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# Teaching particular languages

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## English

**96-218 Flege, James Emil** (U. of Alabama at Birmingham) **and others.** Japanese adults can learn to produce English /ɪ/ and /I/ accurately. *Language and Speech* (Hampton Hill, Middx), **38**, 1 (1995), 25–55.

As is well known, Japanese adults who have just begun to learn English often err in producing /ɪ/ and /I/ because their native language does not possess such liquid consonants. The aim of this study was to determine if Japanese adults eventually learn to produce /ɪ/ and /I/ accurately in words like *read* and *lead*. Liquids spoken by 12 native Japanese speakers who had lived in the United States for an average of two years were often misidentified by native English-speaking listeners. Their productions of /ɪ/ and /I/ also received much lower (and thus foreign-accented) ratings than did the native English speakers' liquids. On the other hand, liquids

produced by native Japanese speakers who had lived in the United States for an average 21 years were identified correctly in forced-choice tests. This held true for liquids in words that had been read from a list as well as for words that had been spoken spontaneously. The ratings of liquids produced by 10 of the 12 experienced Japanese speakers fell within the range of ratings obtained for the 12 native English speakers. These findings challenge the widely accepted view that segmental production errors in a second language arise from the inevitable loss of ability to learn phonetic segments not found in the native language.

**96-219 Hewings, Martin.** Tone choice in the English intonation of non-native speakers. *IRAL* (Heidelberg, Germany), **33**, 3 (1995), 251–65.

While the English pronunciation of second language learners is an area of increasing research interest, the specific study of the English intonation of learners is still largely neglected. This is despite the observation, frequently reported, that incorrect intonation has a particular significance in producing misunderstandings. This study compares tone choice in parallel readings of a scripted dialogue by 12 speakers of British English and 12 learners, four each from Korea, Greece and Indonesia. Analysis is

conducted using the framework of the discourse intonation model outlined by Brazil. The findings suggest that the learners conform to native-speaker use of rising and falling tones for the purpose of marking what is said as either contextually retrievable or as a new contribution to the discourse. The main difference identified is that learners from all three first language groups fail to use rising tones for socially integrative purposes in the way observed in the data from native speakers.

**96-220 Mustafa, Zahra** (Jordan U. of Science and Tech.). Using Arabic and English in science lectures. *English Today* (Cambridge), **44** (1995), 37–43.

Teachers need to be aware of the language they use in teaching as this can influence the learning process. This may be of particular significance when teaching is taking place using a combination of two languages. In science lectures at the University of Jordan, lecturers use code-mixing in Arabic and English; research was carried out to establish the nature of this code-mixing. An attempt was made to pinpoint whether lecturers were aware of their 'alternate' use of the two languages.

In addition to an analysis of the lecturers' own perceptions of their code-mixing, the data recorded from a series of lectures was categorised into linguistic elements which included reference

expressions, illustration and terminology. It was found that mixing Arabic and English was the most frequent method of communicating information to students and that this occurred to a high degree in the use of technical terms and in the indication of the overall structure of the lecture.

Whilst lecturers were aware that they were mixing Arabic and English, they did not appear to be completely conscious of the functions achieved by this code-mixing. It is suggested that further research would illustrate more clearly the precise effect of code-mixing on the students' lecture comprehension.

**96-221 Weskamp, Ralf.** Schriftlichkeit im fortgeschrittenen Fremdsprachenunterricht – ein kontextorientiertes Modell der Textproduktion. [Writing ability in progressive foreign language teaching: a context-based model for text production.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **94**, 4 (1995), 387–401.

Writing texts which are relevant to the present and future situations of students of English does not seem to be part of the German school curriculum. Instead, most texts are only produced as answers to the questions given in textbooks. In this article a model enabling students to learn adaptable ways of goal-orientated text production is described. This model is concerned with the development of learning

strategies and skills. On the theoretical basis of a genre approach, it takes social and situational contexts into account and incorporates the concept of functional grammar. Practical examples are given throughout the article, which closes with a reflection in how far writing can also facilitate oral language production.

**96-222 Rampillon, Ute.** Grammatiklernen durch weniger Unterrichten: selbstverantwortetes Lernen. [Learning grammar with less instruction: independent learning.] *Der Fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, Germany), **3** (1995), 53–8.

The article seeks to show how school children can be encouraged to gain grammatical insights independently. It is hard for teachers to perceive the difficulties faced by students: many are too concerned about their own input. A variety of strategies and techniques are suggested which will help (German) students to gain grammatical understanding (of English). Examples are given of how grammar can be discovered independently, how students can best use and understand grammatical reference books, how they can retain

grammatical knowledge and how they can practise. Students should know as many different learning strategies and techniques as possible. Independent learning can easily fit into the formal instruction given in school, though it is not possible for all learning to be independent. The use of a worksheet to teach the English future with *will* and *going to* demonstrates how independent grammar learning may proceed from interesting and authentic textual examples.

## French

**96-223 Boissonneault, Julie** (Ontario Inst. for Studies in Ed.). Identité et appartenance culturelles: incidences sur l'enseignement d'une langue maternelle. [Identity and cultural belonging: impact on the teaching of a mother tongue.] *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **17**, 1 (1995), 11–21.

Though the development of general didactics for first languages has been slow, at the same time mother-tongue teaching in a minority setting has led to a number of significant findings. Linguistic and cultural heterogeneity in Ontario's French schools raises the question of teacher training in terms of identity awareness and cultural belonging. This article focuses on three aspects among the many

dimensions studied by the authors, namely: (1) the symbolic representations that the teachers have of culture; (2) their knowledge of the social dimensions of French as used in Ontario; and (3) their motivations to converge toward one cultural system or another. The authors comment on the impact of their findings on the didactics of French as a mother tongue in a minority context.

**96-224 Germain-Rutherford, Aline** (Trent U.). Réflexion sur l'introduction d'un entraînement à l'auto-évaluation dans le processus d'apprentissage du français langue seconde en contexte immersif. [Reflection on the introduction of training in self-assessment in the process of learning French as a second language in an immersion context.] *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **17**, 1 (1995), 49–60.

Teachers of French as a second language in immersion classes frequently observe that their students not only have difficulty moving past a

certain level in their language development, but also, paradoxically, that they feel a sense of satisfaction about achieving a great deal in their second

language. Helping students become aware of this discrepancy between what they think they can do in a second language and what they really can do in an extracurricular situation – by opening the classroom

to the outside world and by training the student in self-assessment – would, according to the author, respond at least in part to this phenomenon of the ‘language plateau’.

**96–225 Haillet, Pierre** (U. of Toronto). Les modèles théoriques en linguistique structurale et leurs applications pédagogiques: les concepts de valence, d’actant et de circonstant. [Theoretical models in structural linguistics and their application to teaching: the concepts of valence, actant and circumstant.] *Journal of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **16**, 2 (1994), 83–93.

Structural linguistics has devised a number of theoretical models for considering how the French language operates as a system. The descriptions arising out of such models will no doubt be invaluable to the creation of new approaches to the study of French-as-a-second-language teaching. This article aims to present a possible application to the integration of the concepts of valence, agent and circumstant to FLE university degree courses. Such an approach makes it possible to address the

complexity of linguistics events globally, to locate constants in the organisation of observable data and to solve a good many grammatical problems in contemporary French in an intellectually satisfying manner. As well, it is a necessary component of any process that aims to grant learners autonomy as well as awareness of the means available to them, even if they are studying a foreign language at an intermediate level.

**96–226 Metcalfe, Peter and others** (Open U.). The decline of written accuracy in pupils’ use of French verbs. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 47–50.

Analysis of examiners’ reports on French GCE and GCSE written papers reveals concern at the decline in written accuracy, in particular as regards the form and function of the verb and the use of the tenses. There is evidence of higher standards of performance in spoken French and of an oral effect on written French. The marking system is such as to allow pupils to get good grades without much knowledge of verbs.

Communication and accuracy are not

incompatible; conversely, the ability to conjugate verbs does not necessarily indicate ability to use them correctly. Explicit reference to written French verbs at an early (usually exclusively oral) stage of language learning is suggested, rather than a return to traditional grammar teaching, in order to assist pupils in dealing with the problems of segmentation, homophony and redundancy which are particularly characteristic of the French, as opposed to the Italian, verb system.

**96–227 Sharpe, Keith** (Christ Church Coll., Canterbury). The primacy of pedagogy in the early teaching of modern languages. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 40–2.

The majority of pilot schemes for the early teaching of modern languages involve specialist foreign language teachers intervening in primary classes, thus adding considerably to the cost. The Kent Primary French Project, on the other hand, stresses the importance of teaching skills over subject knowledge, while recognising the need to give primary teachers training to equip them with the knowledge of the language and the culture which

they need in order to teach French effectively to primary pupils. The training offered by Christ Church college also helps to build up the teachers’ confidence. Accreditation is available to those participating and the take-up rate has been 65%. The success of the Project has wider implications not just for teaching foreign languages but for primary education generally; more specialist teachers are not necessarily the solution to every problem.

## German

**96–228 Földes, Csaba.** Chancen der dialektophonen Methode in der Spracherziehung zwischen Deutsch als Mutter- und Zweitsprache. [Opportunities for use of dialectophone methods in language education between German as mother tongue and as second language.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, Germany), **26**, 3 (1995), 156–64.

In areas with German minority populations, the problems of multilingual, bicultural language learners have long been ignored. Is dialect to be seen as a help or a hindrance in their language education? Historically it has had very low status. Research from the South Tyrol in the 1960s and '70s revealed dialect speakers feeling isolated and inadequate, but successful dialectophone teaching practices were reported from Alsace and supported by educational reform. Teachers of German in Romania, Hungary and some states of the former Soviet Union were instructed to promote only standard forms, and intolerance of dialect interference was widespread. Today, however, a consensus is emerging that competence in both standard language and dialect is a desirable goal, and that even vestiges of dialectal competence can be built upon to maintain bilingualism and enhance learning of standard

German. Minority groups' literature must also be supported to promote awareness of cultural identity.

The more tolerant approach to non-standard forms does however mean that teachers require training and materials to diagnose and combat interference problems. This applies particularly to grammar, whereas at the lexical and phonological levels dialect competence has proved a positive influence. Tricontrastive material combining dialect, standard German and the majority language of the region is most useful. It is desirable but difficult to recruit teaching staff with appropriate dialect competence and enthusiasm. Such staff have a very motivating effect on pupils, and teacher education in the future should reflect this. Dialect should not be allowed to disappear, but should become an organic part of the language teaching process.

## Greek

**96–229 Heafford, Michael** (U. of Cambridge). Getting going in Greek – better some than all. *Learning Journal* (Rugby), **12** (1995), 66–70.

Eleven courses in modern Greek for the English learner are reviewed. Eleven features are used to assess the self-study courses these include: a statement of aims and guidance; materials; language skills, relevance and structures; vocabulary and context; and motivation. The criteria for assigning grades are explained, and the results tabulated. More detailed comment is provided with the grouping of the courses into categories. *Get By in Greek* is, by virtue of its layout and well-defined targeting, the most highly recommended. *Breakthrough Greek* and *Speak Greek Today*, despite more shortcomings in the areas of accessibility and content, are also recommended. While two other courses have

recommended features in terms of layout and background information, the remaining courses are not recommended for being variously too grammar-based, out of date, or incoherent.

Overall, writers seem to ignore the learner's need to become attuned to the new language, envisaging them learning from the book alone; some did not even contain dialogues. None offered constructive suggestions as to how learners might develop their knowledge of the language beyond the course and presentation was also generally disappointing. There is clearly a need for more lively and encouraging courses which dispense practical, effective advice.

## Japanese

**96–230 Tamaoka, Katsuo and Menzel, Barbara.** Die alphabetische Verschriftlichung des Japanischen: 'Sesam-Öffne-Dich' oder zusätzliche Fehlerquelle? [The romanised representation of Japanese: 'Open sesame' or cause of error? *ZFF: Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung* (Bochum, Germany), **6**, 1 (1995), 108–28.

The use of *romaji* (romanised representation of Japanese) for teaching Japanese learners with alphabetic mother tongues has been widely criticised

by researchers and educators, who claim a negative effect on pronunciation when *romaji* script is used. To investigate empirically the relation between the

learners' pronunciation of Japanese and possible phonological interferences from their mother tongues triggered by *romaji* script, three experiments (i.e., word naming, lexical judgement and text reading) were conducted in order to compare accuracy and speed in processing Japanese presented in *romaji* and in *kana* (Japanese *mora* script). The results indicate that learners of Japanese with

alphabetic mother tongues process *romaji*-presented words and texts twice as fast as those written in *kana*. Phonological interferences are therefore not caused by the use of *romaji* script; rather, the high efficiency in processing *romaji*-presented Japanese indicates certain instructional benefits for learners with alphabetic mother languages.

## Spanish

**96-231 Lafford, Barbara A. and Ryan, John M.** (Arizona State U.). The acquisition of lexical meaning in a study abroad context: the Spanish prepositions 'por' and 'para'. *Hispania* (Worcester, MA), **78**, 3 (1995), 528-47.

Examination of the development of form/function relations of the prepositions *por* and *para* at different levels of proficiency in the interlanguage of study-abroad students in Granada, Spain, revealed 'non-canonical' as well as 'canonical' uses of these prepositions. The most common non-canonical uses of these forms were as substitutions for other prepositions or conjunctions and overextensions of these forms. The discovery of inherent variability in

the interlanguage systems, as evidenced by the use of both *por* and *para* to express the 'duration of time' function, led the researchers to posit that the choice of preposition for this function is driven by the temporal context of the prepositional phrase. The informants in this study seem to have utilised several L2 learning strategies, such as the Naive Lexical Hypothesis, the Relexification Principle and the One-to-One Principle.

**96-232 Mason, Keith** (Princeton U.) and **Nicely, Kenneth** (Cave Spring High Sch.). Pronouns of address in Spanish-language textbooks: the case for 'vos'. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **28**, 3 (1995), 360-70.

The *voseo* is a frequently-used second person singular form of address in many New World varieties of Spanish. Unfortunately, most textbooks of Spanish regularly treat the use of *tú*, *usted*, *ustedes* and *vosotros*, but ignore *vos*. This article includes a survey of 37 first-year secondary and post-secondary Spanish textbooks for their coverage of the *voseo*. All texts were carefully analysed via a page-by-page survey of explanations, tables of contents, readings, marginal glosses and indexes. Results of the survey revealed that only 16% of the analysed texts included any reference to the *voseo*. The article also makes recommendations for the inclusion of the *voseo* in future textbooks of Spanish and in class instruction. Indeed, the *vos* may be considered as the simple

addition of one more vocabulary item that could improve students' communicative competence in Spanish.

Several factors support an increased attention to *vos*: students have contact with a number of native speakers who regularly use *vos*. This contact is between the students and Central and South Americans, both as immigrants in the United States and through contact with native speakers when students travel and study in Central and South America. Therefore, the ever-increasing contact with dialect speakers exhibiting *vos* requires increased attention to this important form of address in pedagogical materials and class lessons at all levels.