Teaching particular languages

English

94–305 Bowers, Roger (British Council, Manchester). English 2000: 'A networked future'. *English Today* (Cambridge), **9,** 4 (1993), 34–7.

The BBC English 50th Anniversary Forum 'Fifty years on' asked what the role of the English language specialist will be in years to come. We are best able to influence the future, and influence it for good, if we are predicting change and keeping pace with it. The ELT profession must see its role in relation to the political, economic, social and technological shifts of the coming decades. The information explosion means that EFL must see itself as part of the knowledge-based industries. The profession must also develop, pronounce and even market its own professionalism. This means regulating membership criteria and qualifications, and ensuring the services offered are fit for the purpose they are intended to serve. ELT, at least in the UK, must cease to be such a fragmented and internally combative profession. More of the profits of the lucrative ELT business must be ploughed back into professional development, market investment and innovation, and there must be more provision for those not in a position to buy their country's access to English at market rates. The profession must publicise itself and explain its mission. There is a clear need for an international language in a Europe of 40 languages and a multilingual world. To quote John Trim at the *Etats Généraux des Langues*, 1989: 'It is perhaps through the simultaneous development of proficiency (productive and receptive) in a common language of international currency and the ability to understand each other's mother tongues that we can most practically realise the common objectives to which all international organisations are committed.'

94–306 Chevillet, François (Grenoble U.). English or Englishes? *English Today* (Cambridge), **9,** 4 (1993), 29–33.

The author replies to Tom McArthur's 'Models of English' in the October 1992 issue of the same journal, and considers such models and the singularity or plurality of the language(s). Using the image of the tapeworm, divided into discrete yet fused segments, to describe the history of English is an oversimplification. The historical divisions established by scholars are convenient artefacts set up for didactic purposes, and rather than being incremental, Modern English is shifting like a bed of quicksand. The divisions in the history of a language are based on the famous Saussurean dichotomy *synchrony* vs. *diachrony*. Synchrony (describing the 'state' of the language, disregarding whatever changes might be taking place) should be viewed as dynamic and diversified. For example, non-standard relativisation strategies and other such constructions have always existed in English, and the language historian can reconstruct their history easily, emphasising the continuity of some phenomena in the grammar of the language. It may be wrong to believe that synchrony and diachrony are separated by watertight partitions. The biological model, linked to the notion of linguistic monogenesis, is also inadequate. Nineteenth-century grammarians worked on historical linguistics and set about establishing the existence of 'language families'. English, German, Dutch, Norwegian, etc., were for example considered as 'sister languages', the 'daughters' of Common Germanic. The family metaphor is in fact inadequate, not least because a living organism is characterised by the cycle birth–growth–death, and languages do not behave that way. Languages are rather ebbing and flowing like the tide, neither progressing nor decaying. A geopolitical model has more in its favour than either a chronological or a biological one, but the choice of the label 'English' or 'Englishes' is fraught with grammatical and philosophical difficulties. McArthur's use of the phrase 'English languages', implying the existence of a new family, is very bold. It is justified on political grounds, and possibly on literary grounds too: in Britain's former colonies, the English language has been transformed beyond recognition. On linguistic grounds, however, the label 'English languages' is more open to criticism. 'Englishes' or 'English languages' are largely mutually intelligible: therefore 'varieties of English' seems a better label to describe this diversity.

94–307 Cummins, Jim (Ontario Inst. for Studies in Ed.). Ideological assumptions in the teaching of English as a second language. *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **15**, 2 (1993), 37–50.

This paper presents a framework for analysing factors that contribute to the educational success or failure of students from English-as-a-second-language (ESL) backgrounds. The most direct determinant of students' academic experience is the pattern of interactions they follow with educators in the school setting. The relationship between these 'micro-interactions' and the 'macro-interactions' that occur between dominant and subordinated groups in society is mediated both by educational structures (e.g., curriculum, instructional language, and assessment procedures) and by the role definitions educators adopt with respect to culturally diverse students and communities. It is argued that in order to reverse patterns of educational failure among certain groups of ESL students, the micro-interactions occurring between educators and students must actively challenge patterns of coercive relations of power in the wider society.

94–308 Genesee, Fred (McGill U., Canada). All teachers are second language teachers. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **50**, 1 (1993), 47–53.

The last ten years have seen a marked shift away from teaching ESL in schools in isolation and towards the integration of language and content instruction. The academic content of the curriculum itself can provide learners with a strong motivation to acquire the language, and ESL teachers are increasingly coming to use meaningful content as a basis for planning and delivering second language while grade level teachers, as content specialists, are playing an ever greater role in second language learning.

Effectively helping second language learners to acquire the linguistic skills they need to achieve academic success calls for partnership between ESL teachers and grade level teachers and for the latter to acquire some of the knowledge and skills that were formerly the speciality of ESL teachers.

94–309 Handscombe, Jean (North York Board of Ed., Canada). Lessons from the younger set. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **50**, 1 (1993), 54–66.

The author's 'lessons' are presented as six statements that she has derived from her teaching of ESL to children. It is argued that these notions run counter to current practice in ESL for adults, and that teachers in this area could well give them consideration in their own working contexts. The points discussed are: the judicious use of L1 in the classroom; the need for L2 teachers to see the world from the learners' point of view; having classes of learners at different levels of proficiency; the integration of L2 work in curricular activities (rather than teaching up to a certain level of L2 first); incorporating assessment into instruction, and integrating ESL teaching and its techniques into the mainstream classroom.

94–310 Phillips, C. J. (formerly U. of Birmingham) **and Birrell, Heather V.** (formerly Education Adviser, Coventry City Council). Number learning of Asian pupils in English primary schools. *Educational Research* (Windsor, Berks), **36**, 1 (1994), 51–62.

Educational attainments were assessed at the end of the first year in five junior schools. A group of Asian pupils from non-English-speaking homes was compared with the indigenous pupils of the same school classes. Attainments and progress since testing a year earlier are contrasted for spelling and mathematics. In spelling the average of the scores of the Asian subjects was equal to the national mean and little below the average of the indigenous sample. By contrast, the Asians' average in mathematics was significantly less than that of their indigenous peers and below the national mean. Analyses of items in the mathematics tests show language for number concepts to be a factor in these results. The place of language is discussed with regard to the teaching of number to young children from ethnic minorities.

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94–311 Reid Thomas, Helen C. and Hill, David R. (Edinburgh U.). Survey review: seventeen series of graded readers. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **47**, 3 (1993), 250–67.

This is the third in a series of survey reviews. Since the first in 1988, the graded readers scene has changed enormously, with the books becoming a more stimulating teaching resource. They are often carefully targeted to meet the needs of particular groups, e.g. the new series for Africa. The review covers series for world-wide use, series for Africa and series for the Far East.

94–312 Silva, Tony (Purdue U.). Toward an understanding of the distinct nature of L2 writing: the ESL research and its implications. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **27**, 4 (1993), 657–77.

Dealing effectively with L2 writers requires a clear understanding of the nature of L2 writing. In an attempt to develop such an understanding, 72 reports of empirical research comparing L1 and L2 writing were examined. The findings of this research indicate a number of salient differences between L1 and L2 writing with regard to both composing processes (and subprocesses: planning, transcribing, and reviewing) and features of written texts (fluency, accuracy, quality, and structure, i.e., discoursal, morphosyntactic, and lexicosemantic). Implications of the findings for L2 and L1 writing theory; future comparative writing research; and the practical concerns of assessment, placement, staffing, and instruction are discussed.

94–313 Weinstein-Shr, Gail (San Francisco State U.). Directions in adult ESL literacy – an invitation to dialogue. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **27**, 3 (1993), 517–27.

From a reading of the contributions to this special number of the *TESOL Quarterly*, three main trends in ESL literacy emerge: a shift in focus from individuals and institutions to families and communities; recognition of the role of existing knowledge in the construction of new knowledge; and the need to promote collaboration at all levels. Further research is needed to maximise the potential benefits of these trends and their effectiveness in the classroom.

ESL literacy teachers, while helping their students to find a voice, must also work towards shaping a collective voice for the profession and make sure that it is taken into account in the planning of programmes and policy.

94–314 White, Ron (U. of Reading). Saying please: pragmalinguistic failure in English interaction. *ELT Journal* (Oxford), **47**, 3 (1993), 193–202.

This article discusses the consequences of a mismatch between form and function caused by the wrong application of the rule of politeness in a foreign language, specifically, the use of *please* with the imperative by Japanese speakers of English. Normally *please* + imperative is a request, the beneficiary being the speaker, but some foreign speakers of English use this form for other purposes, when they want the hearer to be the beneficiary, using *please* to make it sound polite [e.g. *Please take the elevator to the ground floor*].

Broader implications for inter-cultural communication are considered. The use of inappropriate language can set up a chain of wrong attributions by the hearer. The question of whose rules of interpretation apply – the native English speaker's or the non-native speaker's – needs careful consideration.

French

94–315 Flewelling, Janet. Using computers in the elementary core French program. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto, Canada), **50**, 2 (1994), 387–98.

Computers have become commonplace in schools and more and more elementary core French teachers are expressing an interest in incorporating computers into their teaching programme. This paper looks at

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the benefits associated with computer use in second language programmes as well as suggesting how to set up the programme, select software and make computer use an integral part of the teaching programme.

94–316 Fox, Cynthia (State U. of New York). Communicative competence and beliefs about language among graduate teaching assistants in French. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **77,** 3 (1993), 313–24.

Without a clear understanding of the theoretical concepts underlying the communicative approach to language teaching, it is likely that teachers will be less than effective in using communicative teaching practices and techniques.

A survey of 147 first year graduate teaching assistants (TAs) in French (of whom approximately two-thirds were non-native-speakers) revealed that TAs generally did not conceptualise language according to any model of communicative competence (tending rather to see sociolinguistic competence as subordinate to formal grammatical rules and not complementary) and that their beliefs about language reflected their own experience of language learning. There was no significant difference between native and non-native speakers.

In order to remedy the shortcomings of current practice-oriented training programmes, it is suggested that TAs need courses in linguistic analysis and description and that supervisors should encourage them to uncover their own assumptions about language.

94–317 Nadeau, Marie (U. of Quebec at Montreal). Peut-on parler de 'français sourd'? [Can one talk of 'deaf French'?] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **15,** 2 (1993), 97–117.

Are ungrammatical sentences made by persons deaf since birth particular to this population to the point of being able to speak of a '*français sourd*'? In order to answer this question, this article compares the categories of errors produced in the writings of 226 deaf persons from a corpus of 377 texts with the categories of errors observed in the writings in French as a first language and in French as a second language. It turns out that the errors in the writings of deaf persons have much in common with those of students learning French as a second language. These results emphasise the limits that may exist in using a programme for teaching French as a mother tongue with this population. However, the problems involved in teaching French to deaf persons exceed the simple choice between first and second language. The errors that remain particular to them are sufficiently important to justify a deepening of our understanding of how they learn and use French in order genuinely to adapt education to the needs of this population.

94–318 Nemni, Monique and others (U. of Quebec at Montreal). L'erreur: les intéressés prennent la parole. [Error: those involved have their say.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **15,** 2 (1993), 119–35.

This exploratory study attempts to shed a different light on error correction. It compares the perceptions of teachers and students (adult immigrants studying in a COFI, and young immigrants in secondary school) in FSL classes as to 'traditional' questions regarding error correction: Should errors be corrected? How? When? And by whom? The sometimes surprising results are compared with some of the literature on the subject, and seem to show that further research is necessary in order to determine whether teachers and students endorse the current pedagogical recommendations regarding the tolerance of errors in phonology, morphology and syntax, and if students' needs are presently met.

94–319 Painchaud, Gisèle (U. of Montreal). L'enseignement des langues aux jeunes Québécois des communautés culturelles: politiques et programmes. [The teaching of languages to young immigrants in Quebec: politics and programmes.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal, Canada), **15,** 2 (1993), 7–22.

The language choice of young immigrants represents an important and crucial issue for the survival and development of French in Quebec. Quebec society, which purports to be French-speaking, democratic and culturally pluralist, makes it mandatory for school-age immigrant children to attend

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French-speaking schools. Children whose mother tongue is not French spend an average of ten months in a special class prior to their integration into regular classes. The school performance of non-native speakers of French compares favourably to that of native speakers, even though teachers often mention their shortcomings in French. Heritage languages are also taught within the schools through the heritage-language programme (PELO) and within a community setting by ethnocultural associations through the ethnic-language programme (PLE). There are also ethnic schools where teaching is done both in French and in the heritage language. Unfortunately, there is very little empirical data documenting the linguistic skills of these minority children, either in French or in the heritage language.

German

94–320 Kym, Annette (Hunter Coll., CUNY). Looking back on East Germany: a literature course to advance foreign language skills and build cultural understanding. *Die Unterrichtspraxis: Teaching German* (Philadelphia, PA), **2** (1993), 140–7.

The author has designed and taught a course on East German literature where the linguistic requirements and goals are as precisely defined as those of content, and take into account the varying proficiency levels of students. A potential text is assessed not on artistic merit or how representative it is of its period, but on practical aspects such as the kind of activities that can be based on it. Some background information about the function of literature and the arts in a Marxist–Leninist state has to be provided to students by the teacher. The syllabus consists mainly of works by officially sanctioned authors (Christa Wolf, Ulrich Plenzdorf, Christoph Hein and others), supplemented by the poems of Wolf Biermann, representing dissident writers, and by some recent publications about the *Wende* itself. The texts are selected to illustrate certain historical events or turning points in East German literature or politics. During the course, students are encouraged to acquire information and specialised vocabulary, so that by the end they are reading texts with the eye of an initiated cultural participant. After initial diagnostic tests, students' assignments are adjusted to their individual proficiency. Those operating on lower levels work on tasks dealing with narration and simple description, while those on higher levels concentrate on presenting and supporting opinions, making hypotheses and complex descriptions, and expressing abstract thoughts. Allowances can be made for students who want to try assignments on a higher level than they can reasonably manage. They then usually realise this is not beneficial to their progress and willingly drop back.

Japanese

94–321 Ross, Steven (U. of Hawaii in Manoa). The ins and outs of paragoge and apocope in Japanese–English interphonology. *Second Language Research* (Utrecht, The Netherlands), **10**, 1 (1994), 1–24.

Syllable structure in interphonology has consistently demarcated the initial phases of phonological transfer, as well as the basis for a putative universal preference for the open syllable. The manner in which syllable structure is continually reorganised during the processes of acquisition has, however, not attracted much attention. This article addresses two phenomena in the acquisition of second language syllable structure – a preference for open syllables, as manifest in paragoge, and a developmental process of final segment apocopation that applies to first language lexical items appearing under the domain of the second language in-tonational envelope. The data for the analyses come from spontaneous utterances produced by Japanese students of English as a foreign language. Results of two ten-factor variable-rule analyses suggest that paragogic epenthesis is conditioned by a syllable structure constraint based on the L1, and that variation in the type of segment epenthesised is governed by natural phonological constraints. Analyses of the apocope dataset indicate that acquisition of L2 stress patterns leads to a restructuring of the syllable structure constraint leading to suppression of open syllables in the L2.

Russian

94-322 Muckle, James (U. of Leeds). Survey of schools, polytechnics and universities where Russian is taught. *Educational Research* (Windsor, Berks), **36**, 1 (1994), 39–50.

In this survey carried out in the academic year 1991/92 it was discovered that 307 secondary schools in the UK included Russian in the curriculum, which was a slight increase overall since 1988. The overall increase was accounted for almost entirely by an improvement in the numbers of independent schools teaching Russian: the figure for maintained schools has dropped in both Scotland and England. (The position in Northern Ireland and Wales has improved, though numbers of Russian schools in those areas are so small that conclusions can scarcely be drawn.) The number of pupils learning Russian in all types of school has improved markedly (by 15 per cent overall), except in Scotland where the total is much reduced (by 35·3 per cent). The estimated UK total is now 13,231. Leaving aside Wales and Northern Ireland (because too few schools in these areas provided data to support statistical procedures), of these pupils, 75 per cent are studying the language in maintained schools (in 1988 it was 76·7 per cent) and 89 per cent of these institutions are comprehensive. Though independent school pupils would therefore appear to have a much better chance of starting Russian, the survey shows the subject is being very successfully taught in many schools which are neither for an intellectual nor a social élite.

It was not a purpose of the survey to examine teaching methods and organisation, but inevitably many facts have come to light in the course of the inquiry. The position is helped in some parts of England by the existence of pooled teaching, peripatetic teachers or shared staff. In some places the mould has been broken by 'diversification' of the first foreign language, or by offering pupils a trial period of Russian to help overcome false notions of its great difficulty or strangeness. Much more could be done to re-activate the inactive teachers of Russian, who certainly exist, even allowing for the fact that many of them are interested in other subjects too and that not every one of them may wish to be re-activated. There is no room for complacency, yet it is clear that Russian can be, and is being, successfully taught in a wide variety of schools.

Spanish

94-323 Beebe, Rose Marie and De Costa, Elena M. (Santa Clara U.). The Santa Clara University Eastside Project: community service and the Spanish classroom. *Hispania* (Worcester, MA), **76**, 4 (1993), 884–91.

This article presents a model of experience-based learning that can help students on the intermediate and advanced levels make the transition from language to literature courses in the context of real-life situations. The Santa Clara University Eastside Project provides a link between the university and the community. Students meet the practical needs of underserved Hispanic populations as they pursue the opportunity to practice their classroom language skills in an environment which nurtures a type of learning that cannot be provided within the traditional classroom.