
Teaching particular languages

English

92-61 Eichhorn-Eugen, Antje. 'Die Sprache der Bilder' – Eine Anregung für den fortgeschrittenen Englischunterricht. [The language of paintings: how to use this concept in English lessons.] *Die Neueren Sprachen* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany), **90**, 3 (1991), 279–91.

There are many reasons why it is worthwhile to discuss paintings in English lessons. It calls for concentration and careful observation on the pupils' part, while stimulating the active use of communication skills. It also helps them to recognise the links between painting and literature or their general

knowledge about Great Britain or America. The article provides practical tips that can be helpful in describing the pictures, as well as explanations of basic concepts and guidelines for methods of presentation.

92-62 Grosse, Christine Uber (Florida International U.) **and Voght, Geoffrey M.** (Eastern Michigan U.). The evolution of languages for specific purposes in the United States. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **75**, 2 (1991), 181–95.

This article traces the development of LSP in the United States, presents a rationale for its place

within the foreign language curriculum, and offers an assessment of its research base.

92-63 Marshall, Stewart (Papua New Guinea U. of Technology). A genre-based approach to the teaching of report-writing. *ESP Journal* (Washington, DC), **10** (1991), 3–13.

Non-native speakers of English studying science at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology are taught how to write technical and scientific reports, with particular emphasis on structure and lexis. Acquiring the skill is also seen as a means of developing scientific thinking. The teacher monitors the extent to which students are able to use the structures of technical report-writing to communicate their thinking.

In order to facilitate assessment of students' work a computer program was created which enables the teacher to answer questions and in this way provide feedback for students on all aspects of the report such as its aims, equipment and materials used, procedure, test results. A further advantage of the program is that it assists in achieving consistency when several teachers are involved in marking.

92-64 Rizzardi, Maria Cecilia (U. of Milan, Italy). Teaching writing skills: from aims to assessment. *Modern English Teacher* (London), **17**, 1/2 (1989/90), 33–41.

The objectives of teaching writing, the proposed activities and final assessment have to focus both on the process of writing and on the final product, the text. Writing as a process involves the task environment, including the constraints within which the writer works, the writer's long-term memory and general knowledge, and what the writer actually does as he writes. The latter consists of three phases: planning, translation and reviewing.

In teaching writing, two skills can be distinguished: the pragmatic/ideational competences relating to planning and drafting, and the textual/linguistic ones relating to the expression of content within the discourse and conventions of written language. Assessment criteria for written work are *message* (the communicative aim of the text), *text* (layout and paragraph structure) and *language* (accuracy, range and appropriateness).



French

92-65 McCarthy, B. (U. of Wollongong, Australia). L'accentuation en classe de français langue étrangère. [Stress patterns in classes for French as a foreign language.] *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée* (Mons, Belgium), **98** (1991), 33-54.

Inappropriate stress patterns are among the most conspicuous marks of the speech of the foreign language learner, and they are one of the most difficult to eliminate. This study analyses the stress patterns of a group of beginners and near beginners in French and compares them to those of a control group of native speakers. Stress features are examined at the levels of the sentence, the rhythm group and the individual word. Since the author is mainly interested in the problems of the learner, the corpus comprises utterances produced in typical classroom speaking exercises: free conversation,

repetition, reading aloud and structure drills. It is in free conversation, the only 'authentic' context, that learner stress is the most inconsistent. Although less spontaneous, the exercises of oral reading and repetition both produce more acceptable stress patterns: oral reading at utterance level and repetition at the level of the word. As these two exercises are still used, for a variety of reasons, in most foreign language classrooms, the teacher should not discount the possibility of using them as a means of fostering appropriate stress patterns in free conversation.

92-66 Munro, James S. (U. of Stirling). A bilingual approach to literature teaching. *Francophonie* (Rugby), **3** (1991), 17-20.

Bilingual literature tutorials afford the student the opportunity of learning French by using it while avoiding the inhibiting effect of insisting on French only. A group of first-year university students was allowed a free choice of French or English or of using both languages as and when they wished, though the tutor would always speak French. Mistakes were not corrected, though clarification would be sought if the meaning was not clear, thus underlining the emphasis on content as opposed to form. Pairwork, being less intimidating, was often adopted.

Most of the students reacted favourably and only one clung to English throughout. Approximately two-thirds of class discussion was conducted in French and the system lasted for a whole semester, whereas previous attempts at imposing French monolingually had foundered after a few weeks. However, since a mixture of languages was not acceptable in written work, written assignments and exam answers reverted to the traditional use of English.

German

92-67 Chambers, Gary N. (U. of Leeds). Teaching literature pre-16. *German Teaching* (Rugby), **3** (1991), 16-23.

The communicative era and GCSE have done much to signal the demise of literature, and extensive reading generally, as a profitable activity. The National Curriculum, however, appears to promote the teaching of literature from the earliest stages of language learning, starting with poems, rhymes and songs. Reading is to be restored to its proper status as an enjoyable activity and relatively painless learning opportunity. This will also lay a solid foundation, currently lacking, for sixth-form literature. Teachers should initially offer a limited amount of language, concentrating on visual impact. *Konkrete Poesie* offers many examples: the poems are often very simple, with a limited range of vocabulary. Ingrid Mummert in *Nachwuchspoeten*

argues persuasively for the use in the language learning classroom of poetry written by young people. Themes are age-related and of concern to teenagers, which can be motivating. The language is accessible, and the reader is given insight into another youth culture. Beginning to understand the young people of the foreign country prepares learners for communicating with them. Pupils may also be stimulated to read more demanding poetry, and to experiment with writing in the foreign language. Poetry appears to provide a better stimulus to writing than other literary genres. Pupils will need a poem upon which to model their own creation, preferably one which stimulates them to examine their own culture and compare it with

another. Gap-filling can provide an introduction to independent writing, and group work can prevent pupils feeling too exposed. Fables and fairy stories are also valid stimuli for creative writing. Mummert's approach requires the teacher to relate

the story, with miming if necessary to overcome the language problem, and stop at a tension-filled juncture to allow the pupils to finish the story in groups, for class discussion later.

92-68 Esselborn, Karl. Neue Beurteilungskriterien für audiovisuelle Lehrmaterialien. [New assessment criteria for audio-visual teaching materials.] *Zielsprache Deutsch* (Munich, Germany), **22**, 2 (1991), 64-78.

Films for language learning in the 1960s were based on audio-lingual concepts and are now very dated. In the 1970s, language learning films began to reflect more realistic situations with livelier dialogue, thus becoming more oriented towards communication. Suggestions for exploiting the materials involved pre-teaching, commentary, practice and group work. With the advent of the communicative approach in the 1980s, the choice of video materials increased, with the use of TV discussions and

reports, filmed portraits, literature and documentaries. The most recent films (e.g. *Alles Gute*, 1989) use computer tricks and effects. Schwerdtfeger suggests that video materials play on the cognitive and emotional aspects of learners and encourage them to speak by exploiting their natural curiosity about their environment. Six theses are proposed about the use of video and how it can be exploited in the classroom and eight criteria are then put forward for assessing video materials.

92-69 Merrifield, Doris Fulda. A tool for more effective correcting and grading of papers. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* (Philadelphia, PA), **24**, 1 (1991), 42-5.

This article offers sufficient responses to sixty of the most frequently made errors in German grammar, plus thirteen punctuation rules, and proposes that the instructor hand out this list to the students and henceforth 'tag' language errors by the corresponding number, then have the student correct

them and resubmit the assignment for a better grade. This method will force the student to improve his/her facility with the German grammar, will make obvious at a glance in which area a student is having the greatest problems, and will make more objective grading easier.

92-70 Swisher, Michael. A writing exercise to stimulate creativity and improve style in the advanced conversation and composition classroom. *Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German* (Philadelphia, PA), **24**, 1 (1991), 37-41.

This paper presents an in-class writing exercise that is designed to stimulate creativity and promote sophistication of style in the advanced conversation and composition class. Four nouns and four verbs are taken from two clear and concise texts by

established authors. Students write their own texts based on these nouns and verbs and, through a group editing process, learn to streamline their own style and become more expressive in German.

Italian

92-71 Wicksteed, Kathy (U. of York). Grammar in communicative teaching. *Tuttitalia: the Italian Journal of the Association for Language Learning* (Rugby), **3** (1991), 25-34.

Because traditional grammar books use grammar as a basis and try to match texts to the grammar without including any real-life situations, the result is stilted, unnatural course materials. Form in such textbooks has priority over meaning. Focus is on usage rather than use. In modern communicative courses, the social context is primary and exercises are created in terms of usefulness to students.

In the case of beginners learning Italian, some areas of grammar can be matched to context of use, e.g. reflexive verbs and getting up in the morning. It is possible to relate structures and functions in some cases. Such integration is truly communicative grammar.

92–72 Wimpory, Maria (Teesside Poly.). Business needs Italian; and Italian needs you. *Tuttitalia* (Rugby), **3** (1991), 35–9.

The importance of the Italian market to British industry is stressed and key areas are targeted. In order to meet the language needs of the business executive, the language teacher must be prepared to acquire and teach the language of marketing and of import/export, and the legal and commercial vocabulary required for setting up business in Italy. In order to do business in Italy, the executive also needs to be able to talk about the products and processes of his or her own company; it is up to the teacher to research the relevant terminology.

Once they are able to clarify and prioritise specific needs, teachers select content and methods, and evaluate and collect appropriate materials in order to produce an imaginative tailor-made programme or package which will see the business trainee through from the elementary stages of Italian to a good working knowledge. In this way, teachers will find the teaching of Business Italian rewarding.

Russian

92–73 Izaryenkov, D. I. and Kiyanovskaya, L. F. Игра как форма организации учебной речевой деятельности в процессе овладения вторым (неродным) языком. [Games as a form of organising educational speech activities in the course of mastering a second (non-native) language.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **1** (1991), 65–70.

Games are suggested as a useful way to help students learn to speak in a foreign language. In the last few years, the practical use of games exercises has not been accompanied by a corresponding assessment of its educational role. Role play is generally a basic component of games exercises and the teacher, as well as the students, often participates. Roles can vary greatly and students can often enjoy playing a role which they are unlikely to play in real life. The dramatisation of literary works can also be used. Students can improve their understanding of people and events by role play, as well as improve their

speaking ability. Conditions of games exercises are discussed: the most important is that the content of the game must reflect the age and professional interests of the pupils. It is possible to distinguish two main games exercises – educational speech games and educational games with speech components. Eight types of game are listed, including creative role games (discussions, dialogues), and role game competitions. Games as educational tasks are a useful educational tool, but they must be used in conjunction with other educational methods.

92–74 Kulibina, N. V. Художественный текст на уроке русского языка: цели и методы использования. [Artistic text in the Russian language lesson: aims and methods of use.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **2** (1991), 34–8.

Texts from Russian literature (both classical and contemporary) are a popular educational aid for teaching the Russian language to foreigners. Literary texts are often included in school textbooks; books for independent reading and the development of speech skills have also been written. This article discusses the aims and methods of use of such texts.

The aims include the acquisition and consolidation of linguistic knowledge and skills; practical experience of different kinds of speaking activity; the stimulation of an interest in educational subjects; the fostering of an understanding and knowledge of a country, its people and culture; the exploration of

moral attitudes and the relationship between characters and their actions and emotions; and a study of philology.

In order to demonstrate different grammatical forms or lexical groups of words, and for the forming and strengthening of speech habits, it is often advisable to use small examples of literary works. Dialogues from prose works and small texts from plays are useful for the teaching of spoken Russian and of listening skills. Other methods of study may include literary criticism and complex philological analysis.

92–75 Kurokhtina, G. N. Интерференция ритмических систем русского и английского языков. [Interference between the rhythmic systems of Russian and English. *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **2** (1991), 45–9.

When comparing the phonetic systems of two languages, teachers often point out certain similarities (for example, the reduction of vowels in non-stressed syllables), but experience has shown that far from helping learners, such ‘similarities’ can actually hinder them. This is mainly because the rhythmic structures of words are different in English and Russian, even though neither language has fixed word stress. Secondary stress is a feature of certain polysyllabic words in English but is much less common in Russian, except in abbreviations. Where they differ is in the degree of energy with which

different syllables are enunciated. In Russian, the figures 1, 2, 3, 1 may be used to describe these degrees, with 3 being the stressed syllable and the other figures being defined in relation to it. In English, the corresponding figures for four-syllable words would be 2, 1, 3, 1. This is a considerable source of interference for anglophone learners of Russian; teachers are recommended to point out the basic rules of pronunciation at the beginning, because such mistakes are difficult to eradicate in the more advanced stages. [10 exercises are given.]

92–76 Nikolayev, S. G. О так называемых счетных словах русского и английского языков. [On the subject of named number-group words in Russian and English.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **1** (1991), 59–64.

An analysis and comparison is made of number-group words in English and Russian for the purpose of helping the translating and teaching of Russian to English speakers. Number-group words in English and Russian are described. They form a larger group in Russian than in English and are mainly described from the corresponding numerals, although a distinction is often made between the characteristics of number-groups and numerals. Two conditions are stipulated for the forming of number-group words: firstly, the objects must be similar to each other in order to form a series, and secondly, the

objects must also be somewhat different from each other.

A classification is made firstly of Russian, then of English number-group words. Each type is described in detail. Each group in Russian is often characterised by the use of a particular suffix. Other characteristic traits include the polysemic nature of some words (the word ‘troika’ in Type Two has at least seven different meanings), or names of money, Type Three. English number-group words include many of Russian origin.

92–77 Rich, E. K. К вопросу о преподавании эллиптических конструкций студентам-филологам университетов США. [Concerning the question of teaching elliptical constructions to student philologists in American universities.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **2** (1991), 74–9.

Russians often speak in short, incomplete sentences or phrases which can present problems to foreign students, both in understanding and in knowing how to use such constructions themselves. Recently, more attention has been paid in textbooks to colloquial speech, but it is still a comparatively new area of study. Problems arise as the Russian elliptical constructions, often lacking a verb of movement, have no exact equivalent in English. There are also some situations where elliptical constructions are used, which are found in Russian, but not in American English. Three types of elliptical construction are examined – those which are found in

English and Russian; those found in Russian, but needing a fuller construction in English; and those which are possible in Russian, but impossible in English.

Many Russian elliptical constructions are linked with money or the purchase of tickets. Other constructions include the use of the nominative case to replace other cases – a method also used in English. In order to help students use Russian elliptical constructions properly, several exercises are proposed on various themes, such as shopping, or public transport.

92–78 Ryevitskii, V. V. and Lyebyedinskii, S. I. Проблемы теории учебника в рамках коммуникативно-индивидуализированного обучения. [Problems of the theory of the textbook within the limits of communicative-individualised instruction.] *Русский язык за рубежом* (Moscow), **2** (1991), 79–83.

A student-orientated textbook is described, in which the basic educational principles of the Russian language and the resulting activities are selected in accordance with the level of ability and knowledge of the students, combined with factors of personality and behaviour.

The shortcomings of the monologue system of teaching are described and compared with 'communicative-individualised' instruction. The students are divided into groups in accordance both with their level of ability and with their responsiveness. Each lesson of the textbook contains a selection of spoken activities; grammatical material;

linguistic and oral exercises; the composition of audio texts and texts for independent work, and visually illustrated material.

The principles of the selection, organisation and presentation of text materials are determined on the basis of the circulation of the methodological, psychological and linguistic demands. The basic educational texts are grouped according to complexity and subject themes. All kinds of graphic materials are used, including subject drawings and photographs. The use of various kinds of illustrations allows for a reduction in verbal directions.

Spanish

92–79 Chang, Kuan-yi Rose (West Virginia U.) and **Smith, William Flint** (Syracuse U. in Spain, Madrid). Co-operative learning and CALL/IVD in beginning Spanish: an experiment. *Modern Language Journal* (Madison, Wis), **75**, 2 (1991), 205–11.

This article reports on research into the effectiveness of learning in pairs, that is, co-operative learning, and the use of computers and videodiscs. Students beginning Spanish were required to find answers from computer material. The answers were either expressed in the material, or had to be deduced from it, or had to be inferred from speculation beyond the confines of the material. Students were also presented with information structured randomly

and asked to organise it in correct sequence. It was found that whether students worked individually or in pairs there was little significant difference in achievement. However, it was clear that co-operative learning requires explicit instruction on how to interact with a partner, and that time is needed to develop a collaborative rather than a competitive relationship.

92–80 Connelly, Brian (John Ogilvie High Sch., Hamilton, Strathclyde). National pilot: Spanish in the primary school. *Vida Hispanica* (Rugby), **3** (1991), 29–33.

Teaching Spanish in the primary classroom in Scotland did not start until October 1990. The original pilot study into the teaching of modern languages in primary schools began in August 1989 with French and German and involved six secondary schools with their associated primaries. It was later extended to 27 school groupings and included Spanish and Italian.

Each secondary school was allocated one full-time equivalent (FTE) modern language teacher who visited each primary class for 45 minutes twice a week to introduce the new language, the role of the primary teacher being to assist with group

activities, reinforce the language taught and recycle it between visits from the secondary teacher. A two-day Spanish immersion course and follow-up courses were arranged for the primary teachers to develop their competence and confidence.

The primary pupils are enthusiastic and their teachers have acquired confidence. However, as pupils proceed to secondary school, problems of staffing are likely to arise. In view of the imminent shortfall in secondary school language teachers, means must be found to train primary teachers if this scheme is not to founder as others have in the past.

92–81 White, Anne (U. of Bradford). Putting the poetry back into language teaching. *Vida Hispanica* (Rugby), **3** (1991), 24–8.

The best kind of poetry involves playing with words and images, and communicating feelings and ideas. The most appropriate way to use poetry in the language class is therefore through activities which exploit the open-endedness and ambiguities of poetic language.

The built-in repetition which is a feature of some poetic writing aids acquisition of stress, rhythm and

intonation patterns as well as grammatical structures. The lyrics of many popular songs can also be similarly used. Making students translate poems as a test of comprehension and using poems as a means of acquiring vocabulary are activities which are best avoided. [Activities and exercises for the classroom are suggested, and examples given of Spanish and Latin American lyrics.]

92–82 Zollo, Mike (Britannia Royal Naval Coll., Dartmouth). Spanish in the National Curriculum – a personal view. *Vida Hispanica* (Rugby), **3** (1991), 34–7.

The National Curriculum, which requires all pupils to study at least one foreign language, will mean more pupils learning more languages, thus presenting Hispanists with an opportunity to promote the use of Spanish. For reasons of staffing and resources, languages already widely taught are likely to maintain their position. Spanish, ranking third after French and German, and ahead of Italian, is secure and is well provided for with course materials.

Hispanists should press for Spanish to be taught as

a first language for the whole of the ability range, including lower-ability pupils. They might stress how the phonetic nature of Spanish helps to give learners confidence in the early stages. The more Spanish is taught, the more likely it is that staffing appointments can be justified and maintained. Hispanists have grounds for confidence, but the momentum already established needs to be maintained and opportunities for the extension of the teaching of Spanish in Britain exploited.