etc. A cultural questionnaire was also administered, dealing with features of life in Britain and personal behaviour:

respondents had to say whether the features concerned were the same or different in their own country. The students rated the UK high on facilities and low on personal relationships and behaviour.

The second phase of the project concerned the introduction of various classroom activities designed to promote awareness of cultural distance which it was hoped would lead to modifications of the students' behaviour and thence a minimising of the distance. It was decided that video was the best mean of presenting behaviour in the classroom; students watched video extracts of behaviour and a videoed discussion of behaviour. The methodology used was: roleplaying, discussing the problems, viewing the video in part, then in full, then repeating the role play.

Some conclusions of the project were that linguistic limitations in the students inhibit appropriate behaviour. Students are most in need of cultural orientation at the time they are least able to profit from it (at the beginning of their time in Britain). There is a problem in finding suitable video materials at intermediate level. The students reacted fairly favourably to the programme but it is difficult to say whether it has affected long-term attitudes.

**89-490 Hewings, Martin** (U. of Birmingham). The individualisation of pronunciation improvement. *ELT Documents* (London), **131** (1988), 142-8.

Most courses in English for academic purposes pay little attention to pronunciation improvement. Priority is given to the ability to understand lectures, read textbooks and write essays. Focusing on pronunciation is often seen as being incompatible with the encouragement of oral fluency. There is also dissatisfaction with available materials and recommended methods.

The solution proposed is to identify the needs of individual students and then provide an individualised scheme for improvement. Eight Algerian students at Birmingham University participated in a pronunciation research survey, whose results sug-

gested that individual students have very different pronunciation problems even when they speak the same first language.

Two main areas of difficulty are considered: word pronunciation (including sound-symbol correspondence and 'problem sounds') and word stress. A teaching approach was devised which allowed the students greater opportunity for individual work and involved diagnosis and correction in peer groups. A second approach was devised which only involved the student and teacher: pronunciation problems in a recording made by the student were noted by the teacher and activities suggested to

remedy them. The remedial exercises are generally traditional (being based on discrimination and repetition), but approaching the students individually appears more effective than group teaching.

**89-491 Kachru, Braj B.** ESP and non-native varieties of English: toward a shift in paradigm. *ELT Documents* (London), **128** (1988), 9-28.

English is divided into three categories – native, non-native 'institutionalised' (for example, Indian English) and completely non-native (for example, Japanese). The concept of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is approached from the perspective of a non-native English speaker. Many issues are critically discussed: the status and acceptability of non-native English as 'standard' English; the amount of recognition given by national language policies to local non-native English; practical uses of non-native English; the practical problems and weaknesses of ESP research.

Educational issues of ESP are examined. Localised linguistic characteristics and instructional resources

are considered. The question is raised as to whether the recognition (and use of) localised varieties of English would adversely affect the international intelligibility of English.

It is concluded that there should be a change in the theoretical framework of ESP research. There is also a need for change in the methodology and in the collection of appropriate empirical data, and in the attitude taken towards the different varieties of English. Various changes are suggested, such as recognising regional literature and selecting educational texts from it. A pragmatic basis to ESP research is needed, concerning both international and intranational uses of English.

**89-492 Maley, Alan.** Down from the pedestal: literature as resource. *ELT Documents* (London), **130** (1989), 10-23.

Two primary purposes for literature teaching are: (a) the *study* of literature and (b) the *use* of literature as a resource for language learning. If we espouse purpose (a), the main focus of activity is on literature as cultural artifact: the two main approaches are then (i) to focus on the 'literariness' of the texts being studied, which demands a competence in language which few EFL/ESL students have attained, or (ii) to focus on literature as 'text', the stylistic approach, which is more relevant to EFL/ESL students than (i) but still very demanding in terms of language competence.

If we take purpose (b) above as primary, literature becomes one source among others for promoting language learning. The teacher can capitalise on the motivation arising from the intrinsic interest of the text and can tailor activities to the level of the students. The main concern is to ensure that students interact with the text and with each other in ways which promote language learning. To this end, texts can be experimented with, dismembered and discarded. Students will, in the long run, develop an understanding of how literature functions as well by this method as by approaches (i) and (ii) above.

The advantages of literature as a resource are its universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power and ambiguity.

Alternative ways of using literary texts which run counter to traditional practice are: allowing the text itself to suggest the nature of the activity, seeing the text as one element in a set of linked activities, presenting the text in a variety of ways (not as a static block of words), and devising activities which are not only shaped by questions, but are also given in the form of instructions or suggestions. The two criteria to be applied to any activities are that they require constant reference back to and interaction with the text, and that they involve the students in interaction with their fellow students and the teacher about the text. The framework proposed is based on these points and the unit of material is in three stages: framing (getting ready, thematic preparation); focusing (engaging the students with the text itself); and diverging (parallel activities of various kinds) [examples with discussion].

**89-493 Meziani, A.** (U. of Rabat, Morocco). The English tense system; a pedagogic analysis. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, FRG), **26**, 4 (1988), 281-94.

In teaching the English tense system to foreign learners of English, teachers often misidentify tense with time and thus endow verb forms with meanings they do not signal. Previous accounts of the English tense system are briefly described including those of

Jespersen, Twaddell, Joos, Nehls, Diver, Huddleston, Leech and Comrie. The author then presents an analysis of time concepts in relation to their linguistic forms. In the first concept, 'timelessness', examples are given of utterances which are timeless

in their reference, those where the action is more important than its time. 'Presentness' refers to actions which are simultaneous with the present moment as well as to actions viewed from the present moment but anterior to it. 'Pastness' refers to actions occurring at a time earlier than the present moment excluding now, while the Metaphorical

Past, traditionally the Historic Present, refers to actions in the past by means of a form of the present tense. Futurity is divided into simple future (*will/shall*), epistemic future (reference to a time when the statement was valid) and 'non-will' future (other means besides *will/shall*).

**89-494 Peretz, Arna S.** (Ben Gurion U. of the Negev, Israel). Student-centred learning through content-based instruction: use of oral report projects in the advanced EFL reading class. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **5**, 1 (1988), 181-91.

Two well-known problems associated with advanced EFL reading courses for students of science and technology are the lack of authenticity in the reading tasks, and the fact that the choice of reading material is frequently limited by what the language teacher can understand. These two constraints often lead to lack of motivation on the part of the student, other than the motivation to pass the course. This

article describes a student-centered reading comprehension course for advanced-level EFL students of science and technology, in which student interest and knowledge of content-area subjects are used to create both the motivation to read and an authentic task to accomplish – the preparation and presentation of an oral report.

**89-495 Phillips, Martin.** Microcomputers and the teaching of literature in ELT. *ELT Documents* (London), **130** (1989), 112-25.

Computer programs already, or soon to be, available for studying literature range from those which involve text reconstruction to more flexible ones in which a measure of creativity on the part of student and teacher is possible. The first type can help to increase student awareness of (1) syntactic and lexical choices made by a given author, and (2) the coherence of a text. The second type involves word processing, which enables students to edit and produce their own texts and also allows detailed examination of texts. Both types can engender considerable discussion. There is also available a program which assists in the writing of verse, and yet another which helps with analysis of stress and metre patterns and rhyme creation.

Concordance programs offer the possibility of searching for words, parts of words, or phrases and their context, thus facilitating stylistic analysis. The student can see how an author uses words and infer why he uses them in a particular way. Thus interpretation can be firmly based on empirical data. Fast access to a bank of prerecorded texts is important, and such texts are becoming increasingly available at reasonable prices. Videodiscs for computer use may also eventually offer possibilities such as exploring and comparing aspects of a prerecorded text with its video version.

**89-496 Porter, Gerald** (U. of Vaasa). 'Never heard to speak so free': folk song variability and the flexible use of spoken English. *ELT Documents* (London), **130** (1989), 75-89.

Oral poetry is not commonly used in English teaching, mainly because of the boring nature of the 'doctored' versions of folk songs which have been largely rewritten, or else excluded, in an attempt to feature them on every school curriculum. A folk song revival has now taken place and occupational songs (both early and recent) have become firmly established, whilst some traditional songs have been reassessed.

This article suggests how variations in the texts of these songs can be used to help students express

themselves orally, develop a feel for rhythm in speech and explore the ways songs reflect powerful social and cultural changes. Three essential criteria concerning the use of teaching materials are: the music must be included; versions should have been collected orally; and different versions should be available.

Many suggestions are given for the use of oral literature in teaching, including: transcribing a ballad from a recording; make cross cultural comparisons between songs; making cultural substi-

tutions; assessing the impact of printing; rethinking our literary and linguistic categories; improvising and translating oral narratives. The emphasis must

always be on live performance, rather than on recordings.

**89-497 Strevens, Peter** (Bell Educational Trust). The learner and teacher of ESP. *ELT Documents* (London), **128** (1988), 39-44.

The two main dimensions of ESP are for study and for an occupation. A further distinction can be made between those who already know their subject in their own language and those whose learning of English is part of their academic studies/occupational training, i.e. the distinction is between English which is instructional and English which is operational. The difference has an important bearing on the preparation of instructional ESP materials.

The learner comes to an ESP course with at least three kinds of expectations: cultural-educational, personal and individual, and academic/occupational. Part of the teacher's task is to change the learner's expectations, and in particular to encourage him or her by providing a touch of success.

The ESP teacher is usually a teacher of General English who unexpectedly finds him/herself required to teach students with special needs. Two main areas of difficulty are that of (1) different attitudes, especially between those of literature and science ('the two cultures') - the ESP teacher must

suspend any anti-scientific attitudes and extend his/her range of professional activities; and (2) the gap between the learner's knowledge of the special subject and the teacher's ignorance of it - teachers can either become familiar with the ESP course materials, or with the language of the subject, or allow the students to put them right.

The lack of suitable ESP materials is a problem. There are many different kinds of ESP, and the materials appropriate to one kind may be inappropriate for another. The greater the variety and interest in the presentation of the teaching, the greater the effectiveness of the learning. ESP must select the methods and techniques which seem most appropriate. Its methodologies conform to the same model as any other form of language teaching, i.e. the basic teaching activities are: shaping the input, encouraging the learner's intention to learn, managing the learning strategies, and promoting practice and use.

**89-498 White, Ronald V.** (U. of Reading). Academic writing: process and product. *ELT Documents* (London), **129** (1988), 4-16.

This article reviews parallel research into the processes of native/non-native English writing in order to glean principles and practices which might be relevant to EAP contexts. The educational approach typified by Munby (i.e. the specification of needs and the desirability of predictable linguistic outcomes) is considered, in terms of its attendant emphasis on the study/manipulation of model texts as a basis for imitative, parallel writing tasks. The focus from the start in such a paradigm is on 'product' (using someone else's writing as input), not process.

Process approaches (Deep End Strategies), on the other hand, deal with learner as initiator rather than mimic and assume that outcomes can be unpre-

dictable. This dynamic paradigm is partly involved with schemata (diagrams) and the gradual discovery of meaning by the writer during the composition process itself.

Research into native-speaker writing suggests that, for example, first drafts are writer-based and egocentric, whereas subsequent revision is intended to change writer-based prose into a reader-based form. Non-native writers employ similar methods, but it may in the end be impossible to 'teach' the skills employed by the good writer. Nevertheless, procedures which can help to train writing students (based on Flowers and Hayes, 1980) are presented for possible exploitation by teachers.

**89-499 Yule, George and Gregory, Wayne.** Survey interviews for interactive language learning. *ELT Journal* (London), **43**, 2 (1989), 142-9.

A survey-interview exercise is described as it evolved through the efforts of some ESL learners to develop better spoken English skills. The learners, newly arrived graduate assistants at a North American university who showed limited proficiency in the interactive use of spoken English, prepared a

questionnaire on a topic of interest and were required to interview local American students, record the interview, and present their recorded interviews in class. The resulting data illustrate the development of interactive language use with native speakers and also provide a lot of information on local student

activities. The exercise, which can be modified for use in any ESL situation, provides learners with an opportunity for experience in using spoken English in interaction, for learning first-hand about local

ideas and attitudes, and for reflecting on and discussing the whole experience later in the English class.

### French

**89-500 Azoulay-Vicente, Avigail** (Penn State U.). Vers une analyse systématique de l'interrogation en français. [Towards a systematic analysis of interrogation in French.] *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **44**, 4 (1988), 669-79.

Communicative competence implies an understanding of interrogative sentences. These have been traditionally taught as a series of rules, erroneously suggesting that they are mutually exclusive. Moreover, previous descriptions have been marred by a surfeit of rules, distinctions and exceptions leading to confusion. The author proposes an approach based on the distinction between syntactic and phonological procedures. The former involves a tripartite approach: identification of the interroga-

tive words, rules for their positioning and rules for forming interrogative sentences. These latter rules reduce to four: putting *est-ce que* in front of the subject of the sentence, inversion (*Où iras-tu?*) complex inversion (*Où Paul est-il allé?*) and stylistic inversion (*Où a voulu aller Paul?*) Phonologically, interrogative sentences without an interrogative word have a rising intonation pattern whereas those with an interrogative word have a falling pattern.

**89-501 Beacco, Jean-Claude** (ENS de Fontenay-Saint-Cloud, CREDIF). Un rendez-vous manqué? Théories du discours et grammaire en didactique. [A failure to meet? Theories of discourse and grammar in teaching methodology.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number 2/3 (1989), 138-46.

The influence of modern theories of discourse on language teaching (as far as revealed by published materials) has been less than expected and theoretically ill-founded. Traditional lists of grammar points have sometimes been replaced by lists of functions, speech acts etc., but materials writers have not known what to do with verb paradigms and other elements not tied to a particular function, nor have they come to terms with research findings that one cannot impose or predetermine the sequence in which learners acquire language ele-

ments. Furthermore, the insights of text grammar have not been applied, hence the prevalence of apparently functional but actually unlikely sequences such as "Are you a prison warder? No, I'm a lighthouse keeper." Often a functional cloak disguises rigid structural constraints.

At bottom, the teaching of French grammar has been little affected by these new theories, just as by previous revolutions. Questions of efficient learning have not been addressed, and a cynical complacency prevails.

**89-502 Bouchard, Robert** (U. of Grenoble III). Une transposition didactique des grammaires de texte. [The practical use of text grammars.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), special number 2/3 (1989), 60-72.

The author assesses the value of text grammars for teaching writing skills to learners of French, native and non-native. Such grammars influence the three variables involved in the learning process: the subject matter, the teacher and the learner; they facilitate the structuring of teaching activities in class. Six levels of text organisation are proposed,

three being concerned with the internal organisation of text/discourse and three with external constraints, together with practical suggestions for classroom activities for each level of text. These activities should promote the internalisation of rules and lead to improved performance of global language skills.



**89-503 Combettes, Bernard** (U. of Nancy II). Linguistique et enseignement du français langue maternelle: tendances nouvelles. [Linguistics and the teaching of French as a mother tongue: new tendencies.] *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris), **72** (1988), 57-65.

Initial enthusiasm for applying linguistics to the teaching of French as a mother tongue waned for about ten years. Now, new approaches are occurring, although two obstacles still exist – the question of how to apply the concepts and the important role of institutional activities concerning aspects such as programmes, nomenclature and examinations.

This article examines how, in two areas, the sentence and the text, a linguistic approach can alter teaching methods. Teaching practices often view traditional grammatical assumptions as 'correct'. Only more enlightened teaching encourages pupils to observe and discover rules, but there is never any study of variations, or differences in grammatical

judgements. The theory of generative grammar recognises this problem; language is accepted as not always being that of 'correct' French and can vary according to individuals, social class or situation. It is suggested that teaching practices need to consider an approach which recognises the diversity of pupils' linguistic intuition.

There has been a shift towards the use of theoretical models which rely on approaches other than sentence analysis. The knowledge of grammatical rules has not ensured a true competence in producing or understanding texts. New categories are needed. The creation of a typology of text is considered necessary and problems such as the choice of classification are examined.

**89-504 Cummins, Patricia W.** CAI and the French teacher. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **62**, 3 (1989), 385-410.

This detailed survey of aspects of teachers' needs relating to computer assisted instruction (CAI) and French in the United States proposes ways of acquiring and extending expertise in CAI. Problems which must be addressed include possible uses of computers in schools and universities, literature available for keeping one's knowledge up-to-date, and methods of integrating CAI into the curriculum so that it is effective and meaningful for both teachers and students. Software must be assessed in

terms of suitability for course objectives. Financial constraints can involve obtaining funds, determining hardware needs, cost of training, of computer laboratory services, and of software, and consultation with foreign language experts.

In order to resolve these problems pedagogical needs have to be justified and cost-effectiveness demonstrated. The article concludes with a select bibliography of books and periodicals and a list of distributors and publishers.

**89-505 Cummins, Patricia W.** (Northern Arizona U.). Video and the French teacher. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **62**, 3 (1989), 411-26.

This article was written with the assistance of the AATF's (American Association of Teachers of French) commission on pedagogy, which aimed to look at how video can be integrated into the curriculum, how to evaluate videos or films for purchase or rental, and where to obtain materials for the average classroom. Activities for the classroom are classified as being for lower-level, intermediate

or advanced students (for the latter, the emphasis is mainly on the subject matter, language skills and culture being acquired indirectly). The needs of the non-traditional student are also considered. [List of names and addresses of distributors of French video materials in the USA, Canada and France; select bibliography.]

**89-506 Fischer, Robert A.** (Southwest Texas State U.). Instructional computing in French: the student view. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **22**, 1 (1989), 79-90.

Clearly articulated student perceptions of computer assisted language learning (CALL) programmes are needed to develop effective student-centered CALL materials. A project involving the use of CALL French lessons by university-level students was undertaken to explore student reactions to various lesson design features. Summaries of student responses to a post-project questionnaire show that

mastery-level learning expectations could be implemented as a feasible goal in drill-and-practice software when supported by adequate learner assistance and that computer quizzes had a useful function. In general, students' perceptions of the instructional value of CALL materials were not directly related to achievement.

**89-507 Foley, K. S. and others.** Research in core French: a bibliographic review. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **44**, 4 (1988), 593-618.

This bibliographic review presents an overview of empirical research conducted in the context of core French programmes in Canada. The studies surveyed in this article address eight major areas of research: programme characteristics and outcomes, programme supplements, student characteristics, factors affecting enrolment, teacher characteristics,

opinion surveys of core French programmes, programme implementation and administration, and the development and validation of tests and materials. The review provides a summary of research findings in each of the eight areas as well as bibliographic references to the individual studies which address each of these topics.

**89-508 Herschensohn, Julia** (U. of Washington). Linguistic accuracy of textbook grammar. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **72**, 4 (1988), 409-14.

Analysis of presentation of the articles, possessives and demonstratives in 11 French textbooks used in American colleges has revealed that grammar terminology is often confusing and inadequate. Terms such as 'specific', 'generic' and 'partitive' are not appropriate for the description of French articles.

Prevocative forms such as *vieil* illustrate how misleading and incomplete grammar book explanations can be. One textbook for instance claims that the masculine forms *mon/ton/son* are also used before feminine nouns. Another claims that *cet* is used before a masculine singular noun beginning with a vowel. Such statements may well result in

errors such as *mon petite étudiante, ce admirable professeur*.

The following recommendations are made: grammar descriptions should be clear and concise, and inductive presentation by the teacher with student participation, in French if possible, should be practised. Introduction of complex grammar points should be delayed and to reinforce acquisition grammar points should be revised in later chapters. Textbooks should also distinguish between oral and written skills, and take into account phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and sociolinguistic information.

**89-509 Jackson, Linda and Nice, Richard.** Language texts or language tapes: the effects of medium of input and tuition on translation among first-year undergraduates in French. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **44**, 4 (1988), 715-25.

This paper describes an experiment undertaken with first year undergraduates in French at the University of Surrey. The performance was compared on written and oral translation tasks of two sets of students with exposure to a related oral or written French 'text' and tuition in the corresponding medium. While the written translation task was

completed just as well as both groups of students, it was found that in the oral tasks, assessed both for 'fluency,' related to procedural competence, and for accuracy, students who listened to French and received aural/oral tuition on tape significantly outperformed those who read the text and received traditional written/oral tuition in class.

**89-510 Riley, Philip** (CRAPEL, U. of Nancy II). The ethnography of autonomy. *ELT Documents* (London), **131** (1988), 12-34.

This article was inspired by problems encountered in teaching French, using a task-based, groupwork approach, to four different nationality groups. The Danes took to the activity at once and completed all tasks, but the Americans, Moroccans and Vietnamese all had difficulties, especially with forming and working in groups. This led the writer to consider that his concept of autonomy might be ethnocentric and his approach unsuitable for learners from some cultures. To support this, he considers evidence on cultural variation in attitudes to learning

and to language. Hofstede's four dimensions of national culture, namely individualism/collectivism, large/small power distance, strong/weak uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity (degree of sex role division), were found to be a particularly useful source of possible explanations for the differences between the four groups.

[Two theories of social psychology and four typologies of individual learning styles are also summarised.]



## German

**89-511 Bautner, Joachim** (U. of Manchester Inst. of Science and Technology). Essay-writing in German studies: an appraisal. *German Teaching* (London), **2**, 1 (1989), 1-3 and 18.

The author attacks the German essay as conventionally used in both school and university. Its formal requirements, especially the need for 'balance' with arguments for and against a proposition, are stifling and remote from real-life language behaviour, and far from encouraging a critical stance push the writer into blandness and indifference. Students lack the linguistic resources to

write essays well, and are encouraged to borrow stock phrases of 'dead' German.

After a detailed critique of a specimen essay in *Der deutsche Aufsatz*, a popular guide to essay-writing, the author suggests dropping most composition exercises and replacing them with text-based assignments.

**89-512 Poitou, Jacques** (U. of Paris VII). Les grammaires et les fautes de grammaire. [Grammars and grammar errors.] *Langues Modernes* (Paris), **83**, 1 (1989), 59-67.

Four French grammar books of the German language were tested for their ability to identify as wrong, and to correct, six common errors made by French learners: use of *während* for *pendant*, use of commas, comparison of participles, word order of object pronouns, inversion after *wie auch*, misuse of *dürfen*.

In each case the accessibility and the quality of the

information are discussed. All books failed to deal adequately with at least three of the six errors. Although limitations of space make some incompleteness inevitable, improvements can be sought in three areas: more detailed indexes, explicit statements of rules, examples of what cannot be said (typical errors) as well as of correct usage.

**89-513 Raban, J.** (Cambridge U. Careers Service). The usefulness of German. *German Teaching* (London), **2**, 1 (1989), 20-3.

Putting aside the 'cultural' and 'leisure' arguments for learning German, the vocational arguments are discussed here. So much business is now international that it is necessary to be able to communicate in more than one's own language. The main need is not for translators/interpreters but for people who can do their ordinary jobs in another language. This demands not just 'pure' language skills but an understanding of another mentality and culture. Most employers regard linguistic skills as secondary to professional skills. Most modern language graduates find that it is typically in their second or third jobs that they begin to use their languages, since in their first job they are adding professional training to their language skills. Modern linguists on the continent do not expect to be able to go straight into industry or commerce, as is fairly common in

Britain, so British graduates should not expect to be able to find such jobs on the continent until they have had their professional training in Britain. This situation is unlikely to change in 1992.

How useful is German likely to be in the future? Would Oriental languages be more useful? They are certainly 'harder' - and more remote for children living in the UK. German has an obvious practical value since children can easily experience it in their lives. The language is, moreover, not too difficult. German is an important business language, and German business people seem to expect those with whom they are dealing to make the effort to speak it. Within the European Community, the German economy is particularly important. German should remain as one of the languages commonly taught in the British education system.

**89-514 Varner, Iris I.** (Illinois State U.). Cultural aspects of German and American business letters. *Journal of Language for International Business* (Glendale, Az), **3**, 1 (1988), 1-9.

A study of handbooks offering guidance on the writing of business letters in America and Germany reveals that American handbooks tend to be more

principle-oriented while German handbooks are more function-oriented. In letters with negative messages, Americans try to soften the blow with a

'buffer' opening whereas Germans are less considerate. Where persuasive messages are concerned, price plays a major role in American letters but is a minor factor in German letters. In general German business letters are more formal than American

ones, employ several gradations of formality and have somewhat different block formats. Advice is offered to American businessmen on how to communicate more effectively with their German partners.

## Spanish

**89-515 George, Penny** (South Washington County Schools). Interactive television: a new technology for teaching and learning. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), **6**, 3 (1989), 43-6.

The article describes an interactive television programme in which one Spanish teacher reaches 3959 elementary students at nine different sites through the use of cameras and receivers in the studio and at each of the sites. The programme was designed to use existing cable television technology. The interactive part of the system is provided by a camera with a microphone used in the room where people are watching the programme. In front of the teacher are 10 TV monitors so that the reactions of the students can be watched and heard as necessary. The equipment is simple to operate. The teacher controls which of three cameras is on at any given moment;

audio and video tapes can be used as part of the lesson. There are 173 classroom teachers supervising the classes during the lessons, some of whom have no previous training in Spanish. They can help by participating, especially by modelling responses for the younger children. The programme travels round to the various third grade classes during the year. A pamphlet describing the programme and its learner outcomes is sent to all parents in the autumn. Any evaluation is also communicated to parents. Visual presentation is very important and much of the planning time goes into creating visuals.

## Russian

**89-516 Leaver, Betty Lou** (Foreign Service Institute). Dismantling classroom walls for increased foreign language proficiency. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **22**, 1 (1989), 67-77.

This paper describes current and past communicative classroom exercises used at the Foreign Service Institute to 'break down' classroom walls with activities that encourage language acquisition. These activities were instituted as part of the Russian programme of the Foreign Service Institute in 1984

and include immersion experiences during Russian Week, the Monolingual Training Program (MOLT), the Russian Internship Program (RIP), speaking tracks, phase projects, and language/area integration. Each activity's success at promoting language acquisition is assessed.