

00-346 Young, Dolly J. (U. of Tennessee, USA; *Email: djyoung@utk.edu*). Linguistic simplification of SL reading material: effective instructional practice? *The Modern Language Journal* (Malden, MA, USA), **83**, 3 (1999), 350-66.

Linguistic simplification of authentic texts is a common practice in second language (SL) reading material but research results on whether it actually increases comprehension are inconsistent. The research reported here examines the kinds of modifications which are made, intuitively or intentionally, when a text is simplified, and whether or not the differences in reading comprehension scores of authentic, as opposed to simplified texts, are indeed significant. Specifically, the study examined the types of simplifications made to four authentic texts and investigated differences in recall scores based on whether students read simplified or authentic versions. Four different recall scoring methods were used to assess reading comprehension. Findings indicated that a high percentage of the modifications made were lexical in nature and that recall scores for the simplified texts were not superior to the authentic ones. Moreover, one scoring method in particular, scoring based on the number and weight of misunderstandings, led to significant insights into the relationship between text processing and reading comprehension.

Writing

00-347 Al Kahtani, Saad (Indiana U. of Pennsylvania, USA; *Email: alkahtan@pilot.msu.edu*). Electronic portfolios in ESL writing: an alternative approach. *Computer Assisted Language Learning* (Lisse, The Netherlands), **12**, 3 (1999), 261-68.

This paper begins from the premise that creating and using electronic portfolios facilitate language teaching and learning in general and ESL (English as a Second Language) writing in particular. The author seeks to demonstrate how teachers can create electronic portfolios using the World Wide Web. The paper highlights the benefits of creating and using electronic portfolios, presents their content, and demonstrates some of the tools that can be used to create such portfolios. Several advantages which electronic portfolios are seen to have over portfolios in the traditional paper and folder format are discussed.

00-348 Angelova, Maria and Riazantseva, Anastasia (State U. of New York, Buffalo, USA). 'If you don't tell me, how can I know?' A case study of four international students learning to write the U.S. way. *Written Communication* (Thousand Oaks, CA, USA), **16**, 4 (1999), 491-525.

The number of English as a Second Language (ESL) students entering U.S. graduate schools has risen steadily

in recent years. The study reported here examined the problems that four such international graduate students of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds encountered in the process of adapting to the requirements of discipline-specific written discourses during their first year of studies in the United States. Qualitative data including participant and faculty interviews, observations, analysis of written samples, and reflective journals kept by the participants were collected. The results of the study suggest that international students, who bring different writing experiences with them to U.S. classrooms, need assistance to adjust more easily to the requirements of the new academic environment. This assistance, however, depends on international students and U.S. faculty alike learning to address explicitly how academic writing conventions differ across cultures.

00-349 Berg, E. Cathrine (U. of Pennsylvania, USA; *Email: bergc@dolphin.upenn.edu*). The effects of trained peer response on ESL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **8**, 3 (1999), 215-41.

Since the late 1980s, peer response to writing has gained increasing attention in the English as Second Language (ESL) field. Whereas affective benefits have been reported in the literature, little is known about the effects of peer response on ESL students' revision and writing outcomes. The study reported here investigates these effects and also considers an often-cited suggestion for successful peer response, that is, training students to effectively participate in the peer response activity. The principal question addressed by the study is whether trained peer response shapes ESL students' revision types and writing quality. Effects of trained peer response were investigated through a comparison of 46 ESL students divided into two groups, one trained in how to participate in peer response to writing and the other not. Revision types were identified based on a taxonomy that discriminates between two types of changes: those that affect text meaning and those that do not (Faigley & Witte, 1981). Writing quality was determined by a holistic rating procedure of first versus revised drafts. Results of the investigation indicate that trained peer response positively affected ESL students' revision types and quality of texts.

00-350 Biggs, John (U. of New South Wales, Australia), **Lai, Patrick, Tang, Catherine and Lavelle, Ellen**. Teaching writing to ESL graduate students: a model and an illustration. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* (Leicester, UK), **69**, 3 (1999), 293-306.

Graduate students, especially those writing in a second language, have specific writing needs; and previous research suggests that there might be a case for more pedagogic intervention. This article describes a study with two aims. The first was to adapt a *knowledge x levels x process* model of writing (Biggs & Moore, 1993) to conceptualise the writing needs of graduate students.

Students need to have certain rhetorical knowledge, and to apply cognitive space-saving strategies at the appropriate place and level of ideation during writing. The model integrates the didactic and eclectic elements of Torrance, Thomas & Robinson's (1993) interventions with graduate students' writing. The second aim was to develop and trial a workshop based on the model, addressing the writing needs of ESL (English as a Second Language) graduate students. Participants were 18 students from science-related disciplines, and 16 from non-science, all enrolled in research higher degrees in a Hong Kong university where English is the required medium for the dissertation. The workshops ran for two and a half days each, focusing on dissertation writing and writing for an academic journal. Before/after measures were taken on the Inventory of Processes in College Composition (IPIC) (Lavelle, 1993), and students completed an open-ended questionnaire at the end of the workshop. Three IPIC scales showed significant pre-/post-change: lower procedural and spontaneous/impulsive scores (surface-related), higher elaborationist (deep-related). Open-ended feedback supported the view that positive change had occurred. Students particularly appreciated didactic instruction within the context of formal requirements of academic writing.

00-351 Henry, Alex and Roseberry, Robert L. (Brunei Darussalam U.). Raising awareness of the generic structure and linguistic features of essay introductions. *Language Awareness* (Clevedon, UK), **8**, 3/4 (1999), 190-200.

Recent work in genre analysis has shown how information is structured in several text-types and genres. One such investigation has revealed how information is organised in the introductions of expository texts. Based on this earlier study by the present authors, teaching materials for university-level second-language learners were created with the aim of raising learners' awareness of the rhetorical organisation and salient linguistic features of the essay. The teaching method relied heavily on explicit instruction and essential metalanguage. An evaluation of these methods and materials, based on an analysis of student writing before and after instruction, revealed that students had improved their ability to structure their essay introductions. In addition, the students were tending to improve their ability to texture their writing. The paper concludes that explicit genre-based instruction with the attendant metalanguage can help learners improve their writing.

00-352 Okamura, Akiko and Shaw, Philip (Aarhus School of Business, Denmark; *Email:* phys@lng.h-ha.dk). Lexical phrases, culture, and subculture in transactional letter writing. *English for Specific Purposes* (Exeter, UK), **19**, 1 (2000), 1-15.

The study reported here examines the relative contributions of subculture membership and mother-tongue status/target culture membership in writing transactional letters. The authors examined the letters accom-

panying articles initially submitted for publication by 26 native speakers of English (NSE) and 23 non-native English-speaking (NNSE) academics, and compared them with efforts to write such letters by 21 NSE and 23 NNSE non-professionals (British undergraduates and overseas English teachers). The results showed that the non-native professionals by and large perceived the rhetorical demands of the situation similarly to native professionals but were a little less likely to use appropriate language. The native non-professionals controlled some appropriate phrases, and were able to use appropriate vocabulary, but had very little idea of the rhetoric, while the non-native non-professionals produced grammatically competent letters that were inappropriate in both rhetoric and language. It is concluded that the teaching approach for writing depends crucially on the status of the learners, and that lexical phrases are particularly important for non-natives.

00-353 Paulus, Trena M. (Indiana U., USA; *Email:* tpaulus@indiana.edu). The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **8**, 3 (1999), 265-89.

Although teacher and peer feedback, together with required revision, is a common component of the process-approach English as Second Language (ESL) writing classroom, the effect that the feedback and revision process has on the improvement of student writing is as yet undetermined. This article reports a study in which 11 ESL student essays were analysed in detail, categorising the types and sources of revisions made according to Faigley and Witte's (1981) taxonomy of revisions, evaluating the first and final drafts of the students' essays, and recording students' verbal reports during revision. While the majority of revisions that students made were surface-level revisions, the changes they made as a result of peer and teacher feedback were more often meaning-level changes than those revisions they made on their own. It was also found that writing multiple drafts resulted in overall essay improvement.

00-354 Sengupta, Sima (Hong Kong Polytechnic U.; *Email:* egsima@polyu.edu.hk). Rhetorical consciousness raising in the L2 reading classroom. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **8**, 3 (1999), 291-319.

This article outlines how rhetorical consciousness was developed in a group of second language (L2) tertiary student readers and examines how such consciousness influenced students' reading and writing. The participants were 15 Chinese, Year 1 BA students attending small-group tutorials which aimed to help them with their readings for a course entitled 'Language and Society'. Rhetorical consciousness was developed through regular discussions regarding the features of texts that students perceived as 'reader-friendly'. The classroom discussions were recorded and analysed. In-depth interviews were conducted, and the essays written were analysed. These data were complemented by

retrospective protocol data. Students identified and elaborated as reader-friendly four textual elements, which they believed had enabled them to formulate a more acceptable overall gist of a text, thus making them 'better' readers. However, they did not apply the reader-friendliness features to their texts, although they perceived an increased ability to detect their textual problems. The interview data suggested that, with evolving rhetorical consciousness, these L2 students had become more aware of the nature of written discourse. As readers, they effectively used devices that make texts reader-friendly to get the gist of a text read, and, as writers, they were able to explain why they saw school sponsored writing as a distinct genre.

Language testing

00-355 Al-Musawi, N. M. and Al-Ansari, S. H. (U. of Bahrain; *Email: salansari@arts.uob.bh*). Test of English as a Foreign Language and First Certificate of English tests as predictors of academic success for undergraduate students at the University of Bahrain. *System* (Oxford, UK), **27**, 3 (1999), 389-99.

The purpose of this study is to examine the multivariate relationships of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the First Certificate of English (FCE), and to determine whether the 86 participating students' total score on the TOEFL or their overall score on the FCE tends to be a better predictor of their success at the University as measured by the overall grade-point average (GPA). The multivariate prediction of the GPA from the scores on the FCE is very accurate. Regression analysis revealed that the FCE cloze, and sentence transformation subscores are the only test scores that contributed to the prediction of both students' GPA, and their GPA in English courses. The TOEFL section scores did not contribute enough to be maintained in the linear prediction model. Results indicate that the FCE is a better test instrument than the TOEFL, particularly when English is being taught as a foreign language. Since the TOEFL test did not appear to be an effective predictor of students' academic achievement at university level, it is concluded that using it as a test instrument in any of the major language courses taught at the university within an EFL context should be reconsidered.

00-356 Fulcher, Glenn (U. of Surrey, UK). Computerising an English language placement test. *ELT Journal* (Oxford, UK), **53**, 4 (1999), 289-99.

This article is primarily concerned with the delivery of an English language placement test over the Internet, using the World Wide Web. This is a computer-based test, used for placing students into 'upper intermediate' or 'advanced' classes on summer and pre-session courses at a UK university. The article describes a pilot study

to investigate potential bias against students who lack computer familiarity or have negative attitudes towards technology, and assesses the usefulness of the test as a placement instrument by comparing the accuracy of placement with a pencil-and-paper form of the test. The article focuses upon the process of considering (and discounting) rival hypotheses to explain the meaning of test scores in the validation process.

00-357 Jennings, Martha (Carleton U., Ontario, Canada; *Email: marthaj@cyberus.ca*), **Fox, Janna, Graves, Barbara and Shohamy, Elana**. The test-takers' choice: an investigation of the effect of topic on language-test performance. *Language Testing* (London, UK), **16**, 4 (1999), 426-56.

A fundamental issue in validating topic-based tests of language proficiency is the effect of the topic on the test takers' performance. Topic-based test developers must ensure that test takers are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in terms of their test results when presented with a given test topic. The present authors have termed this threat a 'topic effect'; they argue that it may constitute a source of construct-irrelevant variance, and that investigating its possibility is a critical step in establishing the validity of all topic-based tests. This research investigates the potential presence of a topic effect for the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment using the mechanism of choice, the principal aim being to determine if test-takers given a choice of topic perform significantly differently from those not. English as Second Language university applicants ($n = 254$) were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: no choice of topic or choice among five topics. Overall Proficiency Level, Reading, Lecture and Essay scores were compared for the two conditions. Ordinal level data were analysed using the Mann Whitney U, Chi-Square and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. While the scores for the choice groups were usually higher than the scores for the no-choice groups, the differences were not statistically significant; it was felt, however, that the scores warranted closer examination. For the topic where the difference between the groups was largest, a textual analysis of the essays looked for instances of the use of information not provided in the test—again, no difference was found. The results provide support for the validity of inferences drawn from this test. Because choice is an essential element of the research design, a second focus of the study is to explore the advantages and disadvantages of the use of choice in language testing settings from the perspective of both the tester and the test-taker; and the potential value of choice as a testing feature is discussed.

00-358 Powers, Donald E., Schedl, Mary A., Wilson Leung, Susan (Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, USA) and **Butler, Frances A.** Validating the revised Test of Spoken English against a criterion of communicative success. *Language Testing* (London, UK), **16**, 4 (1999), 399-425.