
Teaching particular languages

English

89-79 Baker, Mona (U. of Birmingham). Sub-technical vocabulary and the ESP teacher: an analysis of some rhetorical items in medical journal articles. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **4**, 2 (1988), 91-105.

This paper discusses the various definitions of 'sub-technical' vocabulary and suggests that more emphasis should be placed on one type of sub-technical lexis, namely items used for rhetorical/organisational purposes in specialised genres. A method is offered for categorising the vocabulary used in medical journal articles into three bands: general lexis, specialised lexis, and sub-technical/rhetorical items. General lexis is identified on the basis of its even distribution across medical and general English. Specialised lexis is identified on the basis of (a) its uneven distribution among medical

texts, i.e. text specificity, and/or (b) a significant difference between its frequency of occurrence in medical and in general English. Items not identified as specialised or general are assumed to have a potentially significant role in structuring the writer's argument. A detailed analysis of a selected number of these items is presented. The paper argues that rhetorical/organisational items are provided in the text as clues by which the reader can interpret the writer's intentions and evaluations. Their acquisition is therefore essential to successful interpretation. Some pedagogical applications are discussed.

89-80 Chamot, Anna Uhl (InterAmerica Research Associates, Rosslyn, Va.) Bilingualism in education and bilingual education: the state of the art in the United States. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (Clevedon, Avon), **9**, 1/2 (1988), 11-35.

This paper provides an overview of the current status and future directions of education for limited English proficient (LEP) students in elementary and secondary schools in the United States. First, the context of current educational activities is established through a brief description of the following topics: estimates of numbers of LEP school-aged children; legislative history of bilingual education; estimates of qualified teachers for LEP students; role of the Department of Education in the education of LEP students.

Issues related to current US government initiatives in the education of LEP students are discussed. The effects of these initiatives on the following areas are described: types of school programmes now

eligible for federal funding; network of services being provided to school districts serving LEP populations; teacher training programmes; recent research findings that are affecting the education of LEP students.

An assessment of probable future directions in the education of LEP students in the United States is discussed. These directions include: research on effectiveness of different methods for teaching English as a second language (ESL); development of content-based ESL programmes and materials; training of regular classroom teachers to meet the needs of LEP students; efforts to improve the quality of programme evaluation; research on second-language learning strategies.

89-81 Coleman, Hywel. 'Little tasks make large return': task-based language learning in large crowds. *Lancaster Practical Papers in English Language Education* (Lancaster), **7** (1987), 121-45.

This paper describes the 'Risking Fun' project, a package of materials and methodology for teaching English to undergraduates at Hasanuddin University, Indonesia. Students were taught English in large classes (average 55) and for only one or two semesters, and the established whole-class approaches had led to little or no learning. The new materials forced students to work individually and in groups on a series of linked problem-solving

activities related to their future needs (study skills). In one example, each of 28 learners was given different partial information from the title page of one of seven books, and the group had to work together to complete an annotated bibliography. The approach was found successful, encouraging new modes of classroom behaviour and a mature approach to learning.

89-82 Eastman, John K. (Official Sch. of Languages, Alicante, Spain). Simplified phonetic English for Spanish policemen, or written English retards listening comprehension. *System* (Oxford), **16**, 2 (1988), 207-12.

Using a simple phonetic system adapted to the local language, comprehension through the recognition of 'keywords' and the rudiments of the production of direction-giving and information-giving answers were taught in less than ten hours. The rapid

advances in listening comprehension achieved in the short time available throw enormous doubt on the advisability of using written English in the early stages of teaching.

89-83 Gurney, Ian. Keys to phonemic symbols: English phonology on the computer. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **41**, 4 (1987), 274-81.

This article aims to show how the use of an appropriately designed keyboard can help with the learning of a set of symbols for transcribing English, and at the same time give learners a picture of the English phonological system. Potential sources of difficulty are first of all considered, and it is argued that certain of these difficulties can be overcome by using the keyboard for initial presentation and practice. Using a custom-designed keyboard is actually a practical possibility, thanks to the microcomputer; the keyboard presented here has been implemented on a Spectrum 48k, but adaptations to other keyboards are also possible. After a discussion of the keyboard's design, a

description is given of a computer program of transcription exercises suitable for initial or remedial practice.

It is by no means essential, however, to use a computer for either the keyboard idea or the type of practice outlined to be effectively exploited. In particular, seeing the symbol set as a 'keyboard' is a powerful image, and the arrangement simply presented on a handout is easy to use and instructive. The computer has, however, played an instrumental role in the development of the ideas presented here, since practical implementation and testing contributed to the design of the keyboard and to a rethinking of practice procedures.

89-84 Kitao, Kenji (Doshisha U., Kyoto, Japan) **and others.** English textbooks in Japanese colleges: a study of trends and an analysis for 1985. *Doshisha Literature* (Kyoto, Japan), **33** (1988), 128-39.

A study analysed the 182 English reading textbooks published in Japan for the 1985 academic year, and compared them with textbooks published in previous years (though no statistical studies had previously been published). A number of trends were identified: textbooks are larger, with fewer pages, and have more pictures and visual aids. The English used in them is easier. More non-literary

texts and texts intended specifically for non-native speakers are used. More textbooks use recently written main texts, with exercises to supplement them. They tend to emphasise developing language skills, and more have Japanese authors or co-authors. More textbooks have accompanying audio-tapes and teachers' manuals.

89-85 Macaulay, Ronald (Pitzer Coll., California). RP R.I.P. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **9**, 2 (1988), 115-24.

The term 'Received Pronunciation' (RP) has been in use for over 60 years with reference to an accent of English. It is frequently recommended as the most suitable form of British English for broadcasting and as the model for both first and second language instruction. The argument for its use as a model is usually based on two claims: (1) that it has been more carefully described than any other British

accent and (2) that it is widely understood. The first claim may be true but raises the question why linguists and phoneticians should have been so preoccupied with a form of speech that everyone agrees is spoken only by a tiny minority of the population. The second claim has never been adequately tested but has apparently been assumed to be true because the BBC broadcasts RP all over

the world. Since RP is not necessarily the easiest or most appropriate accent of British English for foreigners to learn, the choice of RP as a model is difficult to justify. It would be better for everyone

if linguists, phoneticians and teachers overcame their fascination with the accent of an elite minority and concerned themselves more with the speech of the majority of the population.

89–86 Piper, Terry. The importance of heritage language. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **44**, 1 (1987), 78–87.

This article takes the position that the child's success in learning English as a second language may depend to a large degree on his or her proficiency in the heritage language. The author presents the case study of a kindergarten-aged child acquiring English as evidence that limited ability in the first language may impede development in the second. Working with Cummins' (1980) distinction between BICS

(basic interpersonal communication skills) and CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency), the author describes the difficulty that the child, Michael, experienced over a ten-month observation period. Her central point is that the child's failure to acquire BICS in any language necessarily impeded his ability to acquire the language of the school, more closely associated with CALP.

89–87 Skelton, John (Aston U.). The care and maintenance of hedges. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **42**, 1 (1988), 37–43.

Hedging is an important aspect of language use and needs to be introduced into ELT courses. Examples of hedges (which serve to qualify or modulate a proposition) are given. Three activities for classrooms are suggested to raise awareness of this language of equivocation: (i) sensitisation activities in which students read and grade a passage justifying what they give; (ii) rewriting exercises in which

students are for example invited to make a passage more or less definite, and (iii) for beginners, potential 'comment' words/phrases should be built into teaching, e.g. *seem, tend*; modals; *I think, believe...*; frequency adverbs; modifiers like *very, quite*; expressions of doubt like *I don't know, I'm not sure, maybe...*

89–88 Slater, Stephen. Being more adventurous with literature in the ESL classroom. *Prospect* (Adelaide, Australia), **3**, 3 (1988), 325–37.

The article explores how literature can be used more adventurously to build a sense of thematic coherence and involvement from the beginning to the end of the EFL/ESL course. Literature is a form of durable authentic material. Australian literature used as language texts with learners with a survival level knowledge of ESL can both extend their language

knowledge and assist their understanding of Australian culture.

The process of adapting and developing a literary work for use in the classroom and outside is illustrated, together with a scheme of work to cover 10 weeks (two hours per week).

89–89 Wajnryb, Ruth (U. of New South Wales, Australia). Communicative use of newspaper texts in classroom reading: the Read-Ask-and-Tell approach. *Reading in a Foreign Language* (Oxford), **4**, 2 (1988), 107–18.

The trend towards the use of authentic materials in English language teaching has meant the breaking down of some of the barriers between classroom and real world. One of the most popular sources of authentic materials is the newspaper. The article describes the Ask-Read-and-Tell method for using newspapers in the classroom, of which the main

components are the use of short newspaper articles, groupwork and communicative tasks which integrate the skills of reading, speaking and listening.

Articles chosen should be short, on topical or human interest subjects, containing lexis to extend learners without obstructing them. Students are put into small groups, which are each allocated an

article, which students read individually. In the Asking stage, they ask each other's help to clarify any difficulties. They are then given a short list of questions to consolidate their understanding, which the group discusses. In the Telling stage, each group elects a spokesperson, who represents the group and 'rotates' round the other groups, summarising the article for the other groups, who ask questions if required to clarify their understanding. When all the spokespersons have returned to base, the group's

members tell their spokesperson about the articles they have heard. [Suggestions for further work are given.]

The method has worked effectively. The articles are manageable, which give students confidence, as does being part of a group. The method increases the quality of learner interaction enormously, and language is used for a genuine communicative purpose. The teacher's role is that of resource person and classroom manager.

89-90 Yang Huaiyuan (Gansu Provincial Coll. of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Lanzhou, Gansu, China). Using seminar techniques to improve oral English: the Chinese experience. *System* (Oxford), **16**, 2 (1988), 201-6.

To improve the oral English communicative competence of postgraduate students in science and technology, it was decided to use seminar techniques as the principal method in Lanzhou Seismological Institute. After a first stage which provided essential knowledge of English structure, special topics were chosen and related reading materials assigned. After careful preparation, discussion took place in class with questioning and debating together. The seminar technique helped students to learn about the foreign culture, science and technology, as well as the foreign language. The seminar approach seemed especially helpful for these postgraduate students in

giving scope to their special skills and interests, developing their intelligence, cultivating their creative ability and providing a variety of practical communicative situations and a relaxed environment. The seminars helped them to lose their communication apprehension, reinforce their learning of oral English skills and evaluate their own success. Altogether 90 hours were spent on seminar-style work, and the outcome was a breakthrough in the students' communicative competence. This paper describes the work done and discusses some of the advantages of the approach.

French

89-91 Gallison, R. (U. of Paris III). De la lexicographie de dépannage à la lexicographie d'apprentissage: pour une politique de rénovation des dictionnaires monolingues de FLE à l'école. [From a 'repairing' dictionary to a 'learning' dictionary: towards a policy of reforming monolingual FL dictionaries in schools.] *Cahiers de Lexicologie* (Paris), **51**, 2 (1987), 95-118.

The article was prompted by a desire to call the attention of teachers to the gradual disappearance of the dictionary (*omnipresent outside schools*) from foreign language classes, in particular French as a second language, and also to an explanation of this prejudicial and paradoxical phenomenon caused not so much by prevailing methodologies (which impose the manual in place of the traditional anthology, grammar and dictionary) as by the inability of the dictionary to adapt itself to school

curricula. The article militates in favour of a renovation of the dictionary which would rehabilitate its use in school. This renovation would retain the classic function of 'bailing out' and include notably that of learning; the latter would transform the composition of dictionary articles and make of the dictionary what it has never been: a tool for the extension and structuring of lexical knowledge, truly complementing the teaching method or the manual.

89-92 Joseph, John E. (U. of Maryland). New French: a pedagogical crisis in the making. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **72**, 1 (1988), 31-6.

The ever-widening gulf between spoken French (New French) and written French (Modern French), already considerably wider than for other major

European languages and exacerbated by the ultra-conservatism of French, poses problems for teachers which are further compounded by academic tradi-

tion and cultural prejudice. It may even be that French stands on the verge of a major linguistic schism involving a fundamental structural change in word-order comparable to that which occurred when Romance hived off from Vulgar Latin.

In the meantime, the best solution is to abandon the contradictory current practice of either adopting

an oral approach to what is essentially a written language (Modern French), or else teaching students the written language first and the spoken one afterwards, and to follow instead a more logical and consistent course by introducing spoken New French first and written Modern French at a later stage.

89-93 Lehman, Dennis. Didactique et linguistique: violence et passion. [Language teaching and linguistics: violence and passion.] *Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **217** (1988), 45–50.

That French as a Foreign Language (FLE) has come of age and is interested in its own history is attested by the formation of SIHFLES (Société internationale pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère et seconde – International Society for the History of French as Foreign or Second Language) and by a number of doctoral theses, one of which, reviewed here, charts the changing relationship between language teaching and linguistics.

1960 marked a turning point in the history of FLE: CREDIF was founded in 1959 and BEL(C)

shortly afterwards (two institutions with markedly different concepts of the role of linguistics); the sixties saw the abandonment of the old notion of the civilising mission of French, the birth of *Français élémentaire* and *Français fondamental*, and the ascendancy of applied linguistics. Recent years have seen linguistics withdraw to the universities and move towards more abstract, theoretical research, leaving language teaching to confront its own identity crisis.

89-94 Saunders, Gladys E. (U. of Virginia). The structure of errors in the perception of French speech. *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **86** (1988), 43–99.

A group of undergraduates studying French phonetics and phonology at the University of Virginia were tested for listening skills in French. The tests revealed that a number of them not only failed to perceive accurately the exact same portions of the incoming signal, but failed to perceive them in precisely the same way. An in-depth analysis was

then made of the common hearing errors. It was found that American learners of French have difficulty perceiving and interpreting those portions of the French acoustic signal which are most prone to phonological variation. Moreover, their previous learning experiences can be hindrances.

German

89-95 Deffner, Gerold (Goethe-Inst., London). The case for making German a first foreign language in UK schools. *NIMLA* (Coleraine, N. Ireland), **16/19** (1988), 27–33.

Tradition is an important factor in choosing which foreign language to learn. Learning a foreign language helps the understanding of cultural differences. Teaching more than one language benefits a country economically and socially. Schools may be able to teach two or three languages (rather than just French), either within each school, or by local schools specialising.

Chinese, Arabic and Russian language teaching is rejected as the countries in question are so far away; European languages are the most appropriate. The comparative difficulties of learning German, French and English are discussed. German can be regarded

as easier to learn than English where tenses of verbs are concerned, and easier to learn than French where pronunciation and spelling are concerned.

German should be taught as a first foreign language, for several reasons: economic trade between Germany and the UK is substantial; German is a popular and academically useful language to learn; German is often taught in other countries as a foreign language and is therefore a useful international language; German is spoken as a mother tongue by more Europeans than any other language with the exception of Russian, and it is the ninth largest language in the world.

89-96 Molla, Steven R. and others (Logicon Inc.). Artificial intelligence in a German adventure game: 'Spion' in PROLOG. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), **6**, 1 (1988), 9-23.

'Spion' is an adventure game intended as a teaching tool for intermediate and advanced college German. It recognises and 'understands' a small subset of German large enough to allow a student to play the game. To win the game, players are required to communicate with a fictitious agent in complete,

correct German sentences. The version of the game described here was written in PROLOG as the natural outgrowth of a series of earlier programs. The program runs on an IBM-PC or compatible and is available at no cost for non-commercial purposes.

89-97 Sammon, Geoff (U. of Bonn). The image of Germany and the Germans among secondary school pupils. *German Teaching* (London), **1**, 2 (1988), 14-21.

A questionnaire was administered to 194 pupils in 11 English secondary schools to investigate their knowledge of and attitude to things German. Stereotyped ideas about physical appearance and clothing were rare, but a negative view of German character was common, particularly among those who had never been to Germany. Famous Germans mentioned by at least three per cent of pupils

included 10 historical figures (mostly Nazis), six sportsmen, five composers, three scientists and five others, led by Hitler (75%), Beethoven (44%) and Becker (41%). Knowledge of East Germany was minimal. Pupils learning German scored twice as well as the rest on factual questions. Problems were encountered with small sample size, facetious answers and copying.

Russian

89-98 Allar, G. Использование звучащих учебных материалов на продвинутом этапе обучения. [The use of audio materials at an advanced level of teaching.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **4** (1987), 88-90.

Many specialists believe that 'intake' language learning, i.e. listening and reading, is more effective than 'output', i.e. speaking and writing. In the USA, basic Russian teaching is devoted to 'intake' and time is spent regularly in the language laboratory. On an advanced level, however, more time is spent on 'output' and grammar, and little time is spent listening to tapes of native speakers.

The author uses tapes produced by *Russkiy Yazyk Za Rubezhom* which cover a wide range of topics at an advanced level. They are used in the language laboratory accompanied by a picture and a short list of vocabulary. The students listen to the tape as many times as is necessary then answer a series of

questions of increasing difficulty using the new words and phrases learned from the tape. This gradation of questions takes away the pressure often felt in speaking Russian. The lessons are conducted entirely in Russian and only major mistakes are corrected so as not to impede free speech.

This effective use of the living language is enjoyed by students, for it takes away the difficulty and pressure often experienced in intensive language learning. It stimulates their motivation and active participation, increases their knowledge of Russian and the Soviet Union itself and produces very favourable results.

89-99 Azimov, E. G. (Pushkin Inst., Moscow). Методические проблемы использования компьютера в обучении русскому языку как иностранному. [Methodological problems in the use of computers in the teaching of Russian as a foreign language.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **4** (1987), 75-8.

Existing computer assisted language instruction (CALL) programs can be divided into three groups: (i) those dedicated to the teaching of a particular

aspect of language [verb aspects, case systems]; (ii) those directed at the teaching of reading, writing and translation skills; (iii) monitoring and examining

programs. As yet no program exists which fulfils the demands of current teaching methods in Russian as a foreign language. The following failings are noted: no clear-cut division between the teaching and testing stages; no fundamental requirements for programs; and no tried and tested computerised system of analysis and correction of answers. This last problem is fundamental to the effectiveness of CALL and several solutions are mentioned. It is noted that 50–500 hours are needed to develop one hour of computerised course work and that this compares unfavourably with 20–25 hours for

conventional text books. Another limitation is the restriction to written form and computers have been linked to tape recorders, video discs and voice synthesisers in attempts to overcome this.

Current programs are best suited to the early stages of study. It remains difficult to imitate reality, however, and future programs will use more varied methods, games, etc. Some foreign specialists see the importance of CALL as being exaggerated, but developments and improvements in technology will make the process of language learning more effective and ease the workload of the teacher.

89–100 Vakoni, I. (Pushkin Inst. of Russian, Budapest). *Активизация речи на уроках русского языка с помощью видеотехники.* [The stimulation of speech in Russian language classes using videos.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **4** (1987), 85–7.

In modern-language teaching videos are an aid which can be used to stimulate oral work. The advantages of videos are: (1) They meet the individual needs of the pupils. (2) They provoke a verbal reaction and stimulate both individual and group oral work. (3) They create an atmosphere conducive to free conversation. (4) They work on both the mind and the emotions thereby doubly reinforcing what is learned. (5) They enable pupils to build on and master textbook material more quickly and easily. (6) They increase knowledge of the country of the language being learned.

It is important that before watching the video pupils should do preparation exercises and be asked to look out for certain things so that their viewing is active. There should also be follow-up work. There are two levels of understanding a video: (a) general understanding of content, and (b) analysis of detail which leads to oral work. More work should be done in this field so that videos can be used more effectively.

89–101 Bearne, Colin (U. of Sussex). Teaching with the dish. *British Journal of Language Teaching*, **26**, 1 (1988), 54–6.

The article describes the installation of a satellite TV system at the University of Sussex for the reception of programmes in Russian, and also in French, German, Italian and Dutch. The main kinds of material which have been found most useful are (1) news broadcasts, (2) discussion programmes – in an edited form these can form the basis of teaching units as part of a topic-centred approach, and (3) travel programmes and documentaries, for use as

background viewing material for students who will be spending a year abroad. To avoid clashes between languages, certain days are set aside for recording particular languages. In order to control the recorded material it is divided into three categories depending on length of shelf-life required. The call upon the tutor's and/or technician's time is considerable, though editing only replaces the processing of a text which is traditionally part of a teacher's preparation.

89–102 Panchenko, A. M. and Suvorova, A. I. (Pushkin Inst., Moscow). *Повышение уровня мотивации изучения русского языка.* [Increasing the level of motivation in the learning of Russian.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **2** (1988), 26–8.

In classes of 18- to 20-year-old students of Russian it was found that traditional teaching methods had the effect of decreasing the motivation of individuals within the group. It was decided that there should

be a broader scope for participation, opportunities for students to work on their spoken language in pairs and a wider use of more realistic exercises.

Role-playing exercises were found to be a good

method of making students the subjects of the learning process rather than the objects and of increasing the participants' confidence. Only positive roles were chosen which develop the self-esteem and confidence of the students. Motivation

increases as a result, together with general interest in the history and culture of the USSR. Such exercises improve not only the motivation of a student in the classroom but also, it is suggested, the overall quality of the individual.

Spanish

89-103 Cameron Bacon, Susan M. (U. of Cincinnati). Mediating cultural bias with authentic target-language texts for beginning students of Spanish. *Foreign Language Annals* (New York), **20**, 6 (1987), 557-63.

Novice foreign language readers, confronted with an authentic text, are frequently unable to get beyond the literal meaning of the words, and there is a danger that such materials, unless they are carefully selected and the students properly prepared, will only reinforce stereotypes concerning the target culture.

The popular media (newspapers, advertising, etc.) reflect the culture, their format provides the

learner with necessary contextual clues, and since by their very nature they are bound to be popular, they have great potential for motivating students.

The teacher must supply the background information required to facilitate comprehension before the text is read. Post-reading exercises should take the students beyond the factual detail to achieve a deeper understanding; the reading can provide the basis for further activities.

89-104 Phillips, David (U. of Oxford Dept. of Educational Studies). A language of 'unusual simplicity and facility': Spanish as first foreign language. *Vida Hispanica* (York), **37**, 2 (1988), 11-12.

While as few as 8 per cent of secondary schools in the United Kingdom offer German as first or alternative foreign language, only 1.5 per cent offer Spanish. Research is described which is being carried out in Oxford on the position of languages other than French (LOTF) in the secondary school curriculum, as first rather than second foreign languages. The Project is centred in six schools with different patterns of first foreign languages (FL1) provision, of which two are offering Spanish as an alternative either to French or to French and

German. Pupils will be monitored over a three-year period to test the hypothesis that there is nothing in the nature of German and Spanish as subjects in the school curriculum that makes them unsuitable as first foreign languages for the whole ability range. Research will focus on the kind of experience children have in learning French, German and Spanish, their attitudes to the three languages at various stages, the difficulties they experience, and organisational problems for the schools concerned.