

Language learning and teaching – theory and practice

THEORY AND PRINCIPLES

85-1 Allwright, R. L. (U. of Lancaster). The importance of interaction in classroom language learning. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 5, 2 (1984), 156–71. Reasons for ‘getting them communicating’ are (*a*) that communication practice in the classroom represents a necessary and productive stage in the transfer of classroom learning to the outside world. (*b*) Students learn by communicating. (*c*) The more deeply learning involves the learner, the more effective it is likely to be. (*d*) Learning is enhanced by peer discussion about learning. These major arguments commonly used in support of communication in the classroom do not, however, make a strong case for live person-to-person interaction itself as a necessity for successful language pedagogy.

Interaction is inherent in the very notion of classroom pedagogy, being the process whereby lessons are ‘accomplished’. It is necessarily a social matter, a co-production of all the participants. Four modes of participation in interaction management are discussed: compliance, direction, negotiation and navigation. Five aspects of interaction management are: management of turn, topic, task, tone and code [examples]. Management of learning has also to be a co-production. The teacher has to interact with the learners to implement any plans, which will thus be modified through the interaction process. Potential benefits for the learners are that their own involvement is a way for them to get instruction better adapted to their needs. For the teachers, an awareness of the learners’ potential contributions should help them have more respect for their learners. This respect will emerge in the classroom interaction, and will in turn enhance the learners’ own self-respect, and result in improved learning. Teachers can help learners become better managers of their own learning by trying not to get in their way, by allowing them space. Some learner-training may be necessary. What is called for is evolution, not revolution.

85-2 Bentsson, Monika (U. of Göteborg). Linguistic awareness when learning a second/foreign language. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), 15, 2/3 (1983), 151–60.

The linguistic awareness of a group of 18 Swedish pupils following an intensive French course at a French international school was studied over a period of a year. The children were interviewed in their mother tongue. Their French was initially non-existent or very poor.

The young children (5–6 years) thought they knew French when they could say one or two words. The older children thought they would know French at the end of a year; after the year, they thought another year would be needed. When they were asked to compare learning Swedish and learning French, they said they had forgotten how

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they learned their first language. They appreciated that learning a second language was different from learning a foreign language. When asked 'What is grammar?' the young children said that grammar existed in French but not in Swedish (meaning they had a lesson called '*grammaire*' in French but not in Swedish). They later said that grammar is when you write with a red pencil, later still that grammar was verb endings. The older children thought that grammar primarily concerned writing, rather than speaking. The children thought that people became linguistically aware when they began learning a new language.

85-3 Brumfit, Christopher (U. of London Inst. of Ed.). Some problems with Krashen's concepts, 'acquisition' and 'Learning'. *Nottingham Linguistic Circular* (Nottingham), **12**, 2 (1983), 95–105.

Krashen asserts that there is no connection between acts of conscious learning and unconscious acquisition. The implication is that formal teaching may actually prevent effective language acquisition. Widdowson distinguishes more helpfully between 'expression rules' (rules which govern what the learner does with language) and 'reference rules' (which characterise the learner's knowledge). This helps to explain how the two systems can co-exist in the same learner.

The distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge on which the learning/acquisition distinction is based, poses major methodological problems. While Krashen's Monitor Model appears attractive, it raises questions which create logical nonsense. Unless there is some connection between acquisition and learning, many informed and skilled learners have wasted a great deal of time. Krashen has made at least two unjustified confusions: (1) he identifies conscious learning with the conscious learning of rules of grammar and (2) he identifies the process of monitoring with the careful, conscious application of rules. This is like saying you cannot use a language if you cannot produce automatic appropriate responses.

85-4 Oksaar, Els (U. of Hamburg). Language learning as cultural learning. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), **15**, 2/3 (1983), 121–30.

Cultural learning is a necessary aspect of learning a language. Three longitudinal projects are being carried out at Hamburg on (1) bilingual verbal behaviour, (2) the language acquisition of children raised mono-, bi-, tri- and quadrilingually, and (3) identity studies of minorities. The approach is integrative, i.e. does not isolate language from non-verbal means of expression. Sociocultural behaviour patterns can be systematised by the author's 'cultureme' model. This operates on the assumption that communicative behaviour patterns can be isolated. Culturemes may be realised differently in different communicative acts, either verbally, non-verbally, extraverbally, or all three. The linguistic level is closely bound to the cultural level.

85–5 Roulet, Eddy (U. of Geneva). Où en est-on dans le développement d'une approche intégrée des pédagogies de L1 et de L2? [How far have we progressed towards an integrated approach to teaching L1 and L2?] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal), 5, 2 (1983), 95–115.

From the debate and discussion [summarised here] during the decade following the Fourth ACLA conference in 1973 (which called for the teaching of the mother tongue and of modern languages to be based on common linguistic principles), a consensus has emerged in favour of an integrated approach to language teaching; there is general acceptance that the time has come to abandon theoretical arguments in favour of empirical research into learners' problems.

Many teachers are ill equipped to utilise a communicative approach. There is a need to develop the learners' awareness of, and capacity for reflecting on, the nature of language. Thinking about language is not incompatible with communication. It must also be recognised that learners needs and situations and learning strategies may differ considerably and they necessarily influence both the degree of integration and its nature.

85–6 Rückert, Gerd. Zur Funktion von Verfahrenskenntnissen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. [The role of learning skills in foreign language learning]. *Fremdsprachenunterricht* (Berlin, GDR), 27, 6 (1983), 288–91.

Learning skills in foreign language learning fall into three main areas: (1) certain relatively limited and controlled language learning activities, (2) complex target activities, (3) other activities, which though not language activities in themselves, may be combined with the target activities. Language-learning activities are defined here as those activities used for the acquisition of language matter and the development of language skills. They further act as a vital basis for target activities. Target activities and the non-linguistic activities which may be combined with them (e.g. note-taking on the basis of a spoken text) are relevant to real communicative situations outside the classroom. Within the classroom context, however, in addition to their reflecting real communication, they also have learning functions. Learning skills must be acquired alongside the language itself, and their acquisition must be an organic and integral part of the language course and the language-learning process. However, these learning skills must be graded and appropriate ones learnt at appropriate stages of the course. Language-learning activities are appropriate for beginners. As students progress, the target activities become more relevant, and with them the other non-linguistic activities.

A course in the development of reading skills, discussed here, shows how the acquisition of learning skills can be an integral part of the course.

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85–7 Schwerdtfeger, Inge C. (Ruhr-U. Bochum). Foreigner talk: implications for foreign language teaching? *Nottingham Linguistic Circular* (Nottingham), **12**, 2 (1983), 141–58.

‘Foreigner talk’ (FT) here refers to the interaction strategies of native speakers in communication with foreigners. There is no implication of ‘talking down’. A synopsis was made of available studies of FT which revealed various regularities (some disputed). Researchers should be careful to avoid identifying idiosyncrasies in a native speaker’s speech as FT; even small children use FT; FT does not necessarily entail a reduction in speech tempo, but the native speaker uses a limited vocabulary, conveys fewer propositions, and uses fewer idioms and set phrases. FT utterances are short and syntactically less complex but are within the norms of the target language; few refer to phenomena of the immediate surroundings. Native speakers need a signal from the foreigner that he understands the FT utterance before continuing with an explanation. Instead of simplifying syntactic structures, native speakers repair complex questions in order to reduce the choice of answers for the non-native speaker. They also use self-repetition if the foreigner is unclear about an utterance. Native speakers feel more at ease in proportion to the foreigner’s ability to communicate. The responsibility for keeping the conversation going lies with the native speaker.

A revaluation of FT research results is proposed under a functional heading which concentrates on communicative achievements and intentions of native speakers, despite the fact that no agreement has been reached in defining functional categories. [An extract from a study of FT in progress is discussed in detail.]

Teachers in training should benefit from an understanding of basic strategies of FT. Greater emphasis should be put on teaching turn-taking strategies and conversational rhythm from the beginning. Teaching materials should include life-like dialogues wherein both speakers use normal conversational strategies [examples].

85–8 Tucker, G. Richard. Toward the development of a language-competent American society. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (Amsterdam), **45** (1984), 153–60.

All residents of the United States should have an opportunity to develop a high degree of proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading and writing English, whether it is their mother tongue or a second language, while non-native speakers should have an opportunity to develop proficiency in their mother tongue. There are more bilinguals than monolinguals in the world today, and many more children are educated in a second language than exclusively via their mother tongue. No universal policy can be formulated with respect to the choice and sequencing of languages for instructional purposes, but planners must consider factors such as the roles and status of languages in contact in any particular region, community attitudes to languages, whether an accepted orthography and literary tradition for the target language(s) exist, likewise a sufficient body of materials written in the target language(s), the availability of trained teachers, etc.

Innovative instructional programmes should be designed to encourage the development of second-language skills for as broad a spectrum of school-age children as

possible. The needs of at least four distinct groups should be considered: (1) non-English proficient/limited-English proficient (NEP/LEP) individuals; (2) balanced bilinguals; (3) English-dominant linguistic-minority individuals; (4) native English monolingual individuals (Anglo-Americans and those of other ethnic/native origins). Each category needs different educational options to be designed and made available for them.

Most American federally funded programmes have focused on the needs of NEP/LEP students; their goal is transitional, i.e. to utilise the student's home language as a bridge to facilitate the rapid acquisition of English and are based on a compensatory education model which is discouraging to majority-language group participation. In a maintenance programme, still the subject of controversy, students are encouraged to develop all skills in both languages across all domains. A third option is the restoration model, which aims to develop 'lost' skills in the home or ancestral language. Popular support for such programmes seems to be growing. A fourth type is an enrichment model, which aims to capitalise on the demonstrated intellectual benefits of bilingualism, particularly for English-majority monolinguals.

85-9 Weinrich, Harald. Sprachmischung und Fremdsprachendidaktik. [Language mixing and the teaching of foreign languages.] *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (Stuttgart, FRG), 67 (1983), 207-14.

Observations made on bilingual language acquisition, particularly among children, show that elements of the two languages in question tend to be mixed by the learners at certain stages of the acquisition process. One of the languages usually determines the structural patterns used while the other contributes lexical matter only. Similar phenomena occur where a particular language group has to live in a linguistic environment where another language is dominant and finds itself gradually forgetting its own language, or at least losing its certainty in language awareness. Where language standardisation is concerned, and with it such ideals as language purity and the elimination of borrowing from other languages, any occurrences of language mixing are seen in a negative light, regardless of whether they arise from bilingualism or some other cause. In foreign language teaching, therefore, nobody has ever seriously considered the possibility that guided and supervised language mixing might be of some value. There have been a few very successful unofficial experiments with language mixing in language courses, which should encourage official language research centres to undertake basic research into the matter.

PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

85-10 Carrell, Patricia L. (Southern Illinois U. at Carbondale). Inferencing in ESL: Presuppositions and implications of factive and implicative predicates. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich) 34, 1 (1984), 1-21.

One aspect of pragmatic competence in a second language is the ability to draw correct inferences. Much of the information conveyed by a text, or even a single sentence,

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is not conveyed directly as the literal meaning of that text or sentence, but is rather conveyed only indirectly, as inferences which are to be drawn from the text or sentence. The process of comprehending a text or sentence, then, is at least partially the process of drawing correct inferences. If second language learners are to be said to have comprehended a text or sentence, they must also have drawn the correct inferences from it. The study reported in this paper, which included both advanced and high-intermediate ESL learners as well as a control group of native speakers, investigated the drawing of two types of inferences in ESL—presuppositions and implications—from English sentences containing factive and implicative predicates (Kiparsky & Kiparsky, 1970; Karttunen, 1971).

Results of the study, which are compared to earlier empirical studies of fully proficient native speakers of English (Just & Clark, 1973; Vosniadou, 1982), show the ESL learners are in the process of acquiring this aspect of pragmatic ability in English. Specific results reveal better comprehension of implied meaning over presupposed meaning, better performance on semantically positive predicates than on semantically negative predicates, and an interaction between inference type (implication versus presupposition) and predicate polarity (positive versus negative). These results are explained in terms of previous research on the distinction between given and new information. Additional research is proposed and potential pedagogical implications are also discussed.

85-11 De Keyser, Robert M. (Stanford U.) The role of field independence in foreign language instruction. *ITL* (Louvain), 63 (1984), 1–21.

Field independence tests assess the subject's ability to separate an item from an embedding context (e.g. to pick out a simple figure from a complex drawing). Field independent people, who score high on these tests, tend to be interested in the abstract or theoretical, whereas field dependent people, who score relatively low, are less interested in the abstract and are more oriented towards other people [some research findings are reviewed]. Educational implications are that field independent subjects are more likely to use mediating structural rules of their own design in dealing with a learning task (hypothesis testing approach), whereas field dependent subjects are more likely to rely on characteristics of the learning task itself (spectator approach). Field independent teachers are more likely to direct the situation and provide corrective feedback. Field dependent teachers are willing to share the responsibility of directing teaching; they are more inclined to teach facts than to encourage their students to apply principles. A contrast in styles between teacher and students may well be more stimulating than similarity.

Five hypotheses concerning differences in foreign language learning strategies between field dependent and field independent students under different teaching methods are discussed: (1) field dependent students may benefit more from an audiolingual approach and field independent learners from an inductive, grammar-orientated method (though either group might well benefit from the opposite approach). (2) The positive cognitive effect of the audiolingual method for the field dependent student might be counter-balanced by the impersonal characteristics of a laboratory setting. (3) Field dependent students are more sensitive to salient cues and

may therefore have more problems with interference from their native language; the use of the direct method may be more helpful than translation exercises in this respect. (4) If it could be shown that the preferred mode of L1 acquisition corresponded to an individual's position on the field independence dimension, tests of field independence could be useful in determining the L2 learner's aptitude for a particular learning method. (5) The effects of match or mismatch between teacher's and students' cognitive styles is particularly important in language teaching where pupil-teacher interaction plays a major part.

Research studies on field independence and language teaching are reviewed: their findings tend to be inconsistent, probably because of the different measures, tests, and populations sampled. It does, however, seem likely that there is an interaction between individual information-processing modes and foreign language teaching methods.

85-12 Faerch, Claus (U. of Copenhagen) and Kasper, Gabriele (U. of Aarhus). Two ways of defining communication strategies. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), 34, 1 (1984), 45-63.

Two recently formulated definitions of communication strategies are contrasted. According to Tarone's 'interactional' definition, the central function of communication strategies is the negotiation of meaning. According to the 'psycholinguistic' definition suggested by Færch and Kasper, communication strategies are related to individual language users' experience of communicative problems and the solutions (co-operative or noncooperative) they pursue. Within the latter framework, communication strategies are characterised in discourse terms, invoking the notion of 'conditional relevance'. Interactionally defined communication strategies constitute a subset of psycholinguistically defined strategies, and although this subset in many respects represents an important area of strategy use, significant similarities to other types of strategy use are obscured by defining communication strategies in interactional terms exclusively.

85-13 Gardner, R. C. (U. of Western Ontario). Learning another language. A true social psychological experiment. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* (Clevedon, Avon), 2, 2 (1983), 219-39.

Some reasons are outlined why the investigation of second language acquisition is important, and a socio-educational model is presented which aims to incorporate the major individual difference variables underlying the language learning process. Research relevant to this model is presented, with particular attention devoted to a direct test of the underlying causal model. Three deductions deriving from the model are examined. On the basis of the empirical evidence, it seems clear that attitudes and motivation are important because they promote active involvement in the learning process and that they influence active choice behaviour regarding participation in acquisition contexts. There was no evidence for the deduction that differential success in second language acquisition promotes differential attitude change.

Four directions for future research are discussed. These include the suggestion that further attention should be directed towards using causal modelling procedures to

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enhance our understanding of the processes underlying second language acquisition, and the necessity for developing laboratory investigations to provide further 'causal' tests. A third direction which seems important is to extend the general correlation paradigm to other contexts. However, such extensions should use indices with known reliability and validity, and should consider the ethnolinguistic vitality of the region. The fourth direction concerns the role of attitudes and motivation in the loss of second language skills following the termination of instruction. This is a previously unexplored area which could have important implications for language training.

85-14 Hulstijn, Jan H. (Free U., Amsterdam) and Hulstijn, Wouter (Nijmegen U.) Grammatical errors as a function of processing constraints and explicit knowledge. *Language Learning* (Ann Arbor, Mich), **34**, 1 (1984), 23-43.

The first question of this study deals with the influence of the factors Time Pressure (present or absent) and Focus of Attention (on information or on grammar) on the correct use of two Dutch word-order rules in the speech of 32 adult learners of that language. In an experimental repeated measures design using a story retelling task, Attention had a significant effect, but Time did not. The second question deals with the relation between explicitness of rule knowledge, assessed in an interview, and rule application, elicited in the experiment. Although the learners without explicit knowledge of the two word-order rules made more errors in the story retelling task than learners with explicit knowledge, they were influenced by Time and Attention to the same extent as the learners with explicit knowledge.

The results of this study are discussed in terms of Krashen's Monitor Theory and in terms of an information-processing approach that distinguishes executive control from metacognitive knowledge.

85-15 Kirby, John P. (UFSIA, Antwerp). Error analysis and interlanguage studies: an overview. *ITL (Louvain)*, **63** (1984), 65-80.

Invoked to correct the contrastive explanation of error in the early '70s, error analysis proposed that a learner's errors represented a systematic interim competence dubbed 'interlanguage', but recent research reaffirms the role of the mother tongue in a learner's developing competence, while liberating it from the habit-formation theory of the behaviourists. The mother tongue seems to be used consciously as a prop and the learner is aware of what can be transferred and what cannot. It does not merely 'interfere'.

The main terms of the interlanguage argument are reviewed critically, and research in conflict with it is quoted to sketch the current position. There is still little consensus on the cause of learner error, but it is clearly more complex than either the contrastive or interlanguage positions assumed; and Krashen's Monitor model, though open to criticism, comes nearest to explaining the data collected so far.

85-16 Long, Michael H. (U. of Hawaii at Manoa). Linguistic and conversational adjustments to non-native speakers. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, Ind), 5, 2 (1983), 177–93.

At least 40 studies have been conducted of the linguistic and conversational adjustments made by native speakers of a language using it for communication with non-native speakers. The modifications sometimes result in ungrammatical speech. Generally, however, they serve to provide input that is well formed, a sort of linguistic and conversational cocoon for the neophyte second language acquirer. Most of the findings hold across age groups, social classes and settings, although some differences, both qualitative and quantitative, have been noted in these areas, too.

In making the adjustments described, native speakers appear to be reacting not to one, but to a combination of factors. These include the linguistic characteristics and comprehensibility of the non-native's interlanguage, but particularly his or her apparent comprehension of what the native speaker is saying. The adjustments appear to be necessary for second language acquisition, in that beginners seem unable to acquire from unmodified native speaker input. They may even be sufficient to guarantee that acquisition occurs, though there is some doubt about this.

85-17 Mackey, William F. (U. Laval, Quebec). Six questions sur la valeur d'une dichotomie (L1/L2). [Six questions concerning the L1/L2 dichotomy.] *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), 15, 2/3 (1983), 23–58.

Much research has been published on the relationship between the first and the second language (L1 and L2) but the conclusions drawn in the majority of cases are merely generalisations from particular cases. Careful examination of the how, why, when and where of language acquisition is needed. Concepts such as the critical age for language learning, whether or not linguistic competence is innate and what it actually consists of, and compound v. co-ordinate bilingualism, require further elucidation. L1 and L2 are linguists' abstractions; a closer look at the languages concerned in each case is needed.

What the infant acquires is language; later it learns to differentiate between languages. There is no simple dichotomy between L1 and L2, rather a set of multi-dimensional relationships. Instead of two rival codes or two juxtaposed sets of linguistic structures, we should think in terms of two sets of available symbols to be utilised for different ends at different times.

85-18 Magnan, Sally Sieloff (U. of Wisconsin-Madison). Age and sensitivity to gender in French. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (Bloomington, Ind), 5, 2 (1983), 194–212.

This study presents research on the affective reactions of native French speakers to 15 types of grammatical error made by an American speaking French. The native French judges are divided into three age groups, CES students, lycée students, and adults, and an error hierarchy is provided for each. Results show a continuum by age as to how these judges react to gender errors, that is errors of non-agreement with definite articles and adjectives with nouns. The younger, CES students are most

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sensitive to gender errors, *lycée* students slightly less sensitive, and adults the least irritated of the three, to the point that, for the adults, the five gender errors are rated as the five least serious errors in the error hierarchy. Possible explanations for this difference in error sensitivity are offered, with special attention to the possible influence of socioeconomic status. These results are compared to findings in English, French, German and Spanish, with particular focus on results obtained in German by Politzer (1978) and Delisle (1982).

85–19 Melenk, Hartmut and Strauch, Reinhard. *Chaos oder Langweile? Oder: Ist ‚Zewitsprachenerwerb‘ etwas anderes als Fremdsprachenerwerb?* [Chaos or boredom? or: Is second language learning different from foreign language learning?] *Linguistik und Didaktik* (Munich, FRG), 43/44 (1980), 272–83.

This article regards as basically the same two processes which are normally regarded as very different, from the teaching point of view: foreign language learning by German school pupils and the learning of German as a second language. Differences which are apparent in practical language teaching in these two areas in fact point to basic flaws in the teaching concepts employed.

The theory that the two processes are comparable is examined in the light of learners' language performance, and course books where the typical text type showed itself to be trivial in content and highly schematic in terms of linguistic structuring. One course book text which deviates from this norm is discussed: it was a model of texts which are relevant and multi-purposeful. The move away from dogged reliance on course books which has taken place in the teaching of German to foreigners would be welcomed in English courses for Germans.

Most German course materials are found to offer the teacher very little concrete or systematic help in the teaching of German grammar. However, EFL course books, although based on a language curriculum, are of little use as models for German course books since they often do not offer much in the way of systematic grammar, nor do they employ the concept of cognitive cognition to a sufficient degree. Yet conscious language learning should be a regular feature of all such courses.

85–20 Pica, Teresa (U. of Pennsylvania). *The role of language context in second language acquisition.* *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin* (Utrecht), 7, 1 (1983), 101–23.

Different language contexts – the classroom, the wider community, or a combination of both – offer different kinds of language exposure to the learner, but it is not known whether the context affects the process of second language acquisition. Studies in the area are reviewed, and their shortcomings noted. These include the fact that although a 'natural order' of morpheme acquisition is claimed, language context is not strictly controlled. Most of the studies which contrast acquisition variables in relation to language context were conducted on children or adolescents, not adults. Although some studies show an effect for the learning of formal rules of English grammar, it is still unclear if/how such learning contributed to second language acquisition. Studies comparing production and acquisition processes in different contexts have not

matched subjects for native language, hence they were not entirely comparable. The only clearly derived evidence for similarities in L2 production in different contexts was found for phonological development only, not for morphology or syntax.

The possibility of a disturbance in the natural order of morpheme accuracy in FL contexts was tested but results proved contradictory. Empirical investigation of the effect of instruction in the acquisition of easy-to-learn morphology was limited to the third person singular, in performance rather than acquisition variables.

85–21 Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana (U. of Bucharest). Similarities and differences between first and second language learning: some fallacies. *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), 15, 2/3 (1983), 11–21.

Some differences between L1 and L2 learning concern age – L1 is acquired in a linguistic vacuum, while L2 learning is inevitably influenced by the pre-existing code; a metalanguage (of grammar terminology) exists by the time L2 is learned. Children oscillate spectacularly in their learning of L1 (and their forgetting). Similarities are either extra-individual or individual. Extra-individual similarities include the material to be acquired, which is the same (a certain verbal system of signs), but the input to child and adult is very different. Social influences are exerted in both L1 and L2 learning. Individual processes cannot be separated from these extra-individual similarities, since psychological and biological facets of an individual are influenced by them. Children and adults have a drive to communicate and to improve their learning. To base adult learning on a mechanistic model (repetitions, drills) is a fallacy – it ignores the fact that mother tongue acquisition requires effort, motivation and reasoning: it is not innate. Nor is it true to say that any adult has no 'aptitude' for learning a foreign language – if he has motivation and makes an effort, he can learn it. It seems likely that the better someone learns their mother tongue, the better they can learn a second language.

85–22 Trosborg, Anna (U. of Aarhus). The acquisition of some complex syntactic structures in L1 and L2 learners ('easy to see', 'promise' 'ask/tell'). *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata* (Rome), 15, 2/3 (1983), 261–83.

The findings of Chomsky's original study of the acquisition of some complex syntactic structures in English children acquiring their mother tongue are compared with the findings of a number of later studies involving native speakers of English (children and adults), French and Danish learners of English as a second language, as well as native language acquisition of the corresponding Danish structures. The findings show that general syntactic principles are clearly at work on the part of the learners, as well as different learning situations. Considerable evidence was found for structural parallels between second language learning which took place under classroom conditions with very little naturalistic exposure and child native language acquisition. A similar developmental pattern occurs in spite of gross differences in the range of age and individual experience, as well as difference in L1 background (French and Danish). In addition, uniform patterns of L1 development across languages (English and Danish) were found. In addition to the establishment of similar developmental

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stages for each of the specific constructions, the findings also point to a regular sequence of acquisition for these structures.

Evidence presented in this paper seems to support the developmental dimension. Knowledge of a given structure in the learner's mother tongue is not always helpful in the interpretation of a similar structure in the target language. The exceptional structures had to be 'learned all over again', and strategies found with child native language learners were duplicated by L2 learners dealing with the same structures.

RESEARCH METHODS

85–23 Cohen, Andrew (Hebrew U. of Jerusalem). Studying second-language learning strategies: how do we get the information? *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 5, 2 (1984), 101–12.

Observations of learners' behaviour in the classroom can record physical movements but cannot capture what they are thinking about or how they feel. The potential of verbal reports and the ways in which they can be obtained are discussed. Learners' reports are limited to that subset of learning strategies which the learner is conscious of. The three basic categories of data utilised by researchers are (1) 'self-report', i.e. learners' descriptions of what they do, usually generalised statements about learning behaviour; (2) 'self-observation', i.e. inspection of specific language behaviour, either introspectively (only a few seconds after the event) or retrospectively (20 seconds or so after the event) – retrospection can be immediate or delayed by weeks, the bulk of targetting occurring immediately after the mental event; and (3) 'self-revelation', i.e. stream-of-consciousness disclosure of thought processes while the information is actually being attended to.

The major factors which characterise the data obtained from the above three categories of verbal report include: the number of participants, the research context, the recency of the event, the mode of elicitation and response, the formality of elicitation, and the degree of external intervention [table shows which descriptor variables tend to apply to particular types of data].

Verbal reports have been criticised on the assumption that much of language learning takes place at an unconscious level and is therefore inaccessible to verbal probes: that they are at best a source of information on how learners use what they have learned. How much of verbal report is a description of the actual processes used and how much is inference or guessing after the event? In answer, evidence shows that subjects are able successfully to consult their memory of cognitive processes and describe them, though data need careful collecting.

85–24 Edmondson, Willis and others. Learning the pragmatics of discourse: a project report. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 5, 2 (1984), 113–27.

A report on a research project on 'communicative competence as a learning objective in foreign language teaching' which was carried out in Germany between 1976 and 1981. Data were sought from three groups of speakers: native speakers of English,

representing the target norm; native speakers of German, representing the learners' native communicative behaviour, and German learners of English. The aim was to discover (1) how native speakers organise their verbal interactions in certain contexts relevant to FLT, (2) how learners who have been taught according to a structural syllabus behave in interacting with native speakers, and (3) what a 'communicative' orientation in a syllabus entails in terms of teaching methods.

Role-play was used as an elicitation technique; situational patterns and role descriptions were worked out and the role-plays were enacted by native German and English students. Subjects had to listen to their recordings and comment on them. Analytical results comprised investigations in four major fields: (1) descriptions of pragmatics and discourse in the English native-speaker conversations; (2) contrastive discourse analyses of the English and German native speaker conversations; (3) interlanguage analyses of the conversations between learners and native speakers; (4) analysis of classroom discourse (using video recordings of various English lessons).

Pedagogically-oriented products of the research are a 'pedagogic interactional grammar' for secondary school teachers in West Germany and a communication course for future teachers of English.

85–25 Hunt, John D. (Hong Kong Poly.). Co-operating with the learner: a preliminary report on researching learners' problems with processing text. *Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Hong Kong), 7 (1983), 44–55.

A description of research at the Polytechnic into how learners approach the processing of written English texts and their problems and strategies for learning their subject disciplines through the medium of English. The assumption was that text-processing problems would derive not so much from surface forms as from configurations of concepts and textual relations (metacognition). Methodological decisions were influenced by the qualitative perspective to research data, based on aspects of hermeneutics and phenomenology, which allows the researcher 'to get into the defining process of the participant'. Techniques come under the broad category of introspection, but retrospection seemed the most appropriate for the learners in question. As they were not practiced in monitoring their processes during reading, sensitisation in the form of prior explanation took place. Subjects were also asked to mark every point in the text where they felt they had not understood something. These markings were the focus of later questions designed to elicit processing problems. In the early experiments, subjects did not admit to having many problems. Unknown vocabulary would cause an unsolvable problem as students were reluctant to devise ways of finding a solution. A major difficulty was the subject–researcher role relationship: since the researcher was also their teacher, it was difficult to persuade the students that the experiments were unconnected with their course assessments.

ERROR/CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

85–26 Reynaerts, J.-J. Vergelijkende syntaxis Frans–Nederlands. [A comparative syntax of French and Dutch.] *Language et l'Homme* (Brussels), **54** (1984), 61–81.

The first part of a larger study of the differences between French and Dutch. It consists of a catalogue of differences, each illustrated by examples from a Dutch author and a translation of these examples into French. The list of examples is compiled under the following headings: adjectives in French and Dutch; use of modifiers; participles; gerunds; imperatives; infinitives; punctuation after adverbial clauses; inversion of subject and verb; use of the subjunctive in subordinate clauses after certain verbs; articles; passives; locative expressions; modal expressions.

85–27 Rogers, Margaret (U. of Surrey). On major types of written error in advanced students of German. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), **22**, 1 (1984), 1–39.

A lack of evidence on which to base a remedial teaching programme was the motivation for a study of the types of errors made by advanced learners of German (English mother tongue). The error analysis was based on 24 free compositions by students in the first year at university. Results showed that over 20% of all errors occurred in the area of inflectional nominal morphology and nearly 4% in derivational morphology. Lexical/semantic errors accounted for over 12% of errors. Syntax errors, while comprising the single largest group overall (35%), are not so prominent in individual groups since they are spread across a wider range of error types. The largest groups were choice of preposition (6·3%) and word order (5·3%).

The study confirms to some extent anecdotal and less ‘formal’ evidence about the type of errors made by advanced learners of German. However, it seems that there may be some good reasons why apparently basic errors are made by these advanced learners, e.g. inadequate descriptive rules, lack of general rules, load on memory, linguistic complexity.

Results show that the traditional concern with certain areas of morphology is not entirely unjustified on purely grammatical grounds. However, morphological errors rarely interfere with communication. Lexical errors can, on the other hand, interfere with communication to a greater degree than other types of error. Yet accurate use of morphology in a foreign language serves a clear ‘integrative’ function with regard to the largest language society, so it should probably still be an important goal for university level students of German, as well as an adequate vocabulary.

85–28 Thompson-Panos, Karyn (U. of Colorado) and **Thomas-Ružić, Maria** (Fulbright Foundation). The least you should know about Arabic. Implications for the ESL writing instructor. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **17**, 4 (1983), 609–23.

Out of concern for the characteristic English writing deficiencies of many university-bound Arab ESL students, various aspects of written Arabic—from orthographical conventions to rhetorical devices—are discussed. These contrasting features have been

identified as potential contributors to observed error production and weaknesses in some reading skills, but most particularly in writing skills. Ideally, a better understanding of the language background of Arab students can aid the ESL specialist in better addressing the special needs of these students through supplemental curricular objectives and appropriate exercises.

85-29 Zobl, Helmut (U. of Moncton). A direction for contrastive analysis: the comparative study of developmental sequences. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 16, 2 (1982), 169–83.

This paper compares developmental sequences for mature L2 structures with a view to determining influences of the learner's L1 on them. Two kinds of L1 influence are identified: the pace with which a sequence is traversed and the number of developmental structures in a sequence. It seems that the pace of acquisition varies according to whether the L2 and L1 possess functionally and positionally congruent structures and devices. A comparison of two child learners of English whose L1s differ as to the possession of the definite article category, supports the hypothesis that the systematic use of a deictic determiner as an initial approximation to the definite article is traceable to its non-existence in the learner's L1. It is further hypothesised that structural congruence between the L1 and L2 can offset the analogic creativity of the acquisition faculty. In the example discussed, the early postpositional developmental structure can be skipped over, thereby shortening the developmental continuum.

TESTING

85-30 Deyes, Tony (British Council/U. of São Paulo). Towards an authentic 'discourse cloze'. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 5, 2 (1984), 128–37.

A more discourse-oriented approach to cloze testing is needed. Units based on communicative value are more appropriate deletion items than single words if the aim is to test comprehension of a text. Ways of dealing with the identification, recoverability and relevance of such units are discussed. The degree of communicative dynamism conveyed by units can be established by criteria at several levels of analysis – syntactic, grammatical, phonological and semantic.

A prototype 'discourse cloze' test was devised by deleting theme, rheme and transition items from a text in Portuguese, using the above criteria. Roughly every seventh syntactic unit was deleted. Testees were not restricted to one-word answers, since the aim is to recover 'information' rather than linguistic items. Results showed that recoverable rhemes are those whose content can be derived by knowledge of linguistic stereotypes (collocations) and/or by stereotype knowledge about the world. In choosing communicative items to delete, the tester should ensure that they are relevant to the topic of the whole discourse. [Illustrated in an example test version.]

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85–31 Esser, Ulrich. Ein allgemeinpsychologischer Ansatz zur Diagnose der Fremdsprachenbefähigung. [A general psychological approach to foreign language learning ability.] *Deutsch als Fremdsprache* (Leipzig, GDR), **19**, 2 (1982), 76–81.

This article outlines a test to establish degree of language learning ability and gives first results of the test relating to objectivity, reliability and validity. The test is non-verbal, based on school-level language training, and, as far as possible, culturally impartial. The aspects of language-learning ability tested are: associative learning in pairs and the ability to integrate information, learn rules and form analogies. The theory underlying the development of the test is that aptitude tests to date cover aspects of language learning ability which have merely been deduced and which themselves represent functions of general cognitive conditions for human information processing and require examination and diagnostic analysis.

85–32 Eubanks, Frances (Free U. of Rome). Oral testing in the examination context: the short talk and its summary. *Perspectives* (Rome), **8**, 1 (1984), 31–45.

Testing in Italian universities is done by public oral interview; here a test is described as developed for the end of the second year of a four-year English programme in a department of Business and Economics, at intermediate level. Candidates were asked to prepare a five-minute talk on a topic of their choice, but notes and written texts were not allowed during the examination. The talk would be presented to a student partner chosen on the spot, with the examiner present and assessing the communication between the two students. The partner would listen and then give a summary of the talk back to the first student. Then the roles would be reversed.

Performance was assessed by more than one examiner on three five-point scales relating to Quality of Topic, of Understanding and of Summary, and the main criterion was ability to organise discourse as evidenced by clarity and use of detail. This test format produced more language under student control than most oral tests, while at the same time inducing more relaxation, spontaneity and interest in the candidate. It also met most established criteria for communicative testing. Oral examiners should limit their role to that of assessors in view of the success achieved by non-participation in the dialogue.

85–33 Perkins, Kyle (Southern Illinois U.) On the use of composition scoring techniques, objective measures, and objective tests to evaluate ESL writing ability. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), **17**, 4 (1983), 651–71.

In assessing the writing ability of foreign learners of English, two types of test are current and feasible. One (direct) requires the candidate to produce some sequential writing, e.g. a composition, and therefore has construct and face validity because the task is what the test is measuring. The other (indirect) measures the candidate's performance of recognition, ordering, reformulation and other tasks alleged to be the components of writing, which permits objective scoring but never requires the candidate actually to write.

The first is therefore a more convincing type of test provided methods of scoring

can be made reliable. Three methods are considered: holistic, analytic, and primary-trait. Holistic scoring has the highest construct validity. Threats to its reliability because of differences in judgement between raters can be offset by: training, a behaviour-specific rating schedule, careful monitoring, focusing of the raters, and a variety of other techniques. Analytical methods focus on components of the writing to the detriment of factors relating to the text as a whole, so the gain in reliability is not worth the time, and the loss of construct validity. Similarly, primary-trait scoring relies on the identification of factors from an agreed model of discourse. This is not easy to achieve and the time and effort involved is not worth the gain. Objective tests and standardised tests also fail because they concentrate too much on surface features unrelated to meaning and communication. No scheme is perfect and all suffer from lack of definition of what constitutes good writing.

85-34 Stansfield, Charles (TOEFL, Princeton, NJ). Reliability and validity of the secondary level English proficiency test. *System* (Oxford), 12, 1 (1984), 1-12.

The SLEP is a group administered test of English language proficiency which includes two subscores and eight different item types. It is designed to assess a foreign student's readiness for English medium instruction at the secondary level. This article describes the development of the test specifications and the performance of each item type and the total test during an administration of SLEP to students in other countries. Several innovative formats are described and discussed, including multiple-choice cloze and multiple-choice dictation. The paper also reports the findings of a validity study which involved the analysis of test scores and demographic data for US public school students.

85-35 Swain, Merrill. Teaching and testing communicatively. *TESL Talk* (Toronto), 15, 1/2 (1984), 7-18.

Three principles for communicative testing are stated: start from somewhere; concentrate on content; bias for best. The starting point should be the now familiar fourfold subdivision of communicative competence into grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences. Content includes both the language to be elicited by the examination tasks and the tasks themselves; each task should require all four competences to be drawn upon. The test should be conducted and scored in such a way that the candidate gives his best possible performance. The scoring criteria cover all four competences in each of the tasks and are a mixture of objective counts and subjective judgements. The operation of these principles is illustrated with the material produced to test Grade 9 French immersion students in Canada and it is stressed that the principles assume a pedagogical function for language testing, communicative teaching and testing being two sides of the same coin. Indeed, this testing material could also be a teaching unit.

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SYLLABUS/MATERIALS DESIGN

85–36 **Grenfell, M. J.** 'A'-level French: the non-literary option. *Modern Languages* (London), 65, 1 (1984), 27–31.

Literature and literary studies have had a virtual monopoly on advanced language work in the past. The author has been working on developing material for the new non-literary option, the London Examination Board's 'A'-level French Syllabus B. Literature is only needed by the small minority of students who will be going on to be university linguists. Social, economic, historic or geographical material can be equally useful in acquiring active skills. The traditional literary course instilled formal, inflexible attitudes to language that are contrary to developing active skills. Too much emphasis was placed on translation and prose. Instead, a perspective is recommended for exploiting language material, whereby language is met, is decoded or interpreted, and then responded to. The new syllabus tries to apply these principles. One fifth of the final percentage marks are awarded for the oral examination. It introduces 'guided composition', an authentic test of a student's ability to present information clearly and be understood convincingly in written French. The absence of set books on the course is made up for by a series of prescribed topics, chosen from a range of social, economic, geographical and historic themes, on one of which the student has to write a 500-word essay in French. There is also a literary option which deals with literature as part of the contemporary condition. The student thus completes the course with a greater knowledge of different aspects of France. The activities lend themselves readily to the exploitation of available sources of material in the media.

85–37 **Hutchinson, Tom and Waters, Alan.** How communicative is ESP? *ELT Journal* (London), 38, 2 (1984), 108–13.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and the communicative approach are often thought to be closely related. However, the reality is somewhat different. Many of the principles and practices on which much current ESP is based are educationally unsound. In needs analysis, for example, the real views of the learners are seldom given due consideration. Traditional ESP course design has two major drawbacks: firstly, the development in the learner of a capacity to communicate is neglected, and secondly, there is a failure to analyse and take into account the realities of the ESP learning situation. A typical consequence of this is that ESP teachers are often put in the untenable position of having to teach from texts whose subject-matter they do not understand. Furthermore, in most ESP materials, the learner is presented with uninspiring content and language exercises which lack any clear communication focus. As a result, ESP is, at present, a rather uncommunicative form of language teaching. Course material should be chosen in terms of how well and how far it develops the competence of the learner, rather than on the extent to which it mirrors the performance data of the target situation. What is needed is an interpretation of discourse types in the target situation to discover what competence is required to cope with them: it is this competence which should form the basis of the ESP course. It

is not just linguistic, but incorporates socio-cultural or everyday scientific/technical knowledge, and the ability to apply cognitive processing strategies. Materials must be designed in such a way that the learner is fully involved both in the content and the language topics. The need is for topic-related problems which require the use of English to solve them, thus actively mobilising content to generate language work.

85–38 Wolff, Dieter. Lehrbuchtexte und Verstehensprozesse in einer zweiten Sprache. [Texts used in textbooks and processes of comprehension in a second language.] *Neusprachliche Mitteilungen* (Berlin, FRG), 37, 1 (1984), 4–11.

Certain aspects of the structure of texts in language coursebooks block motivation on the part of pupils in schools. Motivation is affected because generally valid human strategies of comprehension are not employed by textbook authors. The article draws on recent research in cognitive psychology which has stressed those aspects of comprehension that go beyond the purely linguistic and involve knowledge of the world. The interaction between perception, language and knowledge in the comprehension process is discussed. Specific areas mentioned are the role of schemata, inferencing, implications, and conversational implicatures and the ways these come to interact with the specific structure of texts (e.g. in narratives). The 'artificiality' of teaching texts results from a writer neglecting fundamental communicative principles when constructing them. A discussion of a scene from a textbook in use in German schools demonstrates that many of Grice's maxims are violated, thus frustrating pupils' expectations. Likewise the inferencing ability of the pupils is not taken into consideration. This can lead to a loss of interest or even to the loss of the ability to employ inferencing strategies in the foreign language. Possible objections to these claims are discussed.

TEACHER TRAINING

85–39 Bautier-Castaing, Elisabeth (U. of Paris III). Pouvoir décrire pour enseigner et apprendre. [Knowing how to describe in order to teach and learn.] *Études de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris), 53 (1984), 34–46.

Recent changes in educational objectives and classroom practices towards a communicative methodology in which supra-sentential and socially-situated discourse has a place have demanded changes in teacher training. Unwelcome 'side-effects' have to be avoided: in particular the vague characterisation of what the teacher is doing and what the learner is to achieve. Teachers should be trained to analyse on-going discourse, their own and that of others. A method of analysis of oral discourse in terms of language functions (communicative goals, establishment of social identity, expression of attitudes, etc.) and discourse structure (realisation of functions, medium/channel, textual coherence, etc.) is put forward. Every factor is present in any utterance but any one may be dominant.

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85–40 Widdowson, H. G. (U. of London Inst. of Ed.). The incentive value of theory in teacher education. *ELT Journal* (London), 38, 2 (1984), 86–90.

Teachers, as well as learners, need motivation; this can arise from a recognition of the central role of theory in pedagogic practice. Language teachers have the responsibility of mediating changes in pedagogic practice so as to increase the effectiveness of language learning; such mediation depends on understanding the relationship between theoretical principle and practical technique. Teachers need to be trained in practical techniques but they must also be educated to see those techniques as exemplars of certain theoretical principles, and therefore subject to reappraisal and change. If they are only required to follow a set of routines, they are unlikely to get much satisfaction from their efforts. To say of a method 'It works' should be the beginning of enquiry, not its conclusion. Some sample questions are given which should stimulate professional interest.

TEACHING METHODS

85–41 Bensoussan, Marsha and Laufer, Batia (U. of Haifa). Lexical guessing in context in EFL reading comprehension. *Journal of Research in Reading* (Leeds), 7, 1 (1984), 15–32.

No one really knows to what extent students use context in guessing the meaning of new words. Some teachers of advanced learners of English as a foreign language prefer to expose students to new words in context, hoping students will acquire the vocabulary through contextual clues; whereas others explicitly teach and drill vocabulary. This study asks whether some types of words are more easily guessed than others, and also whether better students use context more effectively than weaker students do in guessing unknown words. Most importantly, to what extent does context help in guessing, if at all?

Sixty first-year students were given a list of 70 words to translate into the mother tongue. A week later, each student was given a copy of the same word list but with the addition of a text containing all the words.

An analysis of student answering patterns showed that context helped lexical guessing in only 13 per cent of the response for only 24 per cent of the words. Word guessability was shown to be less a function of using the context than of applying 'preconceived notions'. Most frequent errors were with polysemes, morphological troublemakers, idioms and synophones. Although more proficient students knew more words than less proficient students, they were not able to use context more effectively.

85–42 Blomeyer, Robert L., Jr. (U. of Illinois). Computer-based foreign language instruction in Illinois schools. *CALICO Journal* (Provo, Utah), 1, 4 (1984), 35–44.

Some research on the use of computers in language teaching is briefly reviewed. The two main recommendations in the literature are that foreign language teachers should have control over the vocabulary and specific grammar items in the courseware, and that they must become knowledgeable about the alternative methods available in the

field. They must attain a reasonable level of computer literacy, though it is hard to define what such a level might be, as it depends on the context in which the teaching will take place.

Foreign language teachers in Illinois secondary schools are beginning to use computer-assisted instruction as part of their instructional plan, but this is limited to a few of the largest and wealthiest school districts. Even where CAI is being used, only a small portion of the teachers in the school's foreign language department were making use of the available resources. Teachers who were already using CAI were generally very knowledgeable and most were trying to programme their own materials. They were largely self-educated with some assistance from organised inservice training. They were helping their colleagues to learn about the possibilities of CAI.

In the two schools where CAI was being used on a regular basis, the teachers had varying amounts of support from their departments and school administrations. One aspect of computer use that was a common influence on both situations was the scheduling of a central computer laboratory. The local priorities for use and availability of these facilities constituted one of the strongest factors influencing computer use by language classes. The unavailability of usable software seems to be the greatest hindrance to the implementation of computer-based foreign language instruction. Both the local production of software and the review of commercial materials for their eventual acquisition are time-consuming. School support for software purchases may not be available in many school districts.

85-43 Bowey, Judith A. The interaction of strategy and context in children's oral reading performance. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* (New York), 13, 2 (1984), 99-117.

An experiment was designed to test the interactive reading theory prediction that children's reading strategies vary with the availability of higher-level information. Third- and fourth-grade children (aged 8 and 9 years, respectively) were assigned to one of three context conditions and one of three experimental instructions conditions. Results supported the hypothesis that children adopt different oral reading speed strategies, depending on the amount of contextual information available, in order to maximise reading accuracy and, where appropriate, ongoing comprehension. When reading meaningful materials, children adopt a fluent, top-down reading strategy that is relatively resistant to modification. Although a slower, bottom-up strategy is preferred in the reading of words in isolation, children are able to modify this strategy in accordance with experimental instructions. These results are consistent with an interactive theory of reading.

85-44 Carrell, Patricia (Southern Illinois U.) and **Eisterhold, Joan C.** (Northwestern U.). Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 17, 4 (1983), 553-73.

Schema theory research has shown the importance of background knowledge within a psycholinguistic model of reading. One of the basic tenets of the theory is that a text does not by itself carry meaning, but only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously

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acquired knowledge ('background knowledge'). The previously acquired knowledge structures are called 'schemata'. Comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge (not just linguistic knowledge but knowledge of the world).

The two basic modes of information processing are 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' processing. The first is evoked by the incoming data which enter the system through the most appropriate bottom-level (i.e. most specific) schemata. Top-down processing occurs as the system makes general predictions based on higher-level general schemata and then searches the input for information to fit into these partially-satisfied higher-order schemata. Both types of processing should be occurring at all levels simultaneously. A distinction is made between 'formal' schemata (background knowledge of the formal rhetorical organisational structures of different types of text) and 'content' schemata (background knowledge of the content area of a text). Failure on the reader's part to activate the appropriate schemata during reading results in various degrees of non-comprehension.

The background which second language readers bring to a text is often culture-specific. It is therefore important for teachers to provide background information about texts, to explain high-frequency culturally-loaded terms, and to use illustrations to provide additional meaning. Problems with individual lexical items may well be less pervasive than problems relating to an absence of appropriate generalised information assumed by the writer. Texts with familiar settings and even specialised low-frequency vocabulary are appropriate because relevant to the students. Using literature to teach culture is the most direct way to teach culture, but may not, in fact, be the best way to teach language. Teachers can manipulate (a) the text or (b) the reader. The Language Experience Approach uses the students' own ideas and words to prepare beginning reading materials. 'Narrow reading' is confined to a single topic or to the works of a single author, thus increasing the reader's familiarity with style and vocabulary. 'Sustained silent reading' helps students to become self-directed; texts should be selected by students. Help for the reader includes providing background information and previewing content.

85–45 Carver, Ronald P. (U. of Missouri at Kansas City). Rauding theory predictions of amount comprehended under different purposes and speed reading conditions. *Reading Research Quarterly* (Newark, Del), 19, 2 (1984), 205–18.

'Rauding' theory makes precise predictions about the amount of passage comprehension; the accuracy of these predictions was investigated under different purpose conditions and differing rates of presentation. Passages at Grade 10 difficulty were presented to 102 college students at rates varying from 62·5 to 100 000 words per minute using motion picture film. The two purpose conditions were: (a) get the 'gist', and (b) detect the missing verbs. Four different measurement techniques were used and all indicated that the amount comprehended was not substantially affected by purpose. Comprehension was generally high at the low rates, but it was approximately zero at 1000 words per minute and greater. The amount of comprehension at each rate was accurately predicted from rauding theory. The data do not support the idea

that individuals can read unfamiliar but relatively easy material at high rates with high accuracy of comprehension, but they do provide strong support for reading theory.

85-46 Cranen, B. and others (Katholieke U., Nijmegen, The Netherlands). An aid in language teaching: the visualisation of pitch. *System* (Oxford), **12**, 1 (1984), 25-9.

Work carried out at the University of Nijmegen on the development and evaluation of machinery for the visual feedback of intonation is described. The experimental set-up can be used by individual learners: a tape recorder plays a sentence through headphones to the learner while the microprocessor plots its pitch contour simultaneously onto the upper half of the screen. At a signal, the learner imitates the sentence, the contour of which is almost immediately plotted on the lower half of the screen. If the learner is not satisfied, he can replay the sentence; otherwise he proceeds through the tape. The experimenter/teacher can check the results. Not all sentences are suitable for plotting on the screen. Background noise can distort the plotted pitch contour.

Experiments carried out with Dutch learners of English and Turkish learners of Dutch to assess the effectiveness of visual intonation contours showed that the groups with visualisation improved significantly more than the groups without it, irrespective of their general proficiency.

85-47 Danesi, Marcel. Pedagogical graphics in second-language teaching. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **40**, 1 (1983), 73-81.

A typology of pedagogical graphics that can be used in the teaching of target language structure is outlined. Pedagogical graphics are defined as graphic aids such as a box, a circle, an arrow, etc., that can be used to enrich the teaching of structure through visualisation techniques. The typology is based on the graphic conventions of descriptive linguistics, of grammar texts, and of actual classroom practice.

85-48 Dressler, Gisela and others. Welche Landeskunde braucht der FU? [What background studies are necessary in foreign language learning?] *Linguistik und Didaktik* (Munich, FRG), **43/44** (1980), 233-51.

A critical look at recent publications on background studies reveals that they are regarded as incidental to, rather than as an integral part of, language courses. Background information features merely as a setting for the testing of comprehension and grammar and not as a means of promoting 'communicative competence' or 'inter-cultural communicative ability'. A study of recent course materials for the teaching of German as a foreign language shows that background studies do not contribute towards shaping the language course but rather are reduced to incidental geographical and social facts. This dilemma in foreign language teaching is due largely to the fact that the concept of 'competence' is open to so many different interpretations. The history and problems surrounding the concept are discussed.

The ethnography of communication is recommended as a suitable framework for discussion of the teaching of language and culture within foreign language courses.

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Its values are discussed. A short conversation is used to show what the application of such a framework of ethnographic categories produces in terms of results and how these results can be harnessed further in foreign language teaching. If language teaching succeeds in becoming less linguistically orientated and concentrates instead on the integrated and systematic teaching of language and culture, then the concept of background studies (*Landeskunde*) as such will become increasingly redundant.

85-49 Ellis, Rod (St Mary's Coll., Twickenham). Can syntax be taught? A study of the effects of formal instruction on the acquisition of WH questions by children. *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford), 5, 2 (1984), 138–55.

An exploratory study is reported which aimed to examine how the teaching of specific structures (asking WH questions which were semantically appropriate and which displayed subject-verb inversion) contributes to their acquisition, and to identify methodological issues. Subjects were 13 children between 11 and 15 years old, studying full time at an ESL Language Unit. Most had been in Britain about one year; they varied as to age, first language, time spent at the unit and mother-tongue literacy. The formal teaching of WH interrogatives was based on audiovisual approach, since they were familiar with such an approach. [Lesson plan : elicitation instrument ; results.]

The results of the study can be summarised as follows: (1) For the group as a whole, there was no significant increase in their ability to use semantically appropriate and grammatically well-informed WH questions as a result of three hours of teaching. (2) Individual children showed a marked improvement in the ability to use semantically appropriate and grammatically well-informed WH questions. (3) An accuracy order based on the use of semantically appropriate and inverted *what*, *who*, *where*, and *when* questions reflects a clear developmental progression which matches that observed in the longitudinal study of two of the children. (4) With regard to development in the ability to use semantically appropriate and grammatically well-informed *when* questions, it was the low interactors, rather than high interactors, who progressed. The study cannot be said to have proved that teaching does not aid the acquisition of syntax for children. It indicated that for all the children the teaching did not subvert the 'natural' order of development, but then the teaching that was provided was not intended to achieve this. The study showed that the opportunity to take part in nominated teacher exchanges did not help acquisition of WH interrogatives, possibly because it is not production but comprehension which aids development, or because the instruction only worked if it provided the right type of interaction, or because the WH interrogatives had to be within the child's 'zone of proximal development' for the instruction to work.

85-50 Falvey, Margaret A. (British Council, Hong Kong). Some thoughts on the relationship between teacher attitudes and teacher styles. *Working Papers in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Hong Kong), 7 (1983), 18–43.

In a communicative, more learner-centred classroom, the learner appears to take over many of the roles traditionally performed by the teacher, who becomes a manager. Many motivated, experienced teachers often have reservations about the possibility

of implementing such approaches, because of conflicting pressures from students, superiors, parents, examination requirements, etc., or because their own training was on different lines; they thus experience 'role conflict'.

Observations of teachers undergoing further or initial training in teaching English as a foreign language showed that they declared different, sometimes conflicting attitudes towards the role of the teacher. A study was undertaken to verify whether there was any correlation between their attitudes and their classroom behaviour as teachers. Two teachers with contrasting attitudes on the Transmission/Interpretation scale (of Barnes and Schemilt), roughly corresponding to authoritarian/participative, were each videotaped throughout a one-hour lesson. It was found that there were significant differences in the classroom styles of the two teachers and in the length and type of teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction which took place. The Interpretation teacher's lesson had a much higher proportion of learner-learner interaction and much less teacher-learner interaction than the Transmission teacher, and more genuine interaction was encouraged. Attitudes to the role of content in the learning process differed and were reflected in the overall structure of the lesson. The project findings reveal significant contrasts in the discourse in the two lessons and significant correspondence between the attitudes and teaching styles of the two teachers.

85-51 Gagné, Gilles and Lazure, Roger (U. of Montreal). *Pédagogie de la langue maternelle: essai de synthèse des recherches américaines de 1960 à 1980.* [Teaching the mother tongue: an attempted synthesis of US research from 1960–1980.] *Bulletin of the CAAL* (Montreal), 5, 2 (1983), 171–202.

This resumé of published American research (1960–80) into teaching the mother tongue consists of 22 entries grouped in three sections: (1) oral expression and listening, (2) reading and (3) writing, each with a critical commentary, and itself constitutes an abridged version of a book to be published shortly by the University of Montreal. Both oral expression and writing are neglected by comparison with reading, but even here certain important areas, for example, economic and social factors, and children's literature, have attracted little attention.

85-52 Goodacre, Elizabeth (Middlesex Poly.). *Reading research in Great Britain – 1982.* *Reading* (Sunderland), 17, 3 (1983), 139–46.

Three collections of the work of influential researchers in the reading field were published, as well as reports of the APU surveys and the proceedings of the eighteenth UKRA annual conference. The tendency in research was to go beyond products (e.g. answers to comprehension questions, essays, etc.) to observe the process of producing them, and to be concerned with the concept of reading comprehension and that reading should be a meaningful process. This review covers work on reading standards and tests, dyslexia and specific reading retardation, reading development, and reading materials and interests.

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85-53 Harvey, T. Edward (Brigham Young U.) Rate alteration technology and its place in the second-language comprehension curriculum. *System* (Oxford), 12, 1 (1984), 31-41.

One promising way to enhance student listening and reading performance is with recorded materials whose speed is mechanically retarded or advanced but where the accompanying pitch shift is electronically corrected. The device a student or teacher may use to thus modify the original recording is called a speech compressor/expander. Two kinds of electronic circuit are in use which restore the voice sound to normal pitch and tone as the tape is speeded up or slowed down: the first scheme uses a pair of shift registers, the second a Random Access Memory. The comprehension process can be divided into seven phases: (1) perception, (2) discrimination of sounds and symbols, (3) comprehension at the phrase and sentence level, (4) detailed and sequential recall of spoken/written material, (5) analytic thought about what has been heard, (6) use of inference skills, and (7) critical evaluation. The behaviour characteristic of each phase represents curricular objectives for a classroom comprehension programme emphasising the receptive skills.

Rate alteration (in this case, speeded speech) can be used at phase 5 to allow students to experience familiar material at faster-than-normal speed. Success encourages them. Field-dependent learners at phase 4 and 5 benefit from a slowing down of material. Listening practice can thus be individualised. Increased velocity helps advanced (phase 6) learners to improve their reading comprehension ability, even if their listening ability is of near-native standard. The use of rate-alteration technology is more crucial in the middle stages of the curriculum than at either end.

85-54 Higgins, John. John and Mary – the pleasures of manipulation. *Ziel-sprache English* (Munich, FRG), 1 (1984), 1-5.

Two uses of the computer are described which reverse the usual teacher/learner roles, allowing the student to be the initiator whose task is to dig out what the computer knows. The first is a drawing program called PHOTOFIT; the computer draws a random face, calling up features in random sizes, which is then blanked out and the students have to recreate it from memory by typing in commands, which consist of the names of the features and size adjectives. Eventually the machine is asked to re-display the original face together with a list of differences between it and the face drawn by the students. The students get a sense of satisfaction, amusement and power, and are incidentally thinking and talking in English about shapes and sizes. All the input commands are single words, whereas in the second programme, JOHN AND MARY, input and output are full sentences. The computer displays a simple drawing of a room, a door, a man in the room and a woman visible through the door (in the kitchen). When a command is given, the computer re-draws the figures appropriately, sending John into the kitchen or bringing Mary into the lounge. The student tests what the machine can do; a group of learners can pool their resources. This type of program is called GRAMMARLAND.

85-55 Laroche, Jacques M. (New Mexico State U.). Typology of instructional theories. *IRAL* (Heidelberg), 22, 1 (1984), 41–52.

Using nine psycholinguistic criteria, four types of language teaching methodology are distinguished: grammar-translation; direct; audiolingual, and code learning. The last alone meets all the criteria proposed.

The starting point is a truth-table drawn up by Bosco and Di Pietro (1970) in which the grammar-translation, direct and audiolingual methods are all rated against eight psychological and three linguistic features. These eleven dichotomous terms are defined: functional, central, affective, nomothetic, idiographic, molar, cyclic, divergent, general, systematic, and unified. It is noted that no method gets more than four plus signs in the grid. The table tells us in what way each theory distinguishes itself from all the others by computing the ratio of agreements over the total number of comparisons; a formula is given for this. The deficiencies in these three methodologies would be compensated for by a method having the characteristics of cognitive code-learning, which therefore scores all pluses in a modified form of the table, developed to make a comparison between this and the audiolingual method. The table therefore provides a proven instrument to assess comparatively the four methods considered, though if a new theory made its appearance, new features would probably have to be added.

85-56 Littlejohn, Andrew Peter (University Coll. of Bahrain). Increasing learner involvement in course management. *TESOL Quarterly* (Washington, DC), 17, 4 (1983), 595–608.

Arguments for increasing learner involvement in decisions about the organisation and direction of their language courses concern the risks of teacher dominance (learners feel 'spoon-fed', demoralised by inappropriate standards, frustrated by inappropriate pace). Since there is no set route through the learning task, resources can be used most effectively if learners share in its management. If communication is the goal of learning, the method should also be communicative, i.e. involve the exchange and negotiation of ideas and feelings about the learning process. This results in increased motivation, taking responsibility for learning, and increased interpersonal skills.

Learners themselves may well view any attempts to involve them in course management as threatening or irresponsible. Experiments were carried out with two groups of Arab students with lower intermediate ability in English who were required to repeat a term of General English. Their course consisted of three components: language learning workshops, formal linguistic input, and activities. These components ensured that different ways of approaching learning were put before the students. Tasks which aimed to widen their experience included discussing their answers to a questionnaire about studying English, and analysing sections of grammar work from their previous textbook as to what they were asked to do and how easy or difficult they found it. They worked in small groups without ongoing teacher direction. Sessions with 'student as teacher' encouraged the students to listen to each other and to think more deeply about organising their learning. With experience, they became adept in formulating their findings (on grammar topics) and devising

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interesting practice activities. They also practiced group error correction. The final step was the introduction of student-directed lessons, working in groups of five or six. The teacher was only consulted as a last resort. The groups carried out a full range of activities and the atmosphere was very relaxed and open; Arabic was spoken less than when the teacher had been in control. From being 'heavy-going' (passive and teacher-dependent) to teach, they became energetic and enthusiastic and showed a marked improvement. They had, moreover, begun to develop skills and attitudes that went beyond merely the learning of English.

85–57 Nehr, Monika (Technische U., Berlin) and **Riehl, Astrid** (Freie U., Berlin). Learning to read foreign languages: some new experimental evidence. *Journal of Research in Reading* (Leeds), **7**, 1 (1984), 3–14.

The experiments discussed in this paper are investigations to clear up some basic aspects of foreign language reading, especially the role and influence of the audiolingual component on the learning process. Special self-instructional materials for the experimental purposes were developed. The foreign languages were SerboCroatian in the two versions of script (Cyrillic and Roman) and Japanese. The audiolingual component was reduced to zero in two (zero-groups) of the three experimental groups. Only one group received audiolingual training but the written programme was equal for all groups within one experiment. An analysis of variance shows significantly better results for all zero-groups. Though further pedagogical research is needed, it can now be argued that learning to read a foreign language does not firstly mean decoding to sound but the development of a relatively autonomous language ability.

85–58 Opitz, Kurt. The properties of contractual language: selected features of English documentary texts in the merchant marine field. *Fachsprache* (Vienna) **4** (1983), 161–70.

This article is an empirical study based on excerpts from a small number of documents which are used internationally, and from which some key characteristics are extracted that may be used to describe one specialised application of the language of jurisprudence. Although the selection of text samples is random, all are relevant and representative of the dominating aspects of documentary prose as used in the merchant marine field. The findings may not apply to the totality of linguistic evidence in that field, nor should they be considered as statistically relevant; no effort has been undertaken to control the corpus as regards the distribution, range and frequency of its components. The purpose of the present study is simply to trace out useful patterns for establishing a specific text type.

85–59 Piper, David and Piper, Terry. Reality and second-language role-playing. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **40**, 1 (1984), 82–7.

The distance between the usual classroom variety of role-play and that which takes place in real life can be minimised if classroom role-play stresses the communicative interaction of individuals acting on their own behalf and without assuming *personae* superimposed by the teacher. Learning situations and processes should be modelled in terms of actual student identity (this notion is called 'real reality'). Some useful

methods are: (1) the case method, which involves the solution of problems based on the students' own background knowledge and expertise (suitable only for advanced students); (2) verbal assault, in which the student remains himself while responding to a verbal assault situation; (3) computer-simulated situations, i.e. games for two or more participants who must consult with each other in making their decisions; (4) functional dialogues, which allow students to portray themselves, choosing an appropriate situation and role. In this method, unlike the preceding ones, the language is provided.

85–60 Roeders, Paul. Communicatieve competentie en inzicht in de sociale realiteit. [Communicative competence and awareness of social reality.] *Levende Talen* (The Hague), **389** (1984), 88–91.

Four different types of communicative act are distinguished – directive (getting people to do things), factual (concerned with conveying objective information), expressive (concerned with conveying subjective information, and regulatory (concerned with establishing social relations). These four types of act each require different levels of social awareness. Appropriate social awareness is a necessary but not sufficient condition for appropriate language use in children. This claim is tested in an experiment using children aged between 8 and 11 years. The children were given either special training in social awareness or in communication skills, and subsequently tested on a set of specially constructed tests. Children trained in communication skills generally did better than children trained in social awareness, who barely outperformed a control group which received no special training.

85–61 Ryan, Michael P. (U. of Texas at San Antonio). Monitoring text comprehension: individual differences in epistemological standards. *Journal of Educational Psychology* (Washington, DC), **76**, 2 (1984), 248–58.

Individual differences in reading comprehension standards were examined by asking 90 undergraduates to describe the criteria they used to decide whether or not they had comprehended textbook chapters. Students were classified as having a dualistic (fact-oriented) or a relativistic (context-oriented) conception of knowledge on the basis of their ratings of attitude statements drawn from Perry (1968). Comprehension criteria reported by dualists more often involved the knowledge category of Bloom *et al.*'s (1956) *Taxonomy*, and those reported by relativists, the comprehension or application categories. The nature and number of reported comprehension criteria were predictive of course grades in Fundamentals of Psychology: students reporting the use of comprehension or application criteria earned better grades than those reporting the use of knowledge criteria; students reporting the use of more than one criterion earned better grades than those reporting the use of a single criterion. These data suggest that one's epistemological beliefs may dictate one's choice of comprehension standards, and that these epistemological standards, in turn, may control the effectiveness of one's processing efforts.

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85–62 Schwerdtfeger, Inge C. (Ruhr-U., Bochum). Kommunikativer Fremdsprachenunterricht: Eine Bilanz aus der Sicht von Lehrern und ein Vorschlag für die Unterrichtspraxis. [Communicative foreign language teaching: a summary from the point of view of teachers and a proposal for the practice of teaching.] *Unterrichtspraxis* (Philadelphia, Pa), 2 (1983), 161–74.

The author reports on a study of teachers' views about communicative teaching and how they put it into operation. The teachers were asked to comment on 'drills' and 'exercises' in this context, what they understood by 'learning' in communicative foreign language teaching (FLT), the problems and limits of the approach and what pupils think about it. The comments show a large degree of vagueness and a lack of orientation not found with other methods in FLT. A report on pupils' views of FLT showed that pupils consider grammar drills to be very important. They only saw exercises in relation to their relevance for class tests. The pupils do not consider communicative language games to be exercises. Both teachers' and pupils' opinions seem to be in conflict with the aims of communicative exercises.

The principal differences between communicative and audiolingual exercises are analysed. The former take into consideration and reflect the ambiguity of everyday life, e.g. the negotiation of meaning. The language produced is not 'right' or 'wrong', but more or less appropriate. Teachers find it harder to assess pupils' contributions in communicative exercises.

As a pragmatic solution to the difficulties encountered, it is proposed that teachers use 'conventional' textbooks and supplement them with 'communicative detours' in which pupils are confronted with the non-predictability of linguistic behaviour and sensitised to it via more communicative exercises.

85–63 Scott, Michael and others (U. of Santa Catarina, Brazil). Using a 'standard exercise' in teaching reading comprehension. *ELT Journal* (London), 38, 2 (1984), 114–20.

A 'standard exercise' was devised to train students in efficient reading comprehension strategies. It can be applied to almost any text, thus allowing for greater freedom in text selection. It consists of a set of questions which develop from superficial skimming to deeper and more critical levels of comprehension [part of exercise is given]. Three main levels of comprehension are distinguished: 'general', 'main points' and 'detailed' comprehension. The standard exercise concentrates on the first two levels. The last part concentrates on eliciting personal reactions to the text and to the student's own reading progress. Students who have used the exercise felt that it helped them to learn appropriate strategies and to distinguish the main points from the details. Texts can be selected from periodicals like *New Scientist* and *Scientific American*, textbooks and encyclopaedias. The load of new information should not be too great.

85-64 Sheldon, Susan A. (Open U.) Comparison of two teaching methods for reading comprehension. *Journal of Research in Reading* (Leeds), 7, 1 (1984), 41-52.

This study compared two laboratory methods of teaching reading comprehension: answering multiple-choice questions and restructuring by means of diagrams. A total of 133 eight- to nine-year-old children were matched to form the two groups (each comprising approximately 33 children) and were instructed for a period of eight weeks. On the basis of two post-tests it was found that subjects who had used non-verbal restructuring made significant reading gains over those who had employed the question-answer method. An analysis of the relative gains of good and poor readers within the groups indicated that poor readers' comprehension scores were differentially enhanced by having used the non-verbal teaching method.

85-65 Short, Elizabeth Jane (U. of N. Carolina at Chapel Hill) and **Ryan, Ellen Bouchard** (U. of Notre Dame). Metacognitive differences between skilled and less skilled readers: remediating deficits through story grammar and attribution training. *Journal of Educational Psychology* (Washington, DC), 76, 2 (1984), 225-35.

Poor readers consistently fail to use metacognitive skills to aid their reading comprehension. A metacognitive intervention programme was designed to remediate such failures and consisted of two components: story grammar training, designed to increase comprehension monitoring; and attribution training, designed to increase awareness of effort in efficient reading. Forty-two fourth-grade poor readers were assigned to three groups: one group received both components, with the other two groups each receiving one component alone. Fourteen skilled readers served as a contrast group, in post-test assessments. Maintenance was assessed through free and probed recall; generalisation was assessed through a metareading test and an error detection and correction task. Strategy training produced dramatic gains in comprehension. Only children receiving attribution training alone showed poorer performance than skilled readers. Partial support was obtained for generalisation on the metareading assessment. Strategy training improved poor readers' comprehension by providing them with metacognitive skills.

85-66 Spack, Ruth (Tufts U. and Boston U.) and **Sadow, Catherine** (North-eastern U. and Boston U.) Student-teacher working journals in ESL freshman composition (Washington, DC). *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 4 (1983), 575-93.

First language composition researchers have shown that by using a traditional composition teaching method which focuses on the form and correctness of a finished product, teachers ask students to produce writing which does not reflect the actual writing process. Findings indicate that most school-sponsored writing does not involve the self-motivation, contemplation, exploration and commitment which characterise real-life writing. These researchers recommend that in addition to being taught expository writing, students should have more opportunity for expressive writing in their writing courses to allow them to become better academic writers. According to some second language composition researchers and teachers, these

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recommendations are applicable to ESL college students because their composing strategies are similar to those of native English-speaking college students.

Ungraded, uncorrected journals can provide a non-threatening way for students to express themselves in written English. However, the student-teacher working journals described in this article are unlike student personal journals in two important ways: first, the topic of working journals is not personal, but is rather an outgrowth of the writing class; and second, the teacher regularly writes journals to the class on the same subject and includes, in those journals, selected student journal entries. The advantages of this approach are that a group awareness develops around issues relevant to ESL composition, that students come to see writing as a way to generate ideas and to share them, and that teachers become participants in the writing process.

85-67 Stephen, Patricia. Language code acquisition through oral-written dictation: a new tool. *Canadian Modern Language Review* (Toronto), **40**, 2 (1984), 264-76.

Written-oral dictation is an efficient way to simultaneously process a number of language codes. The multi-sensory presentation and processing of English language codes during one school year helped lead to their acquisition by groups learning English as a foreign language. Approximately one-third of the instruction time of one class of 28 fifth-grade beginners was spent processing dictation with an oral-graded response. Twenty-seven earned a satisfactory or better final report card grade. Approximately two-thirds of the class time of one unstreamed A-B class and two streamed B-stream classes of seventh grade third-year students was spent processing dictation with a written-graded response. Fifteen of the 15 A-stream children and 21 of the 41 B-stream children earned a satisfactory or better final report card grade.

85-68 Trocmé, H. (U. of Poitiers-La Rochelle). L'image et le son dans la classe de langue: prise et traitement de l'information visuelle et auditive. Vers une pédagogie écologique audio-visuelle. [Image and sound in the language classroom: collection and processing of visual and auditory information. Towards an ecological audio-visual pedagogy.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Paris), **69** (1984), 73-84.

Audio-visual teaching, in order to become 'ecological', should urgently take into account the learner's relationships to his auditory and visual environment, the functioning of a learning brain, and the learning process of visual and auditory information. Even if the data at our disposal are a small part of what we shall eventually learn about the brain, recent research and experiments throw some valuable light on the various levels where information is processed in the brain, on learning styles and profiles, on brain areas linked up with language activities, on affectivity and intentionality and their possible brain sites.

Many experiments in progress relating to the maximum use of our brain capacities agree on advising the teachers to help the learners to discover their limitless potentiality and what they can do with it, to train the learners to use a wider range of brain mechanisms and reach optimum performance through both left and right hemisphere activities.

85–69 Vogel, Sigrid. Von Hörvorlagen zur Kommunikation. [From listening comprehension texts to communication.] *Neusprachliche Mitteilungen* (Berlin, FRG), 37, 2 (1984), 68–76.

Four hypotheses form the basis for deliberations on the status of aural comprehension as a communicative skill and on the development of an appropriate teaching programme: (1) Communicative skills can not be developed without the complex skill of aural comprehension, the latter involving (linguistic and other) competence, and characterised as the creation rather than just the transmission of information. (2) Listener expectations are an essential part of comprehension, and should be stimulated prior to comprehension exercises. (3) Comprehension itself has two facets – the retrieval/reconstruction of the content of the aural text, and the stimulation of subsequent creative use of language. In learning, the former involves the two dimensions of guidance (and thus difficulty) and interpretative demands, which in turn require different learning tasks. (4) Texts and tasks should be ranked in terms of their difficulty, for which a framework is suggested.

85–70 Walter, Heribert. Einführung in die Texterschliessung durch Kombinieren und intelligentes Raten. [Introduction to the comprehension of a text through combining and intelligent guessing.] *Neusprachliche Mitteilungen* (Berlin, FRG), 37, 1 (1984), 27–34.

Pupils should be given encouragement to read texts in the foreign language and not be put off by long preparatory lists of new vocabulary, etc. An experiment is reported in which 90 % of the 'new' vocabulary in a text was arrived at without any kind of explanation. The second part of the article discusses Carton's notion of 'inferencing' and demonstrates useful techniques which the teacher can use in order to contextualise new vocabulary. The rest of the article is taken up with detailed description of how 'guessing' and the comprehension of unknown vocabulary can be enhanced. Points discussed include the use of nonsense words, the use of the introductory paragraph in a text as an aid to understanding, and the use of various cues, clues, hints and guesses of a linguistic and contextual nature. Such exercises used as a supplement in the classroom may serve to wean pupils away from over-reliance on the dictionary and to encourage them to use their common sense.

85–71 Wolff, Dieter. Überlegungen zum Hörverstehen in Fremdsprachenunterricht. [On aural comprehension in foreign-language teaching.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main), 82, 4 (1983), 282–97.

The importance of receptive language skills (aural and reading comprehension) is widely acknowledged, but the manner of teaching them has not been systematically investigated, and the relevance of psycholinguistic discoveries has been neglected. Comprehension is understood in psycholinguistics as an active cognitive process, utilising strategies of interpretation, thus going beyond purely formal definitions of linguistic structure. The implication for language teaching is that the instruction of linguistic knowledge should be supplemented by the didactic implementation of such strategies as have been found important in psycholinguistic research, such that students are taught how to use linguistic strategies and skills in an efficient manner.