97-225 Yu, Liming. The role of L1 in the acquisition of motion verbs in English by Chinese and Japanese learners. *The Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto, Ont.), **53**, 1 (1996), 191-218.

Research has demonstrated that cross-linguistic lexical similarities are generally positive for target language lexical acquisition, especially when the languages are typologically related. This paper examines the case of typologically *un*related languages. In a study comparing the use of motion verbs in English by Chinese- and Japanese-speaking learners, a clear overall advantage was found for the Chinese speakers, whose first language (L1) lexicalises the motion event in a way that is characteristically similar to English. A mini-lesson designed to raise awareness of, respectively, the relevant similarity and dissimilarity for, respectively,

the Chinese-speaking and Japanese-speaking learners did not, however, appear in general to affect performance on the English motion verb tasks. The brevity of the instructional intervention is one possible explanation of this negative finding. It is concluded that it may be counter-productive for teachers to focus exclusively on linguistic differences between a distant first and second language (L2). By drawing attention to similarities, teachers can boost learners' confidence in the relevance of their prior L1 knowledge and improve their motivation to learn the L2.

97-226 Zampini, Mary L. (U. of Arizona). Voiced stop spirantization in the ESL speech of native speakers of Spanish. *Applied Psycholinguistics* (Cambridge), **17**, 3 (1996), 335-54.

This study examines the role that voiced stop spirantisation plays in the acquisition of English /b d g/ and /ð/ by native Spanish speakers. The results of a data-based experiment show that accuracy in English pronunciation is hindered by native language transfer, including the transfer of spirantisation and first language syllable structure constraints. Furthermore, the suppression of

spirantisation is not achieved at an equal rate for all voiced stops: /d/ is spirantised the least often. It is proposed that the phonemic value of /ð/ in English contributes to this disparity. An examination of the second language pronunciation of /ð/ further reveals that learners do not assign phonemic status to /ð/ in all contexts; it is acquired in postvocalic position first and only more gradually acquired elsewhere.

Language testing

97-227 Denis, Jackie and Van Thienen, Karine (EVACOM, Belgium). Evaluer les compétences communicatives. [Evaluating communicative competence.] *Le Français dans le Monde* (Paris), **285** (1996), 62-5.

This is an account of how, having had no instruction during their teacher training on how to evaluate pupils' performance, the authors based their early assessments on methods they had been familiar with as pupils themselves, but later, faced with pressure to make their assessments more communicative, came to question and revise the procedures they were using. This paper is concerned in particular with the assessment of written work and compares (with examples) the very general approach used in the 1980s and much more detailed procedures adopted in 1995. The latter approach provided both tasks

that were more communicative and more detailed instructions for the students in how to go about them, and proved to be much more informative for teachers and motivating for students. This work arose as a result of the authors having attended a Lingua course on communicative competence assessment in Montpellier 1993 and their having been involved in the setting up of a working party [EVACOM] in Belgium to develop instruments of assessment. A description of the objectives and work of EVACOM is also given.

97-228 Edwards, Alison L. Reading proficiency assessment and the ILR/ACTFL text typology: a reevaluation. *The Modern Language Journal* (Madison, WI), **80**, 3 (1996), 350-61.

Two previous investigations into the validity of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)/ American

Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) text typology concluded that the model

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did not accurately predict test performance for foreign language (FL) readers. It is claimed, however, that these studies suffered from serious flaws in design and implementation that may have led to erroneous conclusions. The present study considered the validity of the pragmatic approach to text difficulty that was put forward by Child in 1987: the text typology underlying the ILR/ACTFL proficiency guidelines. The following question guided this research: does the Child discourse-type hierarchy predict text difficulty for second language readers? Test data were collected from 62 U.S. Government employees having some previously demonstrated French proficiency. Nine authentic French texts and a combination of testing methods were employed. The results suggested that the Child text hierarchy may indeed provide a sound basis for the development of FL reading tests when it is applied by trained raters and when such tests include an adequate sample of passages at each level to be tested.

97-229 Fulcher, Glenn and Bamford, Ron (U. of Surrey). I didn't get the grade I need. Where's my solicitor? *System* (Oxford), **24**, 4 (1996), 437–48.

This article looks at standards in language testing, in the context of the legal framework of the United States and the United Kingdom. It is argued that testing bodies in the U.S. conduct appropriate research into reliability and validity partly because of a legal requirement to ensure that all tests meet certain technical standards. These grew out of litigation involving employment testing, and now apply to all psychological and educational tests too. In the United Kingdom litigation still only relates to employment issues. However, principles have been laid by which successful challenges to educational assessment could be mounted. These principles are examined, and areas are highlighted in which examination boards offering English as a foreign language (EFL) tests may be challenged in the courts. The authors agree with Alderson and Buck's argument that British examination boards would only begin to meet appropriate technical standards once EFL testing was integrated with mainstream school testing; but conclude that this end can only be achieved once examination boards have been taken to court on the grounds that their tests are unreliable, invalid, or biased.

97-230 Hughes Wilhelm, Kim (Southern Illinois U.). Combined assessment model for EAP writing workshop: portfolio decision-making, criterion-referenced grading and contract negotiation. *TESL Canada Journal* (Burnaby, B.C., Canada), **14**, 1 (1996), 21–33.

An assessment model that combines portfolio decision-making with criterion-referenced grading is described as applied in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pre-university English as a second language (ESL) writing programme. In this model, portfolio decision-making is combined with criterion-referenced assessment. The portfolio concept is valuable in that learners are encouraged to 'own' and to make decisions about their work. At the same time, criterion-referenced assessment allows teachers to set meaningful, consistent standards while encouraging learner self- and peer assessment. Learner involvement may be further encouraged through the use of contract grading and collaborative revision of grading criteria. For academically oriented adult ESL learners, in particular, it is claimed that this assessment scheme encourages learner control while keeping performance-based standards at desirable levels.

97-231 Katona, Lucia (Hungarian State Foreign Langs. Examinations Board, Budapest). Do's and don'ts: recommendations for oral examiners of foreign languages. *NovELTy* (Hungary), **3**, 3 (1996), 21–35.

This study focuses on how interviewers in oral language examinations can make their input comprehensible when faced with communication difficulties. In a language proficiency interview, where there is an asymmetrical allocation of control over discourse, it is the responsibility of the interviewer to shape oral interaction and avoid miscommunication. Oral language examinations were audio- and videotaped and instances of modified interviewer input were categorised as

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being self-initiated and unsolicited, or as negotiated input, that is, initiated by a signal from the candidate of incomprehension. Modified input can take various forms, including repetition, addition, explanation, paraphrasing, fronting, clearer articulation, and stress of key words. Analysis of the data reveals that some modifications can help, whereas others confuse or mislead the candidate, interrupt their response, or reduce their opportunity to answer properly. It is clear that some modifications unnecessarily increase 'examiner talk' time, thereby reducing 'candidate talk'. Recommendations are given as to appropriate type and amount of input interviewers should aim for.

97–232 North, Brian (Eurocentres Foundation, Zurich). Description and assessment of foreign language learning proficiency in the Swiss educational system. *Bulletin Suisse de Linguistique Appliquée* (Neuchâtel, Switzerland), **64** (1996), 129–43.

Competence scales for grading and describing foreign language (FL) ability are usually based on subjective experience and consensus. In the project 'Evaluation and self-evaluation at fixed points in the Swiss education system', such a scale was developed empirically. Short descriptions of what learners at different levels can do in the FL were checked for quality in workshops and used by teachers of English, German and French to assess learners. With the help of Rasch statistical analysis, a common ten-point scale was created for communicative ability in FL interaction and for listening comprehension, which, it is claimed, allows an overview of levels reached by learners in different institutions and language areas. The final phase of the project is examining the use of the descriptions and scales for self-evaluation and for the development of an FL portfolio as planned by the Council of Europe.

97–233 Powell, Bob and others (U. of Warwick). Teachers' views on target language testing. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **14** (1996), 3–9.

This article outlines a survey of 300 Foreign Language (FL) teachers from a variety of schools in the Midlands, UK, which investigated local reaction to the restrictions to be placed, from 1998, on the use of English in modern FLs examinations. An overview of previous research on the use of the Target Language (TL) in examination contexts suggests that earlier investigators evinced a cautious perspective. The authors maintain that there was no substantial or detailed investigation of teacher attitudes previous to the establishment of the new Target Language Testing (TLT) policy. The current survey mapped data on an Agree/Disagree/Neither agree nor disagree/No response grid, in relation to such statements as 'Test rubrics in the TL are desirable' and 'The use of TLT can distinguish clearly between levels of attainment'. The subsequent analysis [tabular data] suggested general agreement with TLT in theory, but identified a number of concerns. Respondents felt, for example, that TL rubrics could simply be misconstrued (success/failure thus depending on candidates' ability to understand instructions rather than their linguistic mastery of the test items themselves), and that less able pupils would be disadvantaged by not being able to answer their comprehension questions in English. Practical problems in the successful implementation of TLT were also perceived, and teachers were concerned at its implications for the National Curriculum.

97–234 Robinson, Peter (Aoyama Gakuin U.) **and Ross, Steven** (Kwansei Gakuin U.). The development of task-based assessment in English for academic purposes programs. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), **17**, 4 (1996), 455–76.

Proposals for task-based approaches to syllabus design have had little to say about the role of testing and evaluation procedures. This paper suggests a role for 'authentic measurement' using performance measures in task-based approaches to assessment. In particular, it describes the implementation of a task-based, performance-referenced test of English for academic purposes (EAP), developed for use in placing English as a second language (ESL) students into an academic reading programme at a university English language institute. Results of the present study, based on contrastive discriminant analyses of systemic and mixed systemic/procedural placement batteries with an academic research task performance as the criterion variable, suggest that traditional skills-focused tests of EAP ability relate only weakly to learners' ability to act on such skills in authentic task conditions. Indirect performance-referenced tests, when used in combination with system-referenced tests, are much clearer predictors of success in performing academic task simulations. The relationship of performance-referenced testing to issues in placement and academic English course design are discussed in light of the present study.

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Teacher education

97–235   Barnes, Ann (Warwick U.). Maintaining language skills in the initial training of foreign language teachers. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **14** (1996), 58–64.

Modern foreign language students spend two thirds of their Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses in partnership schools where they may be asked to teach in their second and third foreign languages as well as in their main foreign language. It is thus important for their linguistic skills to be maintained and improved. Warwick University therefore included in the PGCE course for 24 students completing in 1994-1995 a language refreshment programme composed of one term of guided independent learning and one term of language classes during which a formative evaluation was carried out. Students expressed concern about being able to give clear grammatical explanations and examples, and about their vocabulary range and oral work. A final, formal evaluation by staff and students highlighted the value of a risk-free, informal environment with supportive tutors. Both staff and students thought a teaching topic worked well, as did role play and discussion, rather than translation, comprehension and 'hackneyed' topics such as the environment. Future courses will concentrate primarily on the improvement of confidence in spontaneous target language use and grammatical accuracy.

97–236   Macrory, Gee (Manchester Metropolitan U.). The modern foreign languages PGCE course: the role of the target language. *Language Learning Journal* (Rugby), **14** (1996), 65–9.

The article initially foregrounds the problems of students on Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses who graduated 15-20 years before, have not had opportunities to maintain their language skills and/or been largely unsupervised on periods of residence abroad, and yet will have to teach in the target language (TL). With the principal aim of providing opportunities for students to hear and use the TL and to learn new subject-specific language, the university set up input sessions in TLs for 59 students, including 24 dual linguists. Students then completed questionnaires to evaluate the policy. 84% favoured at least some of the course being in the TL. 48 out of 50 respondents wanted practical sessions, workshops, teaching topics, role-plays and language analysis sessions to be in the TL, whereas English was preferred for course administration, assignment briefings and for areas such as the National Curriculum and national testing. Students found large classes initially inhibiting and less conducive to TL use. Positive comments outweighed negative overall, and 74% felt that the use of the TL had contributed to their understanding of pupils' learning, especially in terms of affective factors. Dual linguists expressed concerns about their second foreign language. In future the university plans to include more language work in PGCE courses.

97–237   Medgyes, Peter and Ryan, Christopher (Eötvös Loránd U., Budapest). The integration of academic writing skills with other curriculum components in teacher education. *System* (Oxford), **24**, 3 (1996), 361–73.

The Centre for English Teacher Training (CETT) of Eötvös Loránd University was established in order to meet the increased demand for English teachers which followed the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the resulting relaxation of foreign language education policy in Hungary. CETT's BEd programme for teaching English as a foreign language combines a substantial professional training component with language improvement and more traditional philological studies. This paper describes the way in which the academic-writing component developed over the first four years of CETT's existence, in response to the needs of the trainees taking the BEd. The collaborative process of programme design included tutors who were not directly involved with language improvement. The resulting programme reflects principles shared by the whole staff, and contributes directly to the aim of efficient teacher education which is CETT's main *raison d'être*.

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97-238 Pennington, Martha C. (City U. of Hong Kong). The 'cognitive-affective filter' in teacher development: transmission-based and interpretation-based schemas for change. *System* (Oxford), **24**, 3 (1996), 337-50.

Two basic orientations to the learning process are described, that of 'transmission' and that of 'interpretation'. According to the first view, knowledge is acquired by transfer of information from source to receiver; according to the second, knowledge is developed in the receiver interactively with the source. By analogy to Krashen's views on input and language learning, it is argued that transmission- or interpretation-based values are like a cognitive-affective filter, in that they form a cognitive and an evaluative, emotional frame that affects both intake of new information and performance (output) in teaching and teacher change. The lowering of this filter through reflection makes it possible for teachers to take in new ideas and to incorporate them into their values and practices. However, since some teachers may not have a reflective orientation, guidance in the reflective process may be necessary to move them through cycles of change at an increasingly deep level.

97-239 Tsui, Amy B. M. and others (U. of Hong Kong). Enhancing teacher development through *TeleNex* – a computer network for English language teachers. *System* (Oxford), **24**, 4 (1996), 461-76.

This paper reports an attempt to enhance the continuous professional development of English language teachers by setting up a computer network, *TeleNex*. The paper first proposes that the concept 'teacher development' encompasses three important facets: the development of knowledge and skills, the development of a collaborative culture, and the development of the teacher as a person. It then discusses how the two components of the network, namely the database component and the communications component, enhance these facets of development. Briefly, the database component provides, through its grammar database and teaching ideas database, a body of subject matter knowledge and a bank of teaching resources to help teachers to develop their knowledge and skills. The communications component focuses on the other two facets of teacher growth. It provides a platform for teachers to initiate cross-school collaboration, build confidence in themselves as autonomous professionals, and share reflections on their classroom practices with others, thus enhancing their collaborative and personal development. Messages sent in by users show that participating teachers have been using the network to enrich their knowledge base and to share ideas and frustrations. These messages apparently demonstrate that the network is providing valuable support to teachers in their development as autonomous professionals.

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