# Teaching particular languages

## ENGLISH

**83–453    Brennan, Moya** (Hong Kong Poly.) **and Miao Chin-an** (U. of Hong Kong). **Conflicting expectations and compromise in the Chinese classroom.** *Language Learning and Communication* (New York), **1**, 2 (1982), 197–201.

The paper discusses the differences in the expectations of a foreign English language teacher and her students in China, the realities of the teaching-learning situation, and the compromises the teacher made in trying out new teaching methods.

Contrary to the expectations of the foreign teacher, the students concentrate on language form rather than function and feel more comfortable in the passive role as the recipients of knowledge than using the language to communicate with others. The students expect a well-prepared class in which they learn through listening to the teacher. The teacher is always considered as operating in an evaluating role, as a model of correctness or as a coach to improve their performance in examinations. There are also external factors, such as the students' uncertainty of future opportunities, access to the library and the availability of study facilities, which may affect the students' attitude towards and efficiency in language learning.

Although both the foreign teacher and the Chinese student have different expectations of each other and use what each may consider as strange or inefficient ways of teaching/learning the language, there is an opportunity for two-way communication and improvement, by drawing on feelings of friendship, goodwill and trust in their combined efforts to produce speakers of English.

**83–454    Gage, Julia and Prince, David.** Vocational English: preparing for a first job. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **16**, 3 (1982), 349–58.

A report on a 1980 Vocational ESL (VESL) project for adult Indochinese refugees. The project researched entry-level jobs – jobs requiring a minimum of training – which may be a refugee's first experience in the American job market. Major issues explored during the project were: (1) What are the language and performance skills necessary for entry-level jobs? (2) How can these skills be incorporated into a VESL curriculum for beginning level, semiliterate students? (3) How can ESL curriculum materials reflect on-the-job training techniques?

The research team developed two data collection instruments: an oral survey of employers/supervisors and an observation form to collect data on specific work tasks and functional language requirements of entry positions. Survey results from 20 employers indicated that workers with low English proficiency were performing their present jobs adequately, although advancement opportunities were limited. In general, these workers were employed in positions involving assembly, sorting and maintenance/cleaning tasks. Further analysis at five work sites was conducted to examine language demands of entry level jobs in general and of on-the-job training in particular. Study findings and examples of curricula with language functions relevant to entry-level positions follow.

**83–455 Gui Shi-chun** (Guangzhou Inst. of Foreign Languages, China). A survey of the size of vocabulary of Chinese students. *Language Learning and Communication* (New York), **1**, 2 (1982), 163–78.

A survey is described which aimed to discover the vocabulary size of Chinese students of English as a guide to syllabus and materials designers.

Through random sampling 200 words were selected from the first 10,000 words from Thorndike and Lorge: *The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words* (1944). Since the selection of items is related to the frequencies of the words, it is possible to measure the size of a person's vocabulary. Multiple-choice questions were set in Chinese so as to find out the subjects' actual knowledge of these 200 words; each of them is representative of 50 most commonly used words relating to different frequency bands. Statistical correction for guessing is made when the vocabulary size of different groups of subjects are estimated. To test the reliability of the sampling method three lists of 200 words each were constructed using the same method. Subjects were told to do any two lists. Later their results were compared to see whether they were significantly different. Statistical analyses of mean score, standard deviation, maximum and minimum scores, reliability coefficient, and T-test are performed on the results.

The results of the survey showed that the method is an effective instrument for estimating vocubulary size. Comparative studies of the results of the three lists indicate that they have no significant difference in most cases. The method seems to be most effective for measuring those who know more than 3,000 words. The actual word stock of secondary-school students in China is around 1,200, which means the present level of English of secondary schools is relatively low. But those who are admitted into universities and institutes can probably expand their vocabulary to around 6,000. This is equivalent to the vocabulary size of English majors who have just finished a two-year basic training in English. The survey also reveals that the first two years of tertiary education is the appropriate time to greatly expand the students' vocabulary. Hence, they should be exposed to more language materials.

The minimum requirement of native first-year students for vocabulary is around 15,000. The vocabulary items of D. Harris's CELT (*Comprehensive English Language Test*) for non-native speakers of English are selected from the fourth 1,000 words to the seventh 1,000 words. Other English proficiency tests seem to set an even higher standard. This suggests that we should take into serious consideration the question of English vocabulary teaching at both secondary and tertiary levels.

There is a marked relationship between vocabulary proficiency and language proficiency in general. The correlations between the vocabulary test and TOEFL, between the vocabulary test and EPT (the *English Proficiency Test* currently used in China) are 0·83 and 0·79 respectively. On some special occasions a vocabulary test can be an effective instrument for measuring language proficiency.

There are, however, some problems concerning the survey. Firstly, it can not show the subjects' mastery of spoken English and active vocabulary. Secondly, it can only reflect the subjects' comprehension of 10,000 most commonly used words. Thirdly, these commonly used words are polysemous. The subjects may know the other meanings of a word and not the tested meaning. Lastly, it is still not possible to make item analysis of the test by computer in China at present, therefore discrimination coefficients and other statistical calculations are unavailable.

**83–456 Havranek, Fleurette** (IUT, Villetaneuse). La formation en anglais dans les grandes entreprises: nouvelles orientations, nouvelles difficultés. [New problems and new directions in English teaching in large companies.] *IUT Bulletin Pédagogique* (Nancy), **77** (1982), 71–84.

As a result of the recession, all large companies have cut back their training programmes, including the teaching of English. Some are demanding knowledge of English or a higher level of English from new recruits; others are more selective as regards those chosen to study English, or are making courses more intensive. On the other hand, new technologies have created some openings. More use is being made of outside specialists and language consultants. For the teachers, most of whom are not integrated into the firms' career structures, the changes have meant fewer jobs and less security.

**83–457 O'Flanagan, M. J. R.** Projekt VALERIE: Fachsprache Englisch lesen und verstehen. [The VALERIE Project: reading and understanding specialised English.] *Fachsprache* (Vienna), **3** (1982), 117–25.

Courses leading to a reading understanding of technical texts were introduced at Siemens two years ago. The courses are based on learner's dictionaries. The vocabulary of a learner's dictionary is taken from specifications and descriptions which have been translated into English. The course is divided into three phases. The initial phase is one of intensive vocabulary learning. It overlaps with phase two where the participants are introduced to reading the technical texts. The texts used in this phase are a subset of those used to compile the learner's dictionary. This guarantees that participants recognise vocabulary learnt only days beforehand. In the third phase, the tutorial phase, problems are discussed which the participants have with texts which they themselves have selected. During this phase they are also introduced to a strategy of reading. The course lasts two months.

**83–458 Redicker, Claus-Henning.** Eine neue Sichtweise: Wirtschaftsenglisch als entscheidungsorientierte Landeskunde. [A new view of business English as cultural studies orientated towards decision making.] *Die neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), **81**, 5 (1982), 452–65.

The aim is to present a new aspect of technical business English focusing attention on decision-making, which itself is based on a knowledge of a country's business practices. After representation of the plurality of the conceptions concerning cultural studies, technical business English is presented as a specialised form of obtaining information about a part of the total environment of the undertaking within a national economy of a foreign country. In order to achieve optimum decision-making in this connection three basic conditions have to be fulfilled: (1) extensive knowledge of technical business English vocabulary; (2) qualified knowledge of the subject matter with particular reference to economics; (3) special informaion about the business methods peculiar to the country in question. A case study shows a concrete decision-making situation in marketing.

**83–459   Smith, Larry E. and Via, Richard A.** (East-West Culture Learning Inst., Hawaii). English as an International Language via drama techniques. *World Language English* (Oxford), **1**, 2 (1982), 102–7.

The main focus of English as an International Language (EIL) is on cross-cultural, cross-linguistic interactions, essentially in international communication contexts. It is defined as English used as a vehicle of communication between non-native speakers only, as well as between any combination of native and non-native speakers. When a language becomes international, it cannot be bound to any one culture; it is simply a means of expression for a speaker and his own culture, not an imitation of a native speaker. The main concern is intelligibility, then grammatical acceptability, then social appropriateness.

One of the best ways to teach EIL is via drama techniques which can be fitted into class time, the facilities available and the teacher's abilities. These include exercises in relaxation, observation, 'talk and listen' and improvisation [details].

**83–460   Walsh, V.** (King Abdul Aziz U., Jeddah). Reading scientific texts in English. *System* (Oxford), **10**, 3 (1982), 231–9.

Science textbooks and science texts are complicated documents for the native-speaking student quite apart from the student studyng in a second language. The article is mainly concerned with establishing this complexity. It does so by an analysis of English scientific texts which considers their complexity as a product of three separate yet closely connected variables: the linguistic, the rhetorical and the conceptual variables. Each of these variables is analysed in detail. After outlining the nature of scientific texts from this viewpoint, the article then examines some of the problems which can arise in the ESP reading programme. An attempt is made to develop a framework of guidance notes for ESP reading programmes based upon the issues arising from the analysis.

**83–461   Wyler, Siegfried** (Hochschule St Gallen) **and others.** American English as Swiss 'Gymnasia' (secondary education). *Bulletin CILA* (Neuchâtel), **36** (1982), 68–98.

A national survey was conducted about the attitudes and policies of teachers at Swiss *Gymnasia* towards standard American English (as opposed to British English). It included teachers, headmasters, Boards of Education, and 2000 former American Field Service students who had spent a year as exchange students in the USA. It was expected that modern communications and travel opportunities might have combated the prejudice against American English found in Switzerland up to the time of the Second World War.

Responses showed that British English is still considered the prototype by the great majority of English teachers, and even more so among headmasters and Boards of Education. This held for all the different language/cultural areas of Switzerland. British English has greater prestige and is purported to have greater clarity. Only a few teachers thought that American English was a language of current international

importance. The former AFS students thought that American English should be given due or even prime consideration in the English curriculum. There is no bias against reading and studying American literature in class, however.

# FRENCH

**83–462   Calvé, Pierre** (U. of Ottawa). Un trait du français parlé authentique: la dislocation. [A characteristic of authentic spoken French: dislocation.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal), **4**, 2 (1982), 25–44.

Dislocation is the phenomenon whereby elements of a sentence are displaced to the left or to the right, e.g. *Jean, lui, la mécanique, il connait ça* (*'Jean, him, mechanics, he knows about it'). One, or several elements (as in this example) may be displaced. For a sentence element to be analysed as dislocated, it must (*a*) be capable of being placed either to the right or to the left, and (*b*) be represented within the sentence by a pronominal form (e.g. above, *Jean = il, la mécanique = ça*). The main function of dislocation is to separate topic from comment and to then be able to give prominence to one or the other. For example, in French the intonation contour must fall on final elements, so a shift is needed to bring a comment into a position where it can be given prominence, e.g. *Je les ai faits, mes devoirs* ('I've done it, my homework') where *faits* is stressed.

Teaching foreign learners to use these forms has problems, not least in the fact that classroom materials would hardly ever contain instances of dislocation. Many teachers regard it as 'non-standard'. In most cases the learner does not need to master dislocation in order to express himself acceptably, but if he is exposed to even a small amount of authentic spoken French he will need to be aware of it, at least to the extent of comprehending the displaced elements in the right order for the syntax of the sentence. Some ways of teachng this awareness are suggested.

**83–463   Cox, Thomas J.** (San Diego State U.). The inchoative aspect in French. *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **56**, 2 (1982), 228–40.

The contrast in use between the imperfect and perfect tenses in French is exemplified and discussed, both theoretically, and from the point of view of applying a theoretical distinction to teaching methods for foreign learners of French. From the evidence of real examples it is argued that neither durativity nor terminativity is the crucial feature in the French aspectual contrast, but rather that the perfect is marked as inceptive (i.e. focuses on the beginning point of an action), whereas the imperfect is not. For example, *Personne ne me dit jamais la vérité. Même ton père, qui me mentait, qui m'a toujours menti pendant des années* ('Nobody ever tells me the truth. Even your father who lied (imperfect) to me, who always lied (perfect) to me for years'.) Here the same actions is viewed by the speaker from two different focuses, in the first case the situation, and in the second, its beginning point.

Thus learners of French need to understand that the distinction is not one of tense, nor of relative time frame, but of different ways of seeing the action. Several methods of language practice designed to help students to grasp the contrast are explained.

**83–464 Herzlich, Rivka** (Bar-Ilan U.). Bilan d'une recherche: les réactions du professeur aux erreurs des apprenants. Facteur négligé de l'apprentissage du français – langue étrangère. [Teacher reaction to student error – a neglected aspect of French as a foreign language.] *Bulletin CILA* (Neuchâtel), **36** (1982), 25–35.

Over a period of five months in 1978/9, 24 French classes in Israel, comprising 600 students between the ages of 15 and 17, were studied. Types of student error and their frequency and the teachers' reactions were noted. The teachers were all French speakers but knew too little Hebrew to help students with their pronunciation problems. Consequently the most common reaction to this kind of mistake was to ignore it. Although they believed that grammatical errors should be ignored and correct replies reinforced, in practice teachers seemed unable to stop themselves correcting mistakes in grammar and many were unaware they were doing so until it was pointed out to them. The need for an approach taking into account the special difficulties of Hebrew learners of French was clear.

**83–465 Hope, Geoffrey** (U. of Iowa). Elementary French computer-assisted instruction. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **15**, 5 (1982), 347–53.

This article describes FRELEM, a supplemental programme of drill and practice in elementary French grammar now being used on the computer at the University of Iowa. Thanks to a powerful natural language processing programme called DASHER, students at a terminal can call up written exercises and work at their own pace. The student's answer is compared to the correct answer in the computerised files and then flashed back with errors deleted for correction by the student. With DASHER, setting up a computerised tutorial in foreign languages is quite easy. Any language may be used, within the limitations imposed by the character sets available on the computer. The results of a survey of users indicate in some detail that students react well to the programme and use it often.

**83–466 Le Goff, Claude** (U. of Nebraska). Pour une pédagogie de la correspondance d'affaires. [Teaching business correspondence.] *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **56**, 2 (1982), 241–9.

Standard routine letters are now handled by the word processor. But the true business letter requires skill, understanding of the world of commerce and a good command of language on the part of the writer. In order to stimulate students' imagination and ingenuity, they were each asked to 'found' their own business and relate to it all the problems they were called upon to try and solve and all the letters they composed. On occasion these letters were the subject of discussion by the class as a whole. The advantage of this approach arises from the way it developed in the students qualities such as tact and diplomacy, and the ability to analyse problems, organise an argument and persuade and convince a customer – all essential to those who will later fill responsible posts in commerce and business. [Specimen letters.]

**83–467    Tobin, Yishai** (Ben Gurion U. of the Negev, Israel). Deep structure case, de Saussure, and decoding French. *Bulletin CILA* (Neuchâtel), **36** (1982), 6–24.

In this paper an applied linguistic language decoding model for French is proposed. It is based on a transformational generative notation (Fillmore, 1968, 1969), and applications of aspects of a form content analysis of systems of participation, focus, and deixis for Spanish (Garcia, 1975), hypothetically applied to French, based on certain differences between these two languages pointed out in Brakel (1979). It does not claim, however, to exemplify either theory or approach, but represents an eclectic adaptation, simplification and synthesis of aspects of these different theories in order to fulfill a specific pedagogical purpose; namely to improve the reading comprehension skills of native English-speaking intermediate and advanced students of French. Pedagogical grammars, specific problems of reading comprehension, and a proposal for an individualised reading programme are also discussed.

**83–468    Valdman, Albert.** (Indiana U.). Français standard et français populaire: sociolectes ou fictions? [Standard French and vernacular French: real dialects or linguistic fictions?] *French Review* (Baltimore, Md), **56**, 2 (1982), 218–27.

Both FS (*français standard*) and FP (*français populaire*) are abstractions, opposite poles of a linguistic continuum; neither corresponds to any objective reality. FS represents the supraregional norm, an idealised standard; identified with the formal and the written language and the speech of the educated classes, it draws upon literary French and upon foreign languages. FP, more spontaneous and more familiar, reflects the vernacular language, drawing upon regional dialects and urban slang. Negative attitudes towards FP have created resistance to the introduction of familiar forms of FS into French as a foreign language. Yet these are often simpler for the beginner to master, while the advanced learner needs to become familiar with different varieties of French.

# GERMAN

**83–469 Kemme, Hans-Martin.** Vorschläge zur Weiterentwicklung der Sprechfertigkeit bei fortgeschrittenen Deutschlernern. [Suggestions for developing proficiency in the spoken language in advanced students of German.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, FRG), **3** (1982), 7–11.

The problems experienced by advanced language students are phonetic and morpho-syntactic as well as those of lexical selection and communicative strategy.

Three ways are suggested of overcoming this problem. To enable them to master situations linguistically, students can be asked to act them out by simply imitating tape recordings of native speakers, although such imitative learning is not readily adaptable to everyday life. Alternatively, students can be helped to overcome purely linguistic problems by means of language exercises. However, while such exercises may take cognitive factors into account, it is very difficult to give them pragmatic relevance.

A third exercise is suggested which integrates the aims of the first two while keeping pragmatic considerations in the foreground. Language behaviour is learnt by experience rather than taught and utterances allowed to determine the action rather than vice-versa. Comparison with native-speaker dialogues is involved but students are freer to paraphrase. Grammatical problems which emerge are by no means ignored, but rules of usage have equal importance. [Examples]. Speech acts, once mastered, are used in other contexts, being linked by function rather than grammar. The teacher has a strong guiding role in this exercise. [A detailed guideline is given of the procedure to be followed.]

## ITALIAN

**83–470   Di Napoli, Roland** (Lycée Dumont d'Urville, Toulon, France). Vers une grammaire naturelle: le possessif et le demonstratif en italien. [Towards a natural grammar: the possessive and the demonstrative in Italian.] *Civiltà Italiana* (Florence), **5**, 1/3 (1981), 7–13.

Believing that there is a close link between grammar and the natural rhythms of life, such that, for example, the basic notions of 'having' and 'being' might be lexicalised in the kinship pronoun system; and that further explanation rather than habituation is necessary to ensure correct production of language, the author examines a perennial problem of teaching Italian: the use of the definite article before the possessive adjective and the simplification of demonstrative pronoun forms when combined with the demonstrative adjective (*questo libro, il mio libro; i miei libri, sono i miei; quei libri – sono quelli*).

In an Italian expression like *il mio libro* (my book), the article *il* determines while the possessive adjective *mio* qualifies and hence it follows the natural pattern of such expressions as *the long book*. The case of the demonstrative adjective is similar, e.g. *questo libro*, though it is only by referring to its Latin origins that we can detect both qualifying and determining elements. In both cases, the article reinforces the adjectival function which is in danger of being weakened by the pronominal function.