Language testing

98–266 Buck, Gary, Tatsuoka, Kumi and Kostin, Irene (Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ). The subskills of reading: rule-space analysis of a multiple-choice test of second language reading comprehension. *Language Learning* (Cambridge, MA), **47**, 3 (1997), 423–66.

The rule-space methodology is an application of statistical pattern-recognition techniques to diagnosing the cognitive attributes (knowledge, skills, abilities, strategies, etc.) underlying test performance. The methodology provides diagnostic information on individual test-takers on each of these attributes. This paper describes how the methodology was used to analyse performance on a multiple-choice reading comprehension test. Based on a literature search, a set of 27 potentially important attributes was hypothesised. Four rule-space analyses were carried out on test results for 5,000 Japanese who had taken the reading section of the TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). The set of attributes was modified, attributes were deleted, and interactions were identified, to arrive at the most parsimonious set with the maximum explanatory power. The final analysis contained 16 prime attributes, with 8 interactions: using these, 91% of test-takers could be classified into their latent knowledge states, and given scores on each attribute (as mastery probabilities). Total test scores were then regressed onto these attribute probability scores using multiple regression; the adjusted R-square was .97, indicating that the attributes explained 97% of the variance in total test performance for those 91% of test-takers successfully classified. This suggests that the rule-space methodology can explain performance on complex verbal tasks, such as reading tests, and provide diagnostic scores to test-takers.

98–267 Charge, Nick (U. of Cambridge Local Exams. Syndicate) and Taylor, Lynda B. (IELTS, U.K.). Recent developments in IELTS. *ELT Journal* (Oxford) , **51**, 4 (1997), 374–80.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is widely accepted as a reliable means of assessing whether candidates are ready to study or train in the medium of English. Since 1989 IELTS has been recognised as an appropriate language requirement for entry to courses in further and higher education in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand; more recently, professional bodies, such as the General Medical Council in the UK and the Medical, Dental, and Physiotherapy Boards in Australia and New Zealand, have also accepted IELTS as a screening measure for overseas students. Currently, a number of institutions in the USA and Canada are considering adding IELTS to their list of acceptable language screening tests. In April 1995 a number of significant changes were introduced to the IELTS test. This article describes the nature of these changes in some detail and provides a rationale for their introduction. [cf. abstract 98–271]

98–268 Difabio, H. (Centro de Investigaciones, Buenos Aires). Cualidades psicométricas del test de 'cloze' en la evaluación de la comprensión lectora. [Psychometric characteristics of the cloze test in the testing of reading comprehension.] *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), **29**, 1, (1997), 157–84 .

This paper first discusses the use of the cloze procedure as a measure of the legibility and readability of a text; special emphasis is given to the manner in which cloze relates to both the concepts of 'gestalt' theory and 'top-down/bottom-up' reading processes. The evidence for the internal validity and reliability of cloze as an evaluatory instrument in reading comprehension is then analysed. The study reported here investigated this issue by examining the cloze as an instrument of diagnostic assessment using informative texts. 50 fifth-year secondary level and 52 first-year tertiary level students participated. After establishing internal consistency (Kuder-Richardson 21), statistical tests were used to measure correlations with intellectual level and language proficiency. Finally, the relative difficulty of the grammatical functions represented by each space are analysed. Results showed that the test proved sensitive to syntactic, cohesive, and semantic relationships and operated satisfactorily as an indirect instrument of intersentential comprehension. It is suggested that success in such a test depends more on the ability of the testee to anticipate the macrostructure of the text than on the comprehension of intersentential relationships.

98–269 Gruba, Paul (U. of Melbourne, Australia). The role of video media in listening assessment. *System* (Oxford), **25**, 3 (1997), 333–45.

With a growing and widespread usage of video, satellite broadcasts and multimedia applications in the language classroom, test developers are beginning to utilise video media as a mode of presentation in the assessment of second language listening comprehension. The use of video media, however, presents a number of challenges to the listening assessor. This paper discusses how the use of video media as a mode of presentation influences the definition, purpose and research agenda of a second language listening comprehension instrument.

98–270 Klein Gunnewiek, Lisanne (Utrecht Inst. for Lings.). Instrumenten ter meting van taalverwervingsaspecten: zijn ze valide? [Are instruments measuring aspects of language acquisition valid?] *Toegepaste Taalwetenschap in Artikelen* (Amsterdam), **56**, 1 (1997), 35–45.

This paper reports on an analysis of the validity of instruments used to measure aspects of language acquisition. In essence, it deals with the degree to which the instruments are an adequate reflection of the underlying

theoretical construct, since the relationship between the construct and its operationalisation is deemed central to the question of validity. Pienemann's Processability Theory (1994), used as a basis for the operationalisation, is first outlined; a description is also given of the development of the instruments to measure grammatical aspects of language acquisition. The analysis showed that the instruments mainly measured grammatical aspects; and, although there was a very high correlation between the grammatical aspects, the instruments were not necessarily invalid.

98–271 Wallace, Craig (Charles Sturt U., Australia). IELTS: global implications of curriculum and materials design. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **51**, 4 (1997), 370–3.

This paper queries the removal of a link between reading and writing tasks in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examinations since April 1995. The removal of the link is queried on two grounds: that it is prejudicial to the success of some students from a non-English speaking background, whose first language cultures may not provide them with appropriate schemata to be able to perform the writing tasks effectively; and that it is unrealistic in terms of the measurement of important study/linguistic skills required in university study–exactly what this examination was established to assess. [cf. abstract 98–267]

Teacher education

98–272 Cameron, Lynne (Leeds U.). The task as a unit for teacher development. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **51**, 4 (1997), 345–51.

This paper describes how the idea of 'task' can be used in teacher development to work from teachers' classroom practice towards more effective language learning and teaching. It draws on examples of activities observed in young learner classrooms that can be analysed as tasks, comprised of preparation, core, and follow-up stages, and argues that identification of the language learning potential and goals of core activities is central to effective planning, teaching, and learning. Having shown how each stage of a task can be broken down into components, the descriptive framework for classroom tasks is then used to demonstrate the generation of training goals and content from classroom observation by a trainer, and the structuring of training workshops that follow a parallel task-based pattern of preparation, core, and follow-up.

98–273 Cumming, Alister, Shi, Ling and So, Sufumi (Ontario Inst. for Studies in Ed., U. of Toronto). Learning to do research on language teaching and learning: graduate apprenticeships. *System* (Oxford), **25**, 3 (1997), 425–33.

This article describes the learning processes that six experienced language teachers described themselves as having accomplished in the context of a three-year research project in which they worked, in the context of doing their Ph.D.s, as research assistants. The learning processes involved: learning specific research skills; understanding teaching practices, development of theory and concepts; links with aspects of their graduate studies; working in a team, and preparing themselves for their future careers as university professors and researchers. Suggestions are made for developing these notions into a theory of how language teachers, in the context of apprenticeships during their graduate studies, might learn about doing educational research.

98–274 De Florio-Hansen, Inez (U. Gesamthochschule Kassel). 'Learning Awareness' als Teil von 'Language Awareness'. Zur Sprachbewußtheit von Lehramtsstudierenden. [Learning awareness as a part of language awareness. On the language awareness of teacher trainees.] *Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen* (Tübingen, Germany), **26** (1997), 144–55.

While it is true that there is no clear evidence of a positive correlation between language awareness and language competence, much can be said in favour of the hypothesis that insights into language phenomena can lead to improved language performance. This paper presents a view of language awareness with respect to learner strategies and learner autonomy, for which a link with improved language competence is claimed to be both pedagogically plausible and empirically testable. The author uses the results of current research to argue that a specific type of training based on this view of language awareness would be particularly advantageous for foreign language teacher trainees.

98–275 Edge, Julian (Aston U., Birmingham) **and Gick, Cornelia.** Language awareness and empowerment in foreign language teacher education: Lernen im Tandem. [Learning with Tandem.] *Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen* (Tübingen, Germany), **26** (1997), 127–43.

This article discusses, in the context of teacher education, language awareness and three aspects of empowerment: authority (in the sense of being the author of one's life), ability, and responsibility. These aspects are discussed with regard to those on both sides in teacher education, the trainee teachers and the educators. In the light of this the authors investigate the Tandem method of language learning and evaluate some material taken from Tandem sessions of trainee teachers. Using material from their own Tandem learning sessions, the authors also discuss the opportunities for language awareness