Publications received

Language teaching and learning

Mayte Alvarez, ***On course: Spanish***. London: Hodder Arnold, 2005, pp. vi + 282. ISBN 0-340-885-351 (pbk).

A coursebook for students in post-secondary education who would like to refresh their knowledge of the language or begin from scratch. The comprehensive course takes a firmly communicative approach, giving plenty of opportunity for paired and group oral and written work, and for independent study. In addition to above-average attention to grammar explanations, the course systematically includes sections on the cultural aspects of life in one of the Spanish-speaking countries. Other languages covered in Hodder Arnold's 'On course' series are French, Italian and Spanish.

Nia Griffith, ***100 ideas for teaching languages*** (Continuum One Hundred Series). London & New York: Continuum, 2005, pp. 131. ISBN 0-8264-8549-9 (pbk).

An experienced school teacher of languages outlines inspirational, well-tested ideas on classroom activities. Many of the one hundred activities are grouped under the headings Vocabulary, Games, Active Listening, Creative Writing and Using ICT [information and communication technology]. Other activities are explicitly classified as suitable for use with many topics, or appropriate for more advanced pupils or for occasions when a native speaker of the language in question is present in the classroom. One of the two appendices in the book gives six succinct hints for and ideas about using an overhead projector in the classroom, and the other outlines reward systems to motivate pupils in the language classroom. Although the ideas stem from the authors' experience of the school setting in Great Britain, they are no doubt adaptable to other language-teaching environments.

Lisa Kahlen, ***German grammar made easy***. London: Hodder Arnold, 2005, pp. 261 & interactive CD-ROM. ISBN 0-340-904-968 (pbk).

This is a workbook for adult novices to German and those who have some rudimentary knowledge of the language and need to learn about its grammar to progress beyond the phrasebook repertoire. Each of the six chapters deals with a word class (verbs, nouns and determiners, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions), with the chapter on verbs taking up more than a half of the entire book. The chapters are divided into sections and subsections, each of which includes clearly marked, brief explanations of specific grammatical points and numerous exercises. Answers to exercises are included at the end of the book. One of the two appendices in the book lists common irregular verbs in German, and the other outlines the principles of German pronunciation. The accompanying interactive CD-ROM provides over 200 activities in extensive grammar practice and includes recordings for self-study of listening and pronunciation.

Teresa Siek-Piskozub (ed.), ***European Year of Languages 2001: Proceedings of the 3rd CER-FIPLV Conference, 26–28 September 2001, Poznań, Poland***. Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2002, pp. vii + 302. ISBN 83-87314-35-8 (pbk).

The Third Conference of the Central European Region of Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes was held in the Council-of-Europe-sponsored International Year of Languages and provided a forum for European (and Australian!) linguists, language teachers and other language professionals to debate policy making, intercultural communication, language teaching methods and technology, and recent European language projects. The 36 papers selected for inclusion in this volume – grouped under the headings European Integration, Intercultural Communication, and Foreign Language Learning – present an up-to-date picture of the European scene. Each paper is published in the language in which it was presented at the conference – English, French, German or Polish – and the editor's Introduction in English.

Teresa Siek-Piskozub, ***Umuzykalnienie glottodydaktyki: Muzyka i piosenka na lekcji języka obcego*** [Musical language teaching: Music and songs in foreign-language lessons]. Poznań: Motivex, 2002, pp. 133. ISBN 83-87314-28-5 (pbk).

Drawing on the history of foreign language teaching, ethnography, developmental psychology, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics, and on empirical and theoretical studies, the author makes a case for the use of music and song as a powerful component of the language-teaching curriculum, especially in the classroom with younger and older children, regardless of the overall method of language teaching employed. Considering second-language-acquisition processes overall and those particularly sensitive to music and song input, the author offers practical suggestions for the use of suitable materials, classified with respect to specific pedagogic objectives. The book is written in Polish and includes

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a comprehensive list of references with Polish and international literature citations.

Language testing

J. Charles Anderson, ***Diagnosing foreign language proficiency: The interface between learning and assessment***. London & New York: Continuum, 2005, pp. xii + 284. ISBN 0-8264-8503-0 (hbk).

Diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses in learners' developing foreign language proficiency is central to helping learners make progress. Yet, very few truly diagnostic tests exist, with other forms of testing dominant in the field. The author presents the rationale for and research surrounding the development of DIALANG, a suite of internet-delivered diagnostic foreign language tests funded by the European Commission in the years 1996–2004, a project which covers fourteen European languages and five main areas of language proficiency: reading, listening, writing, grammar and vocabulary. The author explores the empirical results of the project to date, highlighting the role of self-assessment and the value of feedback and advice, thus developing learners' and teachers' awareness of the complexity of language learning.

Teacher education

Sarah Worth, ***Autistic spectrum disorders*** (The SEN [special educational needs] Series). London & New York: Continuum, 2005, pp. 101. ISBN 0-8264-7994-4 (pbk).

Written by a speech and language therapist, this book is primarily for teachers whose pupils include individuals with a form of autism. It covers everything from diagnosis of autism to classroom organisation and differentiation, thus providing a valuable guide to a variety of strategies for teaching and managing affected pupils. The book includes an extensive information and resources chapter with lists of support groups, websites, books and individual contacts which will be useful for both teachers and parents alike.

Applied linguistics

Rod Gardner & Johannes Wagner (eds.), ***Second language conversations*** (Advances in Applied Linguistics). London & New York: Continuum, 2004, pp. x + 292. ISBN 0-8264-6908-6 (hbk), 0-8264-8800-5 (pbk).

The authors of the twelve essays in this collection apply Conversation Analysis to natural, casual conversations involving speakers whose first language is not the language of the talk. Conversations in second-language English, German, French, Japanese, Finnish and Danish within a variety of professional, educational and sociable settings are examined with respect to what speakers in these situations do, how they utilise first-language conversational practices, and whether or not grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation help or hinder the construction of meaning. In the words of a reviewer of the book, it 'makes a powerful case for "ethnomethodological re-specification" in second language research'.

Karen Risager, ***Language and culture: Global flows and local complexity*** (Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2006, pp. xiii + 212. ISBN 1-85359-859-3 (hbk), 1-85359-858-5 (pbk).

The aim of this book is to contribute to the scientific understanding of the relationship between language and culture, and of multilingual and multicultural society. The analytical approach, informed by sociolinguistic theory, critical discourse analysis and social anthropology, draws on a particular field of practice – foreign- and second-language teaching. This provides a particularly productive perspective given that language teaching in this sense necessarily involves both multilingual and multicultural factors. The book presents a new theory of the relationship between language and culture in a transnational and global perspective. The fundamental view is that languages spread across cultures and cultures spread across languages. Linguistic and cultural practices flow through social networks across the world along partially different paths and across national structures and communities.

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