second language. Students in two form four/five classes in a Hong Kong secondary school were taught to revise their first drafts for six writing tasks completed over one academic year. A selection of 30% of student original and revised tasks was analysed for revision changes. This analysis showed that all revised texts were longer and more elaborated. Six student writers were then interviewed to examine how they interpret the influence of their revisions on their texts. These interviews indicated a common belief that text 'improvement' was beyond the writers' capabilities as it entailed more 'accurate' texts. A third of the texts analysed were also graded for improvement by two *independent* readers, who also completed a questionnaire and were interviewed. The findings suggest that revised texts were not always considered 'better'. The author suggests that the similarities between the readers and writers in the way they interpreted text improvement points to the possibility that, in order to improve the texts, a threshold level of linguistic maturity is required.

99–273   Sengupta, Sima (Hong Kong Poly. U.) **and Falvey, Peter**. The role of the teaching context in Hong Kong English teachers' perceptions of L2 writing pedagogy. *Evaluation and Research in Education* (Clevedon, UK), **12**, 2 (1998), 72–95.

This paper examines the ways in which second language (L2) writing is perceived and its pedagogy conceptualised by English language teachers in Hong Kong secondary schools. It then attempts to delineate the factors that shape teacher perceptions. Data were gathered through a questionnaire survey, classroom observations, written protocols and documentary analysis. The data indicate that these teachers' perceptions regarding students' writing are dominated by language-related concerns at the sentence level with minimal focus on either the discourse-related or cognitive aspects of writing. Grammatical and lexical errors engage maximum teacher attention. The data further suggest that teachers' perceptions of L2 writing are predominantly shaped by the contextual factors that surround their classroom lives. It is argued that conditions for teacher perceptions will be subject to change as the context becomes more sensitive to the discourse-related and cognitive factors within L2 writing which recent developments in curriculum renewal and language teacher education in Hong Kong are likely to bring.

99–274   Shi, Ling (U. of Hong Kong). Effects of pre-writing discussions on adult ESL students' compositions. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **7**, 3 (1998), 319–45.

The study reported here assessed whether peer talk and teacher-led pre-writing discussions affected the quality of students' compositions. Forty-seven adult ESL (English as a Second Language) students from three pre-university writing classes participated. Each student wrote three drafts of opinion essays under conditions of peer discussion, teacher-led discussion, and no discussion. Non-parametric tests of rating scores showed no

statistically significant differences overall in the writing under the three conditions. However, students were found to write longer drafts in the condition of no discussion, shorter drafts after teacher-led talk, and drafts with a greater variety of verbs after peer talk. Comparison of students' use of verbs in both written and spoken texts traced the effects of various pre-writing conditions. Whereas the no-discussion condition led to longer drafts (presumably because this left more time to write), pre-writing discussions provided social contexts where either the teacher scaffolded students in the whole-class situation to conceptualise their thinking, or students assisted each other in peer groups to explore more freely and generate diverse vocabulary and ideas for the writing tasks. These results imply that teachers may usefully balance these pre-writing conditions to generate various types of thinking and discourse processes that facilitate ESL students' writing. The study also highlights the importance of the time factor and the relationship between length and quality in L2 writing.

99–275   Varghese, Susheela A. and Abraham, Sunita A. (Nat. U. of Singapore). Undergraduates arguing a case. *Journal of Second Language Writing* (Norwood, NJ, USA), **7**, 3 (1998), 287–306.

The need for undergraduate writing instruction enabling students to master skills in argumentation is increasingly being recognised. To date, however, there are few studies demonstrating the effects of explicit instruction in argumentation. This paper describes an instructional study in which students were trained in two key aspects of argumentation, namely, the structural and interpersonal components. Participants were 30 undergraduate students following the (English) Academic Reading and Writing module offered at the University of Singapore. All students received eight weeks of explicit instruction: the structural aspects were taught and measured in terms of Toulmin's 1958 framework of argument analysis; the interpersonal aspects were measured in terms of the creation of a clear persona, audience adaptiveness, and stance towards the unique discourse of argumentation. Findings contrasting a pre- and post-instruction writing task reveal statistically significant improvement in students' abilities to formulate claims, to offer specific and developed grounds, and to use more reliable warrants (i.e. the structural aspects); students also showed improvement in the interpersonal aspects of argument. The paper concludes with recommendations for improving the research on and teaching of argumentation.

Language testing

99–276   Barnes, Anne (U. of Warwick, UK) **and Pomfrett, Gwynne**. Assessment in German at KS3: how can it be consistent, fair and appropriate? *Deutsch: Lehren und Lernen* (Rugby, UK), **17** (1998), 2–6.

Language testing

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Teachers often find national criteria distant and poorly clarified, and assessment at Key Stage three (KS3, i.e. ages 11-14) is only one of many priorities currently facing modern languages departments in UK secondary schools. The authors of this article make a number of observations and suggestions regarding assessment at this level. Teachers need departmental training in streamlining time-consuming record-keeping, in using the National Curriculum level descriptions and in standardising their judgements. Departmental portfolios, comprising annotated pieces of pupils' work, can help in working towards consistency, but selection criteria and updating procedures must be carefully considered. The reasons for assessing pupils' progress should never be obscured by over-emphasis on statutory requirements, and teachers must be open and honest with pupils about how they are assessed, encouraging them to develop strategies for dealing with tasks and tests. Frequent classroom practice should be given, for example, in understanding target language rubrics and instructions. Research on learners' strategies in Year 9 (age 13-14) has even shown that training booklets can be effective, but departments must consider whether strategy training should be embedded in schemes of work or carried out as a separate activity. Good practice in KS3 assessment will also benefit KS4 and post-16.

99–277 Coniam, David (Chinese U. of Hong Kong). From text to test, automatically–an evaluation of a computer cloze-test generator. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* (Hong Kong), **3**, 1 (1998), 41–60.

This paper investigates the application of corpus data to computerised test design. It describes *Autotest*–a computer system which produces multiple-choice vocabulary tests from a plain text by means of a word class tagger and lists of the most frequent words in English. Tests produced by the system are envisaged as being printed out and used as traditional pen-and-paper exams by English language teachers in Hong Kong. The paper describes the procedure for getting from a text to a test, and presents an analysis of two cloze tests which have been produced by the system and trialled on classes of students in Hong Kong secondary schools. Results are encouraging in that, while the system did not produce as many good test items as would be expected of a competent human test setter, the test items produced by the system were far from what might be expected of a potential 'garbage in, garbage out' methodology. The system is not intended, however, to be seen as a stand-alone test-producing system, and it is stressed that the system has to be viewed as an *aid* to a teacher producing tests herself.

99–278 Finch, Andrew E. (Andong Nat. U., Korea). Oral testing and self-assessment: the way forward? *Language Testing Update* (London, UK), **23** (1998), 33–42.

Traditional methods of testing still prevalent in Korea mean that there is very little time for conversational

English in the test-driven secondary classroom, despite the introduction of recent advances in language teaching methodology. This paper suggests that the 'Use of English' can only be promoted in schools by incorporating an 'Oral Test' into the overall testing requirements, and that self-assessment by students on those tests can be a valuable additional means of improving oral abilities. The paper describes a test that was developed focusing on the improvement in spoken English of 1700 freshman university students over one academic year (64 hours), and which was administered and evaluated using established oral-test criteria. Grading was relative, looking at improvement rather than at level of achievement, and the Conversational-English course taken by the students was the basis of the test. Results showed that: preparation for the test necessitated active spoken participation in lessons; lessons tended to utilise task-based communicative teaching methods; and the means became the end–the test was not only a reason for developing oral skills, but also a means of achieving that goal.

99–279 Laurier, Michel (U. de Montréal, Canada). Méthodologie d'évaluation dans des contextes d'apprentissage des langues assistés par des environnements informatiques multimédias. [Multimedia CALL environments and second language learning evaluation methods.] *Etudes de Linguistique Appliquée* (Paris, France), **110** (1998), 247–55.

This article is concerned with computer-assisted testing. It first offers a brief overview of the development of the methodology and approaches in computer-aided evaluation in second and foreign language learning. It is suggested that computer-assisted testing is better suited to some evaluation purposes than others; and various types of evaluation are listed and discussed (e.g. formative, summative, etc.), with a view to exploring the potential contribution of the computer depending on the desired outcome. The article concludes with the description of a prototype computer-adaptive test, which is used to illustrate the possibilities of multimedia CALL environments in this area.

99–280 Lumley, Tom (Hong Kong Poly. U.). Perceptions of language-trained raters and occupational experts in a test of occupational English language proficiency. *English for Specific Purposes* (Exeter, UK), **17**, 4 (1998), 347–67.

As part of the process of development of spoken language assessment procedures in occupational settings, it is common practice to use occupational experts as informants. The rating process, however, more commonly relies exclusively upon the judgements of language-trained specialists. Research to date has produced conflicting findings concerning the relative harshness and other characteristics of these different groups of raters. This issue is considered here in the context of a recent standard-setting project carried out for the Occupational English Test, an occupation-spe-

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cific test of English for overseas-trained health professionals administered on behalf of the Australian Government. The study was conducted in response to criticism of the standards applied in the test. Twenty audio-recordings of role-plays from recent administrations of the speaking sub-test were each rated both by ten trained ESL (English as a Second Language) raters and ten medical practitioners. The ratings produced were then analysed to compare the extent of agreement reached by the two groups of judges concerning candidates' language proficiency, as well as group and individual differences in interpretations of the rating scale used. Broad similarities in judgements found between the two groups indicate that the practice of relying on ESL-trained raters is essentially justified.

99–281   Vandergrift, Larry (U. of Ottawa, Canada) **and Bélanger, Claire**. The National Core French Assessment Project: design and field test of formative evaluation instruments at the intermediate level. *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes* (Toronto, Ont.), **54**, 4 (1998), 553–78.

Curriculum changes in Core French programmes across Canada have resulted in the need for new evaluation tools. In response, the National Core French Assessment Project has been established to create new formative evaluation instruments. This paper describes the background and theoretical framework for the project as a whole, and then focuses on the design and field-testing of the instruments created for intermediate-level students. Reactions gathered by questionnaire from both teachers and students involved in the field tests are analysed to assess the merits of these prototype instruments and to suggest further improvements. Results of the field-test indicate that the overall reaction to the bank of evaluation instruments is very positive. Teachers have found the instruments flexible to use and helpful for evaluating the desired learning outcomes. Students have found them beneficial for focusing and organising learning activities, thereby enabling them to improve their performance in French. Both teachers and students comment on the motivating aspect of these instruments and on their potential for providing useful feedback.

Teacher education

99–282   Borg, Simon. The good teacher trainer. *The Teacher Trainer* (Canterbury, UK), **12**, 2 (1998), 7–10.

This article examines the criteria that a group of pre-service language teacher trainees feel that good teacher trainers should satisfy. Trainee descriptions of the good teacher trainer were elicited and then grouped by the author into three broad categories: professional qualities (e.g., use of teaching aids, class control, clear explanations), interpersonal awareness (e.g., respect for trainees,

humour, ability to gain rapport) and training content (e.g., useful, varied and not overly theoretical). Drawing from the criteria most commonly mentioned by trainees, the author offers the profile of a good teacher trainer. The author then goes on to describe one concrete example of a trainer altering their behaviour as a result of trainee feedback, and dwells on how respect for trainees can be communicated by the act of asking trainees to evaluate, albeit in this indirect fashion, their trainers' work.

99–283   Bowker, David. Helping teachers to reflect: an application of neuro-linguistic programming. *The Teacher Trainer* (Canterbury, UK), **12**, 1 (1998), 19–21.

This paper describes the 'Logical levels' model developed by Robert Dilts from the field of neuro-linguistic programming and applies it to reflective moments in in-service language teacher training courses. The model suggests we can look at ourselves in relation to an issue or situation from five different points of view: identity, belief, capability, behaviour and environment. The author takes the issue of lesson preparation and shows how, by asking teachers questions relating to each of the logical levels, deep reflection can be encouraged that moves teachers beyond ritualised teaching behaviour to a consciousness of the full range of choices available in their work. An example of such a questioning and exploring conversation is given in abbreviated transcript form. The article goes on to discuss practicalities such as the use of pacing and floor space to separate the logical levels and finishes with some ideas for follow-up and variation.

99–284   Burton, Jill (U. of South Australia). A cross-case analysis of teacher involvement in TESOL research. *TESOL Quarterly* (Alexandria, VA, USA), **32**, 3 (1998), 419–46.

A fundamental question for practitioners in TESOL (the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages) is whether TESOL research is useful. This article suggests that a missing link in answering this and related questions is some kind of shared reflective framework for TESOL practitioners–that is, researchers, teachers, and teacher educators–to theorise practice; and that such a framework could support comparisons across settings. The author argues that teachers need to be involved in research on teaching; and, through the examination of some specific settings for Australian TESOL research and professional development, she proposes an evaluation framework to facilitate cross-case and cross-context analysis of such research. It is recommended that researchers in TESOL focus first on characterising TESOL professional development activity and second on considering its relation to other educational and mainstream research traditions.

99–285   Celani, Maria Antonieta Alba (Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brazil). A retrospective view of an ESP teacher education