Teaching particular languages

ENGLISH

82–317 Baddock, Barry J. (Gasamthochschule Kassel). Introducing students to ESP. *Recherches et Échanges* (Paris), **6**, 2 (1981), 21–9.

Introductory exercises are recommended for students beginning ESP courses to reassure them by showing how much the specialist variety shares with the 'common core' English which students are acquainted with: (i) discussion, (ii) lexical slot-filling, (iii) identifying sentence relationships and (iv) cloze procedure. [Copious examples.]

82–318 Boyle, Joseph P. (Chinese U. of Hong Kong). Texts from business journalism for ESP courses in Hong Kong. *System* (Oxford), **9**, 2 (1981), 99–105.

Hong Kong is at an interesting stage both linguistically and commercially. With the new opening of Mainland China to the West, the importance of Mandarin is on the increase. Being a British colony, Hong Kong has English as the second language taught in schools. Frequent complaints are heard that the standard of English of business graduates is poor. The article examines the use of texts from business English journalism as a good example of an overlap area between English for specific purposes and general English. The polished and high idiomatic language of business reporting, plus the political background necessary for an understanding of much business writing, ensure challenge in using such texts, yet at the same time the general business context gives the opportunity for more relevant and effective language learning. Six examples are given and suggestions offered on their potential for the language teacher.

82–319 Bullard, Nicholas (CAVILAM, Vichy). An approach to the teaching of English for participation in medical conferences. *Recherches et Échanges* (Paris), **6**, 2 (1981), 113–22.

A course is described for medical researchers who needed to use English at international conferences. It was established, by interview, that they could read and understand specialist articles but had great difficulty in understanding papers delivered in conferences and even more difficulty in delivering them. Time available was limited to 2 hours per week per group, with occasional intensive sessions on Friday evening and Saturday. The first cycle totalled 100 hours.

The participants' comprehension problems were not, by and large, at the vocabulary level, or even at sentence level, but were more closely associated with discourse. Much of the course therefore concentrated on listening strategies, notably the identification in use of various forms of discourse marker. Authentic texts, selected initially for the simplicity and logic of their structure (though not subject matter) were used, accompanied by blank flow-charts which attempted to help the participants organise their listening and to draw their attention to salient points of discourse organisation. Later, less well organised texts were used. This investigation of discourse organisation

was later applied, together with other more traditional criteria, to the participants' own speaking needs.

82–320 Kraus-Srebrić, Eva (City of Belgrade Board of Education) **and others**. A six-tier cake: an experiment with self-selected learning tasks. *English Language Teaching Journal* (London), **36**, 1 (1981), 19–23.

An experiment in self-directed learning is described in which Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* was used to establish six levels of cognitive ability. For each level different learning tasks were prepared. Children in four classes in a Belgrade school were then each invited to select the task that they individually felt to be the most appropriate and to complete it together with others who had chosen the same task. During the experimental lessons, pupils showed enthusiasm and an ability to select their own learning tasks, and to co-operate well in their learning.

82–321 Ngulube, Joseph H. Some thoughts about the place of English in our education system. *English Teachers Journal* (Lusaka, Zambia), **5**, 1 (1981), 10–17.

Language policy as formulated for education in Zambia at present where a foreign language dominates in school activities will work against achieving the general aim of education for development, i.e. the integration of school and community, activity-based learning and development of cultural and aesthetic appreciation. The decision to retain English as the overall medium of communication within the education system should not be taken to imply the banishment of vernacular languages from the classroom or their relegation to special periods like Religious Knowledge. Since Zambia is a multilingual nation, the school classroom should be a multilingual classroom, and not just be dominated by one foreign language. Any sharp division between the school and the community it serves will inevitably act against the integration which the education reforms set out to achieve.

82–322 Norman, Susan. The new lingua franca. *Times Educational Supplement* (London), 3398 (14 August 1981), 17.

English is flourishing as an international language, but while foreigners may be eager to speak our language it is not necessarily us they wish to speak to. A more radical approach is advocated in the creation of a new dialect geared to the needs of the international user. International English would be a greatly simplified version of the language of native speakers, restricted to one simple past form, *did*, with *will* as the marker of future time. Learners would sound more competent after a relatively short period of study than those who follow conventional courses sound using a multitude of tenses imperfectly. Emphasis would be placed on the receptive skills so that learners would recognise the forms and tenses used by native speakers, without being expected to produce them themselves. The main target of such a course would be the international business user, but it might also be an ideal basis for any learner of English.

82–323   Ramsey, Robert M. (American Graduate Sch. of International Management, Glendale, Arizona). A technique for interlingual lexico-semantic comparison: the lexigram. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **15**, 1 (1981), 15–24.

This article deals with vocabulary in the EFL/ESL curriculum and introduces a technique for interlingual lexico-semantic comparison: the lexigram. This technique is based on a study of restricted word association data obtained from native speakers of English, and from native speakers of Castilian and Catalan. English (L2) data from non-native speakers in that city are also compared with data from native speakers. Such comparisons should provide the L2 teacher with valuable insights into vocabulary structures.

82–324   Reed, Bill (Centre Linguistique de la Régie Renault). L'anglais pour le personnel d'encadrement de l'industrie automobile. [English for training personnel in the car industry.] *Recherches et Échanges* (Paris), **6**, 2 (1981), 81–98.

This article shows how the language services department of a major company can use its own special position and the skills of its personnel to set up English courses which are closely linked to the company's activities, and make use of the company's own 'authentic materials', provided by their UK affiliates. The courses described are intended to teach both intermediate and advanced technical and commerical English for executives of the automobile industry.

82–325   Serpell, Robert (U. of Zambia). The cultural context of language learning. Problems confronting English teachers in Zambia. *English Teachers Journal* (Lusaka, Zambia), **5**, 1 (1981), 18–33.

The cultural context in which English is learned in Zambia is characterised by a conflict of values which leads to contradictions in educational policy. The situation is diglossic, i.e. the society has two languages which are functionally separated, the former colonial language having high prestige and public use and the indigenous language(s) have low prestige and home use. Code-switching in Zambia is common, and often leads to a creative use of language.

The context of language learning for the pre-school and Grade I child is discussed: a study shows that Grade I children were adept at handling their multicultural, multilinguistic, situation, but that their language knowledge tended to be context-specific, e.g. they dealt best with questions about a picture in English (the context of the school curriculum), and with questions about home in Bemba or Nyanja, irrespective of their home language.

Five strategies for coping with the problem of mastering the curriculum in English are outlined: ritualised performance (language behaviour produced mechanically on demand); unstructured guessing; language mixing; 'pseudo-retardation' (inability to do themselves justice in a formal test), and 'narrow, non-generalised literacy' (literacy too closely tied to one particular language). Reasons why English is so daunting are suggested by Lambert's work on bilingual education in Canada: success in the

dominant language can lead to alienation from the family culture. English is ambivalent – is it a national resource or an irredeemably foreign institution?

Secondary-school teachers should stress the variegated nature of English, and acknowledge forms which traditionally were taboo, such as the many informal uses of English. The use of other languages in the English classroom could be illuminating; it could help to demystify English and give students greater confidence.

82–326 Wainman, H. and Wilkinson, M. (U. of Malaŵi). Legal English: a functional approach. *Recherches et Échanges* (Paris), **6**, 2 (1981), 68–79.

The paper, written by a lawyer and a language teacher, considers the importance of language in the training of lawyers. The legal training situation within one country (Malaŵi) is described and the communicative needs of a lawyer are outlined within that situation. Each area is then discussed in some detail under the headings of 'interviewing', 'letter writing', 'comprehension of judgements', 'advocacy', and 'the drafting of legal documents'. Suggestions are made as to how the various areas of language competence can be taught. There is a need for greater co-operation between lawyers and applied linguists in certain areas of legal training.

FRENCH

82–327 Charotte, Jacky (Centre Spécialisé pour l'Enseignement du Français, Cairo). Sur des manuels anciens, faisons une pédagogie nouvelle. [Let's use new approaches with old textbooks.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **164** (1981), 64–9.

Traditional textbooks with their vocabulary lists, grammar exercises or audio-visual dialogues do not develop communicative competence, for that implies the capacity to make or interpret utterances in accordance with appropriate rules of use. However, teachers can analyse the language content of lessons in their textbook in terms of speech acts, notions, actors, context of situation, topic, setting and medium, and devise suitable practice material. [Two examples based on different textbooks are given.] Teachers should realise that various starting points and modes of progression are possible; increasingly the needs of the learners will determine our approach.

82–328 Cross, David (Archbishop Michael Ramsey Sch.). An investigation into effects of a delayed start in main foreign-language learning. *Modern Languages* (London), **62**, 2 (1981), 85–92.

The fourth in a series of reports on an experiment in the timetabling of French [*see abstracts* 78–184, 80–272, 81–284]. The performance of delayed start pupils (who began French at the age of 13, having followed a multinational Foundation Course during the first two years of secondary schooling) is compared with that of earlier students in the same school who began French at 11. The only changed variable was that of time. Contrary to expectations the delayed start pupils ended the third year as proficient in every way as the earlier pupils. They did not prove to be more efficient

learners, nor were they more highly motivated. [Some tentative conclusions are drawn.]

82–329   Csécsy, Madeleine (U. of Nice). Les trois accents: aigu, grave et circonflexe. [The three accents: acute, grave and cirumflex.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **162** (1981), 20–8 (pt I) and **164** (1981), 57–63 (pt II).

With only five letters to represent 12 non-nasal vowels, French makes use of the acute and grave accents to distinguish the three different sound values indicated by the letter E: the closed /e/, the open /ɛ/ and /ə/. There are regional variations in the way these sounds are pronounced in different parts of France, but all native French speakers maintain the hierarchy of phonological oppositions essential to the system.

Whereas the acute accent is a purely phonetic sign and is only used with the letter E, the grave accent may also be used with the letters O and U where its function is to distinguish homophones, e.g. *ou* and *où*. The circumflex, which is the only accent which can be used with all five vowels, has an etymological function indicating where a letter, usually S, has been lost.

The errors made by foreign learners in the use of accents are sometimes similar to those made by native speakers and are the result of carelessness or ignorance of orthographic conventions or the rules governing open and closed syllables. More serious errors, however, stem from the inability to discriminate between the three phonetic values for E: a common problem for Slavs, Greeks and speakers of other Romance languages, and for the majority of Asians and Africans.

GERMAN

82–330   Buttjes, Dieter. Kultur und Identität. Landeskundliches Lernen im Bereich Deutsch als Fremdsprache. [Culture and identity – regional studies in the sphere of German as a foreign language.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **3** (1981), 2–10.

As yet there is nothing in Germany comparable to the interdisciplinary science which has been developed in English and the USA in the form of courses as Cultural Studies, American Studies, or, indeed, German Studies. Internationally the German language is regarded as being of cultural significance rather than of use as a lingua franca, and this in turn argues in favour of German regional studies.

Regional studies can help the student of a foreign language cope with the integration and identity problems which arise when he is confronted with a foreign culture and help him avoid too great a culture shock. Bicultural education should aim at the preservation of ethnic identity and avoid a one-sided cultural assimilation (a 'Germanisation'). A programme of study is recommended which would introduce the social traditions of a foreign culture as well as those of Germany. The pupils and the teachers would be of mixed ethnic origin. (However, there is a risk of being too Utopian. A politically inspired programme which introduced German children in depth to, say, Turkish culture would be resisted by the 'host' society.) Nevertheless, increased

cultural awareness would enrich the lives of German children and help them respect, or even find attractive, things foreign. Such lessons would assist immigrant children to adapt to Germany.

82–331 Gilgenast, Trudy E. (U. of Delaware) **and Binkley, Janet R.** (International Reading Assn.). Student foreign language course interest and curriculum planning. *Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **1** (1981), 27–32.

A survey of 162 students in university German classes indicated that students have distinct preferences as to the types of course they would like to enroll in for further study of German. The most popular options overall were German conversation, travel skills, interpretation and translation. Courses listed in the survey can be grouped into (1) socio-cultural; (2) literature; (3) non-literature, and (4) language. Upper-level students were strongly interested in areas (1), (3) and (4), lower-level students mainly in (4). Information about a student's major can be a guide to his likely course interests: 50 per cent of business majors were only interested in business German, and science majors were the only group of whom 50 per cent were interested in scientific writing. Advanced students are clearly interested in courses of a practical and functional nature. The same patterns of interest in cultural and language-orientated courses emerged from a survey of 1531 other students studying 14 other languages.

82–332 Levine, James S. and Mehl, Jane R. (U. of Maryland). Lexical functions and vocabulary building. *Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), **14**, 1 (1981), 71–7.

The theory (from the field of machine translation) of lexical functions can be applied to the problem of word-collocations in the acquisitions of German as a second language. The term 'lexical function' refers to the regular semantic relations existing between certain key words and other words or word-combinations. Words are not viewed in isolation, but as lexical correlates of other words.

The formalism used to express a lexical function consists of three elements: the name of the function, the key word (in parentheses), and the word or word-combination value of the function. An example of a lexical function is the semantic relation between a (key) word denoting a certain phenomenon and the designation 'to a very high degree' (of the phenomenon). This function has been called 'Magn' (from Latin *magnus*) and is illustrated as follows: Magn (*Raucher*) = *starker* (Magn ('smoker') = 'heavy'). A variety of lexical functions (e.g. Locative, Multiple) are discussed and sample exercises employing this principle are presented.

SPANISH

82–333 Ozete, Oscar (Indiana State U.). Current usage of relative pronouns in Spanish. *Hispania* (Worcester, Mass), **64**, 1 (1981), 85–91.

Fifteen first-year college textbooks were studied and their recommendations on the use of the relatives *que*, *quien*, and *cual* as object of a proposition were compared with

the result of a survey of recently published newspapers and magazines. Not only did the textbooks contradict one another but similar discrepancies were discovered in the professional literature examined; current practice was shown to deviate from both and also to conflict with the grammar of the *Real Academia Española*.

Not only grammatical rules but considerations of style are involved; there are marked regional differences between Spanish-speaking countries. For teaching purposes, a simplified approach, providing students with clear guide-lines, is required. *Que* should be introduced first, next the contrast between *que* and *quien*, and then the contrast between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

RUSSIAN

82–334   Holliday, Gilbert F. (U. of Montana). Some observations on the teaching of one-stem verb systems. *Slavic and East European Journal* (Madison, Wis), **25**, 1 (1981), 90–4.

The single-stem method of verb analysis based on the infinitive is contrasted with a two-stem technique (infinitive and third person plural) with particular reference to didactic value. Jacobson and Swan's one-stem analyses are reviewed and found to be comprehensive, but more appropriate for communication between knowledgeable linguists than for imparting fundamental knowledge to students. They involve an understanding of the whole verb system which is beyond the reach of students in the early stages of language learning, and which additionally requires an agreed commitment to one system where more than one teacher is involved. The two-stem system based on infinitive and third person plural is seen as superior in practical terms in the early stages of study.

82–335   Shirjaev, E. N. Синтаксис высказывания в разговорной речи. [Syntax of the utterance in conversational speech.] *Русский язык в национальной школе* (Mosow), **4** (1981), 8–14.

The concept of conversational speech as a form of Russian radically different from the codified literary language is introduced. A set of principles are presented for translating conversational speech into literary Russian. These can be classified as involving three major steps – the filling in of syntactic positions which in conversational speech are understood with reference to context; introducing inflectional endings required in standard Russian; and removing a variety of emphatic devices characteristic of conversational Russian and regularising the word order. It is hoped that these principles can be of use for those who do not have Russian as a native language.

82–336   Yurevich, F. (U. of Oregon). Словосочетания и их ролб в препо-давании русского языка. [Phrases and their role in the teaching of the Russian language.] *Russian Language Journal* (Michigan), **34**, 119 (1980), 1–15.

Starting from the premise that the teaching of phrases, though vital, is largely neglected, classification systems are examined. The general categories of free phrases,

set phrases and idiomatic phrases are distinguished. Attention is drawn to the importance of free phrases for the learner, in contrast to the emphasis placed by specialist linguists upon set phrases and idioms. Four basic types of verbal phrase, six of noun phrase are listed. The need for learners to be made formally aware of these is stressed, particularly where they diverge from native-language patterns.

A review of phrase dictionaries is given, namely those of Yermolenko; Shansky and Bystrova; Reginina, Tyurina and Shirokova; Bratus'; Anisimova, Ivanova and Ul'yanenko; Deribas; Denisov and Morkovkina. The last of these is particularly useful for the teacher or compiler of teaching materials because of its exhaustive treatment of free phrases. It is suggested that, to be of immediate use to students, it would merit 'translation' into Russian–English form.