Lang. Teach. (2008), **41:4**, 509–542 © Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S0261444808005223

Annual Research Review

Review of research on language teaching, learning and policy published in 2006

Richard Johnstone University of Stirling, UK
r.m.johnstone@stir.ac.uk

My previous review (of 2004 and 2005 together) was delayed for reasons beyond my control and therefore could not appear as planned in the journal, but the publisher generously agreed to make it available on-line through their website, where it can be accessed (see Johnstone 2006). In the interim the journal has changed. The abstracts are no longer there, replaced by a range of different types of contribution. The absence of the abstracts might tempt the reader of the present review to read it in a somewhat different way from before by regarding what I have to say about each article as a kind of abstract. This would be a mistake, because I have never attempted to provide a balanced summary of any article. For a balanced summary, the reader should go to the abstract of the particular article itself, most of which are quite easy to find on-line. In discussing an article, my purpose is simply to select something which I find interesting and maybe reflects a trend.

Following the new format, the present review will be annual and somewhat shorter than before. In the past, I made a point of discussing some 100 articles, but with new types of contribution coming into the journal to complement the annual review, my annual target will be some 70–80 articles. This makes the process even more selective than before. Nonetheless, I try to cover a reasonable range of different aspects but rarely include anything for theoretical interest alone, so I pick out particular themes which seem to have some application to the teaching and learning of additional languages, and from a reasonably wide range of journals. Purely for convenience, I use the term L2 to cover any kind of additional language, be it modern foreign, heritage, community or other, and be it second, third, fourth or other.

1. Acquisition

1.1 Implicit and explicit knowledge and feedback

What makes some grammatical structures more difficult than others? This is the concern of R. Ellis (2006), who argues that it is essential to distinguish between L2 implicit knowledge (IK) and explicit knowledge (EK). In his study, 17 different structures were investigated with

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

L2 learners of English in New Zealand, mainly of Chinese origin and with various levels of proficiency. It was found that structures which were easy in terms of implicit knowledge could be difficult in terms of explicit knowledge, and vice versa; that measures of both IK and EK predict general language proficiency; and that together implicit and explicit measures of grammatical structures may predict much of the variance in general language proficiency scores. Much depends on the clarity with which the concepts of IK and EK are understood, and a merit of this study is the exemplary way in which IK and EK are analysed and set out.

A major theme of the classroom-based study by R. Ellis, Loewen & Erlam (2006) is how SLA is influenced by implicit and explicit feedback. They focus on two types of corrective feedback: implicit (in the form of recasts) and explicit (in the form of metalinguistic explanation), when teachers dealt with errors in a target structure. Measurement of what had been acquired embraced both implicit knowledge (in the form of an oral imitation test) and explicit knowledge (in the form of two tests, one involving grammaticality judgement and the other metalinguistic knowledge). Generally, explicit feedback as metalinguistic explanation proved superior to implicit feedback as recasts, in respect of both the implicit and the explicit knowledge of the students. The participants were attending a language school in New Zealand, were mainly East Asian, with a mean age of 25 years, and had been in New Zealand from 8 months to 13 years. The distinct advantage in the results favouring metalinguistic information was despite the fact that learners in the recast group received substantially more corrective feedback. It was considered that the metalinguistic information had indeed helped the students generalise the target structure beyond the examples which they had received and thus seemed to have contributed to system- as well as item-learning. This is an excellent study, equally impressive in breadth and detail, and classroom-friendly.

Also interested in implicit language knowledge is Erlam (2006), who is concerned with the development of a special kind of text based on oral elicited imitation, as a means of IK. The task required participants to process a number of statements for meaning, to repeat those that were grammatically correct and to correct those that were ungrammatical. Thus, the task was reconstructive in that it asked the participants to process the statements rather than simply repeat them. In the event, a strong positive correlation was found between participants' performance in repeating grammatically correct items and their performance in correcting those that were incorrect. Among the advantages which this kind of test showed were that it was practical, easy to administer and score, and allowed particular structures to be tested. The results suggested that as a test of implicit knowledge it was both valid and reliable.

1.2 Input and output

To the reader such as myself, with a generalist rather than a specialist knowledge of the theoretical background to SLA research, N. Ellis's (2006) article is not an easy read but is worth the effort. Focusing on the shortcomings of L2 acquisition where input fails to become intake, he discusses a range of features which may become available as a result of frequency, recency or context but which he terms as 'fragile' and which do not lead to intake because of a number of possible factors such as contingency, cue competition, salience, interference, overshadowing, blocking or perceptual learning, all of which are claimed to have been shaped

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

by the learner's L1. Ellis's paper sets out a number of factors of L1-driven selective attention and perceptual tuning which he claims modulate and attenuate L2 intake.

The study of processing instruction (PI) by Marsden (2006) is set in two UK secondary schools with learners of French aged 13/14 years, and uses another form of input, entitled 'enriched input' (EnI) as a basis for comparison. In both PI and EnI learners received brief explicit grammar and processing explanations, but they differed from each other in that in PI there were referential activities which forced the learners' attention on to the meaning of particular target verb inflections, whereas in EnI there were reading and listening activities containing the same number and type of target forms as for PI, but with no required focus of the learners' attention on the target forms. The design allowed for two experiments and three tests – pre-, post- and delayed (14–16 weeks) – as well as for different levels of learner proficiency. It is not appropriate to try to cover all the findings of this complex study, but the results did show a clear advantage for PI over EnI. Enormous care was taken to conduct a rigorous experiment in a busy and pressurised secondary school context, and the findings have something important to say to large numbers of teachers.

Morgan-Short & Bowden (2006) were interested in the comparative effects of two well-known strategies, one of which (PI) was focused on processing instruction, with the other instruction, MOBI, which stands for 'meaningful output-based instruction'. They offer an informative account of the recent research background to both strategies. Their study involved Semester 1 university students of Spanish and contained pre-, post- and delayed post-testing. It was found that both PI and MOBI led to improved performance for interpretation and production of the target structure. There were, however, interesting differences between the two. In the immediate post-test of production, for example, MOBI outperformed PI; but at the same time MOBI showed the greater loss from immediate to delayed post-test. A merit of the paper is that the writers draw on their extensive knowledge of the research literature in order to advance possible explanations which would be consistent with their evidence. They cautiously conclude that output-based instruction which contains some input can strengthen form–meaning connections and can lead to as much linguistic development as instruction based on input alone.

Working with Japanese learners of English aged 18–40, Takimoto (2006) was interested in the comparative outcomes of two types of input-based instruction on the participants' pragmatic proficiency: the one consisting of consciousness-raising and the other consisting of the same plus explicit reactive feedback. A control group was also included in a pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test approach. All three groups received the same amount of instruction, and the main testing instruments consisted of open-ended discourse-completion and role-play. The results showed that in the development of students' pragmatic proficiency both treatments were superior to the control, but that there was no clear difference between the one treatment and the other, suggesting possibly the central importance of what was common to both, namely the consciousness-raising approach. Another study in the PI tradition is by Toth (2006). As with the other studies, it was found that PI provided reliable benefits for the acquisition of L2 morphosyntax (in this case, with students of Spanish at university in the USA). However, the research was concerned also with communicative output (CO). It was likewise found that CO benefited the acquisition of L2 morphosyntax, and it was surmised that output as a component of L2 instructional programmes might have an important role

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in what the writer describes as engaging psycholinguistic processes that benefit L2 system development, thereby implying a facilitative relation between output, metalinguistic resources and acquisition.

1.3 Recasts

The study by Ammar & Spada (2006) is concerned with corrective feedback in the form of recasts and prompts. Students were at Grade 6 learning L2 English. An interesting feature of the study is that it takes account of different proficiency levels within the same year-group, something that schoolteachers all over the world have to contend with. The target structure (his/her) was measured before the treatment, immediately after and again four weeks later. I find the results interesting, not so much in that prompts proved more effective than recasts but rather because students' capacity to learn from recasts seemed associated with their level of proficiency. High proficiency students benefited equally from prompts and recasts, whereas lower proficiency students were less able to benefit from recasts. The results showed that corrective feedback does make a positive difference but, as the writers express it in the title of their study, 'one size does not fit all', with the consequence that the effectiveness of any corrective feedback technique needs to be evaluated in relation to learners' proficiency levels. Well said.

R. Ellis & Sheen (2006) offer a critical review of the role of recasts in SLA. Their text is salutary, in that it shows how elusive and diverse the concept of 'recasts' can be, which makes definition difficult. They claim that recasts can constitute an implicit or an explicit strategy, and can provide positive or negative evidence. They also argue that the social and socio-cognitive aspects of recasts have tended to be ignored in research. This paper is recommended reading for anyone wishing to develop an informed research perspective on recasts. The conclusions contain twelve key points to bear in mind arising from their review. The writers suggest also the value of a qualitative approach to investigating recasts in order to learn more about the variations in the concept and the contexts in which these arise.

Another thorough and informative overview of recasts in relation to learner uptake is provided by Sheen (2006), in a study which combines data from New Zealand and South Korea. One of the features which impressed me most about this study is the wealth of clear examples of several different types of recast. It was found that most recasts occurring in the classrooms tended to be short, declarative in mode, reduced, repeated, with a single error focus, and involved substitutions rather than deletions or additions. As such, they seemed to facilitate learner uptake and/or repair. Moreover, the recasts tended to be explicit rather than implicit, which made them seem more salient, and as such the study challenges the view that recasts constitute an implicit form of corrective feedback.

One of the possible problems with recasts has been some uncertainty as to whether learners notice them. The study by Carpenter et al. (2006) focuses on this issue. Their subjects were 34 advanced learners of English from a variety of L1s. For one group (response-only), the NNS (non-native speaker) learners' utterances were eliminated from a video-recording, so that they were confronted only by the NS (native-speaker) teacher's response, whether recast, repetition or distractor. The other group (utterance–response) received both the NNS

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

learners' utterance and the NS teacher's response. The results showed that learners were more accurate in identifying recasts when they heard the learner's original utterance before the NS teacher's recast. The team concluded that learners with access to NNS original errors (and therefore to the contrast in error-response sequences) are able to identify recasts better than learners who do not see or hear the original error.

Also pursuing the theme of recasts were Lyster & Mori (2006). They distinguish between explicit error correction, recasts and prompts (the latter pushing learners towards self-repair). Their data came from French Immersion (FI) and Japanese Immersion (JI) classrooms with pupils in Grades 4 and 5. The results showed that both FI and JI teachers made most use of recasts, then prompts and then explicit error correction. The use of recasts seemed to fit in with the content-oriented nature of the instruction, since recasts can provide positive or negative evidence, maintain the flow of communication, keep students focused on content and offer some scaffolding for students' learning. However, differences were noted in how the FI and JI students responded. In JI settings, most uptake and repair followed recasts, whereas in the FI classes most uptake and repair followed prompts. The researchers surmise that possibly the JI students were predisposed to noticing the corrective purpose of recasts. The researchers formed a 'counterbalance hypothesis' which states that processes which act as a counterbalance to the communicative orientation of a classroom will tend to be superior to processes that are congruent with it, in helping learners to re-structure their systems.

1.4 Information gaps

Information gaps are widely accepted as a good basis for classroom pedagogy, and Pica, Kang & Sauro (2006) show that they are more than useful also for data collection and analysis, particularly in respect of linguistic forms that are difficult to learn, possibly because of low frequency, low perceptibility or other. They claim that information-gap tasks can help learners notice L2 forms which otherwise they might have missed. In their study they made use of the sorts of task which might draw learners' attention to form as well as to function and meaning. Their paper contains useful sections on 'selection of forms that encode function and meaning' and 'creating conditions for modified interaction and attention' (p. 309). In respect of data analysis they are informative on the operationalisation of attentional processes and on interactional processes. Their own small-scale study contains a classroom-based methodology for the study of attention and interaction in SLA, particularly in respect of how learners acquire and use low-salience L2 forms that have shown little development over time. A merit of the study is that, although impressively research-based, it also conveys a clear sense of classroom relevance.

1.5 Interactional overview

In recognition of 25 years of interaction research, Mackey & Gass (2006) provide a fascinating overview of how research in this area has developed. Initially, they claim, research was descriptive of how NS and NNS conversations were structured. This led to research on the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

value and functions of particular discourse patterns, including links between conversation and comprehension. Then, the 'interaction hypothesis', involving 'negotiation for meaning' and 'interactional adjustments' was developed, connecting input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways. Recently, there has been questioning of the need for the term 'hypothesis' in 'interaction hypothesis'. Given that the facilitative role of interaction in learning now seems well-established, the question no longer is whether interaction plays a facilitative role but rather how.

In addition, Mackey (2006) considers methodology in future interaction research. Introspection is viewed as a learning opportunity and also as a data-collection method, involving in-depth research on individuals in their social contexts. There is a valuable section on learners' perceptions and their introspections, and one on the implications of cognitive neuroscience, involving electroencephalography (EEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) which might prove particularly useful, for example, on how learners process certain types of phonological variants, incongruities, violations and anomalies. Most usefully, attention is also drawn to learners' perceptions of the value of the interactions in which they participate, since this might affect the interaction's structure or whether they benefit developmentally from it. Mackey claims that this aspect has not had much empirical investigation. A good point.

1.6 An emergent phenomenon

According to N. Ellis & Larsen-Freeman (2006) 'language emergence' assumes that 'language is conceived as the emergent properties of a multi-agent, complex, adaptive system' (p. 558). Among the terms they use to characterise language are: 'open', 'nonlinear', 'chaotic (at times)', 'unpredictable', 'sensitive to initial conditions', 'self-organising', 'feedback sensitive', 'adaptive' and 'characterised by strange attractors'. They claim furthermore that as a complex, emergent system, it follows adaptive, Darwinian principles. A thought-provoking account. I don't think that in itself it helps the reader very much in working out what the implications of this view of language are for learning and teaching languages, but the related account by Larsen-Freeman (2006) offers a provisional answer. It is claimed that in respect of language as an emergent phenomenon, language development is not discrete and stage-like but more like the waxing and waning of patterns. Change can be gradual, or sudden, with the latter heralding the emergence of a new order qualitatively different from before. Five Chinese learners of English were closely examined in respect of their oral and written production. The emergence of complexity, fluency and accuracy were seen, not as the unfolding of some prearranged plan but rather as a system adapting to a changing context.

2. Strategies and processes

2.1 Autonomous learning

Finkbeiner et al. (2006) sought to gain empirical evidence on how autonomous learning in FL classes can effectively be supported. The focus was on independent work with FL texts in

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

literacy events where cooperation is essential. What learning strategies do students use and under what conditions? Are these strategies adequate in the given learning setting? What interventions do teachers identify as necessary to support learners, and what interventions do they apply? Are these teacher interventions effective? The empirical part of the paper reports on a pilot study of Year 9 students in all types of German secondary school, exploring the concept of 'self-regulation' which is seen as representing something different from the prevailing teacher-controlled approach.

2.2 Changes in strategy-use over time

Griffiths (2006) claims that relatively few studies of language-learning strategies are longitudinal. In a private ESOL language school for international students in Auckland the study investigated how progress in language learning related to changes in reported frequency of language learning strategy use over a period of time (three months). Students who progressed most rapidly were those who reported the greatest increase in frequency of language learning strategy use. Among the strategies reported as most increased in usage by the five most successful students were: watching TV in English, revising regularly, writing letters in English, reading newspapers in English, consciously learning new vocabulary, keeping a language learning notebook, taking note of language used in the environment and controlling schedules so that English study is done. However, the findings do not apply equally. Not all students making good progress reported increased use of strategies. Also, some students who reported increased strategy use did not in fact make much progress. Nonetheless, although an uncomplicated linear association between rate of progress and reported increment in language learning strategy use cannot be claimed, the results of this study do indicate that in general increased reported frequency of language learning strategy use is linked to progress.

2.3 Self-regulation

Tseng, Dörnyei & Schmitt (2006) claim that much of the research on language learning strategies has not sought to develop theoretical understandings but rather has served more practical goals such as enabling learners to become more self-directed or effective in their learning. They also claim that research in this area has experienced problems such as definitional fuzziness, e.g. in respect of the well-known Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (or SILL; Oxford 1990). Their contribution seeks to develop a new approach to conceptualisation and assessment, through the notion of self-regulation as elaborated in the field of educational psychology. The instrument which they create and trial seeks to target the learner trait of self-regulatory capacity rather than specific strategic behaviours. It contains five facets of control: commitment control, metacognitive control, satiation control, emotion control and environmental control; and for the moment it focuses on one learning domain alone – vocabulary learning. This fascinating account shows how the instrument was developed, piloted and in a more refined form evaluated in respect of Taiwanese learners of English.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2.4 Directives

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has become widely adopted in many countries, backed in Europe by the EC Action Plan for Languages. Dalton-Puffer & Nikula (2006) rightly claim that CLIL-based research has tended to focus on mastery of the target-language, the learners' L1 and also substantive content. Their contribution on CLIL, by contrast, is concerned with language use – in Finland and Austria. Their specific interest is in directives and their functions, since these are common in CLIL classrooms. Presenting an interesting account of directives as appearing in biology, chemistry, mathematics and history lessons at secondary school, they distinguish between directives for information and directives for action, the latter requiring more interpersonal work, and in this respect they highlight differences in teacher behaviour as between Finland and Austria, suggesting an influence of what they term 'matrix culture'.

2.5 Peer-tutoring

An interesting study of peer-tutoring in a women's university in the UAE is reported by Mynard & Almarzouqi (2006). A Vygotskyan approach was adopted whereby more competent learners scaffolded those who were weaker, helping them progress through their zone of proximal development. It was claimed that the approach not only helped students in their English and cognitive skills but also helped them become more autonomous learners and adjust to university life. Other benefits included developing networking opportunities, making friends, building confidence and self-esteem, enhancing team-working and leadership skills, though there could be potential difficulties arising from personality clashes and differing expectations. In their study, all eleven participants were positive about peer-tutoring. Among the benefits were a feeling of learning by teaching others, feelings of value by helping others and increased sense of responsibility. On the other hand, the tutees seemed dependent, lacked metacognitive awareness and self-management skills. From this, it was concluded that as the programme developed it would be helpful to increase awareness of the programme's aims and to provide on-going strategy training for tutors. This study has the merit of addressing a practical issue and of suggesting how improvement might be achieved.

2.6 Teacher-talk and cognitions

A feature of the study of classroom discourse by Walsh (2006) is the strong role played by the teachers, not only in teaching their classes but also in taking responsibility for the analysis and further development of their particular approaches. In this, the researcher played a key facilitative role through feedback interviews which helped the teachers in developing their own research tools and in collecting and interpreting data from their own lessons. Eight experienced teachers were involved, teaching EAP and ESP courses at university. A well-thought-out three-phase programme was implemented, extending over two or more years,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

which led the teachers towards refining their use of metalanguage and enhancing their powers of critical self-evaluation and conscious decision-making.

The study by Andrews (2006) focuses on the development of three EFL secondary school Hong Kong teachers' subject-matter cognitions. What is of particular interest is that the same three were involved in an earlier study with the same researcher on the same topic in 1996/7, when they were in their earlier years of teaching but with no professional training. Their Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) and cognitions were investigated again in 2004. It transpired that there had been very little change in their TLA and grammar-related cognitions. The bigger difference lay in the ways in which they interacted with the context in which they had worked. Among the key conclusions are: (i) that years of experience of teaching grammar do not necessarily lead to expertise (none of the three reveals anything like the 'rich and integrated knowledge' embedded in the grammar teaching of the expert teacher in Tsui's study – Tsui 2003: 200); (ii) the uneven nature of teacher development, with progress in different dimensions occurring to a different extent and at different rates; and (iii) all three teachers had to accommodate to their working environment, and each did so in quite different ways (two were pro-active in reaching a satisfactory compromise between their beliefs about language pedagogy and the perceived reality of the context, while the third compromised most, possibly for reasons of health).

2.7 Transfer

The capacity to transfer learning from one context to another is an important goal of education, but there is less strong evidence of this happening than many would wish to see. Learning often remains restricted to the context in which it initially took place. This issue is addressed in a discussion paper by James (2006). Basing his views on wider (non-ELT) educational research, he outlines two strategies which seemed plausible for helping ELT students transfer their learning: one termed 'hugging', described as a possibly unconscious process that is triggered when a situation is perceived as similar to a previous situation in which learning had occurred; and the other termed 'bridging', which is a conscious process that connects two situations which seem to lack similarities. A range of practical suggestions is offered for exploiting both of these possibilities. Strategies for 'hugging' include setting expectations, matching, simulating, modelling and problem-based learning; while strategies for 'bridging' include anticipating applications, generalising concepts, using analogies, parallel-problem-solving and metacognitive reflection. I found this to be a succinct and useful piece.

2.8 Distribution of time

Whereas immersion approaches usually make available substantial amounts of time in which to engage with the target language (TL), more conventional approaches based on the TL as school subject rather than as medium of learning generally offer only limited amounts of time, because of the need to cater for learners' full curricular needs. It is of interest therefore

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to consider how the possibly limited amount of time available should be distributed. This is the focus of an excellent study by Hinger (2006), set in an Austrian secondary school with students aged 16 learning L3 Spanish. The class was divided into two groups which had the same teacher, course book, syllabus and assessment but which differed in the distribution of the overall same amount of time within a semester. Moreover, the students themselves were able to choose which group to join. The comparison group had three 50-minute lessons per week for 12 weeks, whereas the intensive group had two slots each of two weeks in which they had three hours of Spanish per day for four days per week, with an eight-week gap between slots 1 and 2. The aim of the study was limited to an analysis of group cohesion. The analysis revealed major differences, with the intensive provision yielding a significantly higher degree of group-building communication by peers. Moreover, there was a higher variety and richer quality of interaction in the intensive group, revealing a higher level of intra-group acceptance and cooperation. Of course, there are several other possible outcomes to consider in addition to group cohesion, but at least this excellent study suggests strongly that the distribution of time does matter in formal foreign language education at school and that there are good grounds for teachers, managers and researchers to explore a variety of possible intensive formats.

2.9 Strategies and proficiency

The fascinating study of L2 learning strategies by Lafontaine (2006) offers a possibly salutary picture, in the case of Canadian adolescent francophone ESL students in their 5th year of secondary school. The writer claims that strategy research has thus far not really come up with a clear picture of how strategies relate to different levels of L2 proficiency. Accordingly, three different levels of student were involved: high, middle and low. The possibly salutary message was that not many clear differences emerged across the three proficiency levels in respect of the large number of listed strategies. In fact out of 80 strategies, thirteen (16%) were used differently according to proficiency level: eight metacognitive strategies (three of attention and five of control), four cognitive strategies (two of comprehension and two of memorisation), and one socioaffective strategy (concerned with clarification requests). However, when I think about it, the numbers seem not too bad. Maybe they seem low in view of the large number of strategies in the list – but if the number in the list had not been mentioned and someone had asked me how many strategies would show a difference between the different proficiency levels, then I guess I would have thought 13 to be quite a high number, and I'd have been quite impressed with the finding that eight of the strategies were metacognitive, particularly as the setting was a secondary school, which maybe has a limiting effect.

2.10 Static and animated visuals

Sometimes when reading a research paper, the mind leaps forward to what it considers would be the likely outcome. Thus, in reading the title of Lin, Chen & Dwyer's (2006) study, which is concerned with the relative effects of static visuals and of computer-generated animations in immediate and delayed EFL achievement, my own mind could not prevent

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

itself from predicting that the computer-generated animations would win. The students were at university in Taiwan, aged 19–25 years, with some seven years of English in the bag, and engaged on a content-learning project in which they had to confront an instructional script containing some 2000 words describing parts of the heart, their locations and their simultaneous functions during the diastolic and systolic phases. Some task! In the event, the results only partially supported the computer-generated animation approach. In the immediate post-test it was superior to the static visuals only in respect of learning outcomes which were of a low-level factual or declarative sort; when the learning outcomes were more complex, the static visuals were not inferior. Nonetheless, the computer-generated animations did prove superior in the delayed post-test in helping students retain difficult and complex knowledge. Not a clear-cut answer, then, but this in no way detracts from a fascinating study which opens up issues worthy of further exploration.

2.11 Vocabulary retention

With the aim of finding the most effective way of L2 vocabulary retention in the case of ESL students on intensive university courses in the USA, Folse (2006) tested three different conditions: one, doing a fill-the-gap exercise for each of the 18 target words; two, creating an original sentence for each; and three, doing three fill-the-gap exercises for each. The post-test results showed no significant difference between conditions one and two, but showed condition three to be significantly superior to the other two. The writer claims that many educators assume that new vocabulary is better retained by writing original sentences than by doing what some might consider a superficial completion exercise. The results suggested, however, that multiple retrievals, as in condition three, can be more effective, if the aim is indeed vocabulary retention.

2.12 Strategy overview

The overview of strategies for language learning and language use by Macaro (2006) comes at a good time, in that there has been major teaching and research interest in this topic for many years, but gradually accompanied by a build-up of confusion and in some cases explicit scepticism as to what exactly strategies are and what effects they lead to. Macaro sets out a whole range of problems with strategies to which eminent researchers have drawn attention. A merit of his paper is that it is able to move beyond this proper questioning process in order to elaborate a possible outline of a revised model. In Macaro's view, learner strategy features should be described in terms of a goal, a situation and a mental action; they are the raw material of conscious cognitive processing, and their effectiveness or otherwise reflects the way they are used and combined in tasks and processes; and they need to be distinguished from subconscious activity, language learning processes, skills, learning plans, and learning styles. This is not the last word on strategy model development, but refreshingly it faces up to problems which have arisen and it looks forward. To readers wishing to come to terms with this important area, this article is recommended reading.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

3. Attitudes, motivation, representation

3.1 Willingness to communicate

Research on Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is well advanced through a study by Cao & Philp (2006), which has the merit of investigating WTC not only as a psychological trait but also as situated in a classroom context. WTC-as-trait may possibly suggest a tendency towards actual WTC behaviour in class, but clearly the classroom context could introduce factors which might restrict or indeed enhance it. Participants in the study were four males and four females of various nationalities in New Zealand, aged from mid-20s to mid-40s, and studying English for up to eight years. Among the variables found to influence WTC behaviour in class were size of group, familiarity with the topic, self-confidence, medium of communication and cultural background. This classroom picture complements the more abstract picture of WTC-as-trait and it could prove useful to teachers and students in class.

3.2 Cultural representation

How the process of L2-learning relates to the ways in which L2 learners view the L2 community is the object of the study by Rubenfeld et al. (2006).They claim it is already known that contact with an L2 group can help build up confidence in the individual's L2 and feelings of identification with the L2 community, but that thus far research had not shown how cultural representations in the form of attitudes and beliefs about the L2 community are formed. Their subjects were 50 anglophone and 50 francophone university students in Canada. Data-collection was by means of a questionnaire containing scales such as self-evaluation of L2 confidence, exposure to L2 media, frequency of L2 use, situated ethnic identity, semantic differential, feelings associated with the L2 community and feelings associated with minorities who speak the L2. For both anglophone and francophone groups L2 confidence or contact led to positive feelings of L2 community identity but without seeming to reinforce L1 identity. The francophone group showed higher L2 confidence. In the case of the anglophone group no connection between L1 and L2 identity was found, but in the case of the francophone group with possibly greater ethnolinguistic insecurity it was possible that positive cultural representations of the L2 community would best take place if their ethnolinguistic L1 identity was first reassured. To my mind this is an interesting finding which might conceivably have greater force in the case of smaller and more threatened language communities.

3.3 Self-efficacy

Both reading and listening involve comprehension and thus must have certain commonalities, but in other ways they differ considerably. The study by Mills, Pajares & Herron (2006) focuses on the 'proficiency' dimension of FL reading and listening comprehension, in relation to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the concepts of 'self-efficacy' and of 'anxiety'. Their 95 subjects were studying French in semesters 3 and 4 at university in the USA, with roughly 2/3 female and 1/3 male. The writers claim that anxiety has long been considered to have a negative impact on FL learners' performance, and they seek to offer some re-evaluation of this assumption. The findings lead to an insightful discussion of differences between the processes of listening and reading, and of differences between the female and male students in respect of perceived anxiety. The notion of perceived self-efficacy emerges strongly as being of high importance, e.g. in helping to regulate and channel anxiety into a productive form, and there is a useful discussion, based on L1 self-efficacy research, of how learners' L2 self-efficacy might be built up.

Another study featuring self-efficacy is by Graham (2006a), based on students of French aged 16–18 years at secondary school in England. A group of ten was selected, all sharing a similar level of high achievement, yet it was found that the perceived self-efficacy of five of them was negative, while with the other five it was positive. It seemed that to some extent attributions lay behind the differing perceptions, with the negative group showing greater passivity in the face of difficulties, reflecting a tendency to refer to particular personality traits that limited their ability. Students in the more positive group, by contrast, did not cite low ability as a reason for any lack of success, and in some cases were aware that not using strategies can compromise success. The three students with the strongest self-efficacy seemed to welcome learning for its own sake. For them effort, resilience and perseverance were good things, and they had greater insight into the benefit that strategies can bring. One implication of the study was that it might be wise not to provide learners with too much 'easy success' at initial or intermediate levels, because this may lead to discouragement when they reach advanced level and the going gets tougher. Among the strategies for helping students strengthen their self-efficacy were to encourage them to set their own goals based on what they hoped to achieve. This seemed a better way forward that encouraging them to compete with their peers. If so, it would become important for learners not just to develop and use good strategies but also to question and be prepared to modify the beliefs that they hold about themselves as L2 learners.

3.4 An adaptive approach

The approach to L2 motivation adopted by Li (2006) seems at the opposite end of the spectrum from the 'administer a motivation questionnaire to a group of students you otherwise don't know, and then disappear' approach which has been variously adopted by others. Li's approach is intimately embedded in classroom life over a period of time (in this case, one whole term) and seeks to understand how motivation might be influenced by a variety of factors, including those which might emerge with increasing familiarity with the classroom context and which might therefore require an adaptive rather than a pre-designed research approach. Some of the impetus for this reflects Allwright's (2003) 'exploratory practice' (EP). Two EP principles that seemed central to Li's concerns were: 'integrate the work for understanding into classroom practice' and 'make the work a continuous enterprise'. A notion of 'balanced research' is developed which allows for alternation between adaptive and pre-designed plans, and this seems particularly appropriate for a teacher-researcher, as Li was. One of the insights

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

which arises is that, although it is good to improve one's teaching techniques, there are other more subtle considerations to bear in mind in the socially constructed world of classroom teaching. As an expression of the perceptions of someone who is relatively inexperienced in both teaching and research, this highly thoughtful and illuminating study shows maturity of insight and reflection.

3.5 Males losing interest . . .

In many countries there is a widespread assumption that at school it is female students, rather than males, who are good at and motivated for L2 learning. Yet, having done these reviews ever since 1993, I have difficulty in recalling many top-class studies of gender as a factor influencing L2 learning. All the more welcome therefore is the study by Kissau (2006), set in Canada with Grade 9 students learning core L2 French, i.e. as a subject and not in the more intensified process of immersion. Kissau reports a concern in Canada that male students were losing interest in learning French, and his study focuses on gender differences in this respect. In the event, clear differences were found which mainly seemed to reflect messages which the respondents felt their society was giving them, discouraging messages in the case of young men, e.g. that it was not normal for them to do well in French. In fact, societal perceptions seemed to lie behind all or most of the variables where significant gender differences were identified. Indeed, they were so powerful that they over-rode positive attitudes, with male students who were good at French, who liked it and who wanted to learn it nonetheless yielding to this negative signal and dropping out of their L2 learning. However, all was not lost and the paper concludes with some useful suggestions for re-imaging the association between male students and L2 learning.

A strong feature of Bartram's (2006) study of peer-group attitudes to foreign language learning (in this case, towards French or German) among 15–16-year-old students attending mixed secondary comprehensive schools was that it drew its data from three different countries: England, Germany and the Netherlands. The most negative perceptions of peer-group attitudes and also of French and German were shown by the students in England. The gender comparison was particularly striking, with German boys showing far fewer negative and far more positive responses towards learning French than did their English male counterparts. However, gender alone could not explain the degree of negativity in England. A possible explanation lay in the lack of choice, since students in England showed greater enthusiasm for a wider range of languages and for the ability to choose.

4. Proficiency/competence

4.1 Multicompetence

The notion of 'multicompetence' goes back to the early 90s, and since then has attracted considerable attention not only from researchers but also from major transnational bodies, e.g. in the form of the Council of Europe's advocacy of one plurilingual competence, as opposed to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

separate language competences as a key goal of language learning. The contribution of Hall, Cheng & Carlson (2006) is welcome, in that it gathers a wealth of insight into the notion which has accumulated over the years and advances the debate. They claim that the notion thus far has been surrounded by theoretical confusion arising from over-reliance on assumptions such as a view of L1 and L2 language knowledge as separate systems, the presumption of a qualitative distinction between multicompetence and monocompetence, and the assumption of homogeneity of language knowledge across speakers and cultures. In advancing their view, they highlight usage-based accounts of language knowledge and of multicompetence. They boldly question the value of terms such as interlanguage, transfer, shift and interference, claiming that these suggest autonomous systems with identifiable borders. Instead, they move to a view of language knowledge as something which is emergent and provisional, where boundaries (in their words) 'are as malleable and porous as the social actions in which they are grounded' (p. 232), and they find the notion of 'communities of practice' a useful heading under which to locate these understandings. The focus then is not so much on abstract system components as on 'communicative repertoires' and the skilled participant becomes a 'multi-contextual communication expert'. A thought-provoking paper and indeed a breath of fresh air.

4.2 Distinctive characteristics of languages teachers

What is it that is distinctive about foreign language teachers? This is the topic pursued by Borg (2006) in a paper in which he assembles views from two groups of practising teachers and two groups at pre-service level, and four individuals reflecting teaching expertise in subject areas outside foreign languages. In fact, the focus is not on foreign language teachers in general but is limited to EFL teachers. One of the insights gained from the study is that context is important, and therefore one needs to be careful about generalising across countries, contexts and cultures – certainly a good point. Nonetheless, an interesting set of distinctive characteristics of EFL teachers and their work is elaborated from the data. Quite properly, these are not presented as a definitive statement but rather as a set of initial perspectives. The list includes characteristics such as 'the nature of the subject', 'the content of teaching', 'methodology', 'teacher-learner relationships' , 'commercialisation', 'status', with each of these being briefly and usefully exemplified. To my mind, this is an interesting topic that merits further research on what is distinctive about teachers of an additional language but also on what is common across all teachers, regardless of their specialism.

Neatly complementing Borg are Johnson & Jackson (2006), who step outside the conventional boundaries of Applied Linguistics (AL) in order to highlight an important AL issue, by examining the skills-base of teachers in three non-AL areas, here termed OS (Other Skill): music (classical singing), table tennis and flight simulation. A refreshing study, it was not intended to uncover a dramatically new way of teaching languages but rather to learn what seemed common and what seemed different and to reflect on any such differences. Among the commonalities were that both OS and language teachers shared an information-processing perspective and were aware of learners' processing needs. Among the differences were that the OS teachers tended to spend more time briefing and de-briefing, providing

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

considerable performance-based feedback to their students, and organising their approach very much on a needs basis.

5. Listening, speaking, reading, writing

5.1 Metalinguistic awareness and listening

A potentially useful instrument has been developed and validated by Vandergrift et al. (2006) in the form of their Metalinguistic Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). The validity is all the more impressive in that the questionnaire was field-tested with 966 respondents in different countries, different learning contexts, with different languages and different levels of respondent L2 proficiency. An additional merit to my mind is that the questionnaire is quite short, with only 21 items, making it reasonably easy to administer in a fairly short time. Underlying the MALQ is a five-factor model: problem-solving, planning and evaluation, translation, person knowledge and directed attention. It should be added that the mental translation was intended negatively, in that it would impede the process of coping with the flow of sound in listening. The researchers claim that the instrument came through its field-testing well, that it relates well to actual performance in listening, and that it could be used not only as a tool for research but also for diagnostic and consciousness-raising purposes. An instructor (or a learner for that matter), for example, on using the questionnaire might find that certain components were being underused, and so teaching and learning might be adjusted accordingly; they emphasise, however, that the MALQ remains based on self-report and as such should be viewed as one but not necessarily the only possible source of information.

5.2 L1 and L2 listening ability

To what extent does L2 listening ability arise from L1 listening ability or from L2 proficiency? This question is the focus of a study by Vandergrift (2006) in respect of Grade 8 learners of French. The results showed that both of these contributed to L2 listening ability, but with L2 proficiency much the better predictor. It was found that students had difficulty in transferring L1 inferencing skills into L2 inferencing ability and seemed unaware that they might draw on non-linguistic knowledge sources such as their knowledge of the world to compensate for inadequate L2 knowledge. The results also point to the importance of developing vocabulary knowledge in the L2 and of developing metacognitive knowledge about L2 listening. As such, it helps to be able to draw on both top–down skills in order to guess the meaning of words from context, and bottom-up skills to develop rapid word-recognition capability. There is a wealth of useful advice, e.g. on the transfer of L1 inferencing skills to L2 inferencing tasks.

5.3 Reception strategies and L2 proficiency

Farrell & Mallard (2006) claim that in strategy research most attention has been given to production strategies, and it is their purpose by contrast to highlight the importance of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reception strategies. They outline a range of factors which can affect reception strategy use, such as type of task, learner status and learner proficiency. In their own study they focused on reception strategies in French as a foreign language as evidenced in interactions between NNS learners of French in Singapore. They also wished to establish whether proficiency level influenced such reception strategies as were used, with students aged 19–49 at three different proficiency levels (elementary, intermediate and advanced). Three broad categories of strategy were identified: those to develop new information, to confirm old information, or to clarify old information. Within the category of 'new information' there was evidence of three specific strategies: 'forward inferencing', 'uptaking' and 'faking'. Differences were indeed found according to the students' proficiency level, in that intermediate-level students used three times as many reception strategies as the elementary group, and slightly more than the advanced group. The conclusion was that in tasks requiring exchange of information students make use of a range of reception strategies but that this varies according to proficiency level, and that some reception strategy training for beginning L2 learners would be appropriate.

5.4 Attributions for difficulty in listening

My own present experience as a learner of two Chinese languages tells me that the most daunting skill is making sense of listening to native or fluent speakers talking at natural speed. The study by Graham (2006b) gives a similar message in the case of students aged 16–18 years learning French at school in England. Her intention was to establish how successful the learners considered themselves to be as listeners, and to learn about their attributions for their perceived success or failure in this skill. The results showed that for many learners listening was indeed the most difficult skill, because of difficulties such as coping with the speed of delivery and making out individual words in a stream of spoken French. Among the main attributions were their own perceived low ability in listening and the difficulty of the tasks and texts. Moreover, they tended to reveal only limited insight into such strategies as might have helped them become more effective listeners. Instead, there was a feeling of lack of control over what they might do. An implication of the study therefore is that teachers might discuss with their students what is involved in listening, including both top–down and bottom–up processing, to help them play down their negative attributions and develop positive strategies for gaining greater control.

5.5 Listening anxiety

A further aspect of listening is investigated by In'nami (2006) in the form of the anxiety which students experience when taking a FL listening test. The subjects were Japanese Year 1 university students, none of whom had been abroad but who had studied English for on average 6.3 years, mainly through reading-based than communicative teaching, but whose proficiency in listening was considered to be relatively high. The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of test anxiety on listening test performance, with three possible factors being taken into account: general test worry, test-irrelevant thinking, and emotion. None of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

these three was shown in fact to affect listening test performance. It was considered that test anxiety is an anxiety problem in general and not specifically related to the foreign language learning context. It is worth noting that test anxiety was viewed as only one of three components of foreign language anxiety, the other two being communication anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Future studies might desirably focus on possible relationships between these three, and might focus also on different ages and different levels of learners' listening comprehension proficiency.

5.6 Language contact and confidence in listening

The role of 'language contact' and of 'confidence' in L2 listening comprehension were central to the study by Moyer (2006) whose subjects were 27 advanced level students of German, with ten NS German speakers for comparison, and with both groups being exposed to both short and extended listening passages. Differences were indeed found between the two groups, but not particularly in achievement on the tasks. One difference lay in reported self-confidence when dealing with the shorter listening passages which the advanced students found more challenging than did the NS. The shorter passages tended to be academic, official or media-type and quite complex, whereas the longer passages tended to feature less formal and more interactive communication (and maybe with more redundancy?), thereby allowing a better context for comprehension. The 'language contact' variable also was of interest in that students did seem to benefit most in their listening comprehension if they had access to NS, enjoyed multiple sources of contact for language use, spent additional time on target language activities outside class and had a greater length of residence in a German-speaking community.

5.7 Support for listening

Although much recent research involving listening has focused on input-processing, it is also valid to investigate different types of support for listening which teachers or materials-designers might provide. This is the focus chosen by Chang & Read (2006) in respect of business-major students at college in Taiwan. Four different forms of listening support were investigated in relation to two different levels of proficiency: topic preparation (TP), vocabulary instruction (VI), repetition of the input (RI) and preview of the questions (PQ). It was found that TP and RI were overall the most effective in helping students comprehend their listening passages, but there was a difference between the two in relation to proficiency levels, with RI being more salient for high proficiency students but with TP benefiting both levels. It was surmised that TP was helpful to the lower proficiency group in that it could help them compensate for their lack of linguistic knowledge. Although lack of vocabulary was a concern expressed by the students, providing them with VI of key words shortly before the listening text proved to be the least effective form of support, and in fact seemed to have a negative effect on high-proficiency students. I like this study because it sets out four forms

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of possible support which seem credible for busy classrooms and finds out something that is potentially useful.

5.8 Oral proficiency

What effects on oral proficiency arise from immersion study abroad? This question was investigated by Golonka (2006) in respect of students taking Russian immersion in Russia. Pre-programme and post-programme oral proficiency interviews were held, in order to measure possible gains. Some students had crossed the threshold into advanced-level proficiency, while others had not. So, could a possible explanation be found? The researcher presents an interesting empirically-based model containing five variables which seemed to predict advanced-threshold gain: grammar, vocabulary and accuracy (linguistic variables) and self-correction and sentence repair (metalinguistic variables). It was concluded that this was a robust model for predicting language outcomes of study abroad. The findings are considered to have implications for advanced-level speaking proficiency, e.g. a high level of grammatical control and an attention to form as in self-correction and repair seem helpful. There is the further implication that these important pre-requisites might benefit from development at pre-advanced levels in order to help students maximise their linguistic capital from their residence abroad.

5.9 Formulaic utterances

Formulaic utterances are a well-known phenomenon of language production, but their precise implications for L2 learners are not necessarily clear. Two studies help us in this respect. Wood (2006) was interested in formulaic sequences in the development of speech fluency in narrative re-telling. Participants were intermediate-level ESL learners. The stimulus for eliciting the spoken narratives were three short silent films. Over a six-month period each film was played twice at a three-month interval. After each playing, students audio-recorded their spoken narrative. Five categories of formulaic sequence were found to contribute to increased fluency: repetition of formulas in a run, use of multiple formulas to extend a run, use of self-talk or fillers, reliance on one formula or filler repeatedly, and use of formulas as rhetorical devices. It was concluded that formulaic sequences had clearly facilitated the development of fluency over the period.

The study by Fitzpatrick & Wray (2006) features learners of English studying in the UK at intermediate-to-advanced levels and has a particular focus on L2 memorisation. The students identified messages that they wished to convey in future conversations. Having memorised a NS-like version of these, they attempted to use them in real conversations. It was concluded that when a learner has memorised a NS way of expressing an idea which the learner wishes to express, this does not guarantee it will be produced (accurately or otherwise) in real conversation. The writers describe this as an underlying mystery and offer an interesting discussion of what this might mean. They surmise that individual differences among learners may generate agendas which may run counter to being like a NS, e.g. achieving a successful

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

interaction, remaining flexible and being true to one's world perception. This leads them to suspect that idiomaticity is tied to a learner's personal identity and motivation for L2 learning.

5.10 Reading strategies and proficiency

To what extent and in what ways do reading strategies adopted by learners of differing levels of proficiency differ from each other? This is the area investigated by Ikeda & Takeuchi (2006), in the case of Japanese university EFL learners. Two groups were selected of different proficiency-levels. Over eight weeks the participants received explicit strategy training, based on seven strategies considered relevant to both groups, it having been ascertained by questionnaire that neither group had used these strategies frequently beforehand. In addition, the participants were required to make portfolio entries on strategy learning each week, and the portfolios were analysed to identify possible differences between the groups. Six differences emerged. These were: amount of description of each strategy, understanding of the purpose and merit of each strategy, understanding of the conditions in which each strategy is effective, understanding of the combined use of the strategies, the timing for the evaluation of strategy use, and the method of evaluating the efficacy of their strategy use. Among the practical pedagogical conclusions were that it would be useful, especially for lower proficiency groups, to provide concrete examples of strategy use from higher proficiency learners, rather than mainly abstract explanations.

5.11 Reading strategy instruction

Reading strategy instruction (RSI) is the focus of Wright & Brown's (2006) study, involving school students aged 14–18 years learning French or Spanish at secondary school in Northern Ireland. Among the strategies were: working out meaning from context, prediction, use of reference materials, use of sources outside the classroom, guessing/deduction, whole-text reading, and developing narrative awareness. In the event, the development of such strategies across the board was by no means uniform, leading the writers to suggest that the automatic acquisition of strategies by learners cannot be taken for granted. However, there was evidence to suggest that students' awareness of strategies and their capacity to reflect on these in their reading had improved, but that development of a more fully strategic approach might at times be prejudiced by intervening factors such as the nature of a particular text seeming to dictate which particular strategies would be used.

5.12 Parallel literacy

Parallel literacy (PL) is the term used by Robertson (2006) to describe what is acquired by five children, all of Pakistani background, born in England, and attending the same mainstream primary school in which they were educated through English. The children, five years old at the start of the study, were followed for two years. In addition to their mainstream English,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

they were inducted into literacy in Urdu and in Classical Arabic through attending out-of-school complementary classes. Moreover, their home language was Pahari. Both Urdu, the official language of Pakistan, and Classical Arabic, the language of the Qur'an, were new to them. Far from falling between these four languages, the children showed themselves to be competent, and resourceful. The teachers in the mainstream school perceived the complementary schools as 'old fashioned', 'rigid', 'authoritarian' and 'formal', but in reality this was not so. The study focuses on the actual practices in helping these children acquire literacy in their three different contexts. In the Qur'anic class, for example, the degree of autonomy and independence allowed to individual learners was far greater than for the other two languages, with the children expected to take control over which bits they would practice, how quickly and how many times. Their movement from one context to the other helped the children to become aware of what counted for the most prestigious aspects of each and what would count in each context for 'doing it properly'. In a way, the least enlightened of the three classes might have been the mainstream English one, in that teachers started with a curriculum that had to be covered, and quickly, and the system was closed and monolingual, not exploiting the wider literacy knowledge of those children who had more than one language.

5.13 Glosses

When students are engaged in reading L2 books, there is the possibility that they will engage in incidental vocabulary learning. To this, multimedia technology brings the possibility of making available vocabulary glosses in a learner's L1 or L2 and also of offering pictorial support for vocabulary that might cause a comprehension problem and thus impede the flow of reading. The study by Yoshii (2006) is concerned with whether L1 or L2 glosses differed in students' incidental vocabulary learning; whether picture glosses (text + picture) and no-picture glosses (text-only) differed for the same purpose; and whether there were any interaction effects among the three factors: languages (L1, L2), pictures (presence, absence) and two different types of tests administered at two points in time (immediate and two-weeks delayed). The students were Japanese, studying English at university in Japan. The results did not favour one of the types of language gloss (L1 or L2) over the other, though the two-weeks delayed test did show a slight advantage of the L1 over the L2 glossing, while the text + picture mode was superior to the text-only mode on one of the two types of test but not the other. However, the positive conclusion was taken that glosses were helpful to students, even though one form of glossing did not stand out as clearly superior to another.

5.14 Implicit and explicit approaches to L2 spelling

Cañado (2006) is an impressive study focusing on the dispute between implicit and explicit approaches to the teaching of EFL spelling in English, with pupils in the third cycle of their primary school education. It was claimed that through practice explicit learning can become implicit, spontaneous and automatic, with clear evidence of long-term gains from

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

explicit instruction plus practice. Among the features of spelling that were investigated were blends, digraphs, double letters, silent letters, vowels, diphthongs, triphthongs, phonograms, homophones, word roots, clipping, compounds, contractions, saxon genitive, capitalisation, punctuation, exclamation joint, question mark, apostrophe, comma, colon, suffixes, ⟨ie⟩/⟨ei⟩, plurals, ⟨qu⟩ and soft/hard ⟨c⟩/⟨g⟩.

5.15 Teacher commentary

There is a neat, small-scale study by Sugita (2006) on the perceived effectiveness of three different sorts of teacher commentary on their EFL student writing attempts. The students were native speakers of Japanese learning English at university in Japan. The three types of commentary were: to ask a question (e.g. 'What do you mean?'), to offer a statement (e.g. ('It is confusing/not clear'), and to give an imperative (e.g. 'Explain it more clearly'). It was found that the most substantive positive changes arose when feedback was by means of imperatives. This finding was considered to be interesting, because the prevailing orthodoxy favoured feedback by questions. One possible implication for teachers was that where substantial changes are considered necessary, then feedback by imperatives might be appropriate.

5.16 Noticing one's grammatical errors

Vickers & Ene (2006) were interested in the potential of learners for improving their grammatical accuracy by noticing and correcting the grammatical errors which they had made. The participants in their study were 13 advanced students at university, enrolled in composition courses. The target structure was the past hypothetical conditional. After writing sentences featuring the target structure and making some errors in the process, the students were asked to read a passage containing the structure, written by a NS, and to locate any mismatches between their own attempts and this. Following this process, their performance on the target structure was much improved and remained so when checked again after five weeks. It was concluded that learners of this sort were self-correcting their use of a complex but important tense by identifying correct versions in a reading passage and then checking their own attempts.

5.17 Revisions

When writing in a foreign language, students may feel a greater need for revisions than when writing in their L1. If so, does attention to linguistic considerations inhibit them in their higher-level cognitive processing? This issue is investigated by Stevenson, Schoonen & de Glopper (2006), who set out to test what they term 'the inhibition hypothesis'. In order to do so, they constructed a multi-dimensional revision taxonomy, with data being collected by both think-aloud protocols and by key-stroke logging. Specifically, they wished to find out if there was a difference in the frequency of different types of revision when the students were

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

writing in L1 Dutch or in FL English; and to ascertain whether being of higher or lower proficiency, or being monolingual or bilingual, made a difference (the bilingual students being from minority backgrounds such as Turkish or Moroccan). They also wished to learn if there was a relationship between frequency of revisions and text quality in each of the two languages. The students were 13–14-year-olds who had received roughly 3.5 years of English. The results showed that the students made more revisions in the FL than in their L1, but this did not suggest any marked inhibition of higher-level revision processes. The writers surmised that the different kinds of revision were not necessarily competing strongly with each other for cognitive resources in either language. There was no support for the view that bilingual learners had an advantage in what for them was their L3. The writers conclude that this may have been due to the fact that students of Turkish or Moroccan background in the Netherlands tended to be in a subtractive bilingual context characterised by factors such as low socio-economic status, low educational level, intellectual climate of the home and attachment to migrant culture.

5.18 Feedback by peers

Feedback can clearly be an important means of helping FL learners to improve their writing, but the provision of feedback can prove difficult in countries such as China where class-size may be very large. Yang, Badger & Yu (2006) were interested in feedback provided by peers. Would this prove acceptable, and if so would it prove useful? Their subjects were students learning English at university in China. The task was based on essay-writing, with one group receiving feedback from the teacher and the other from peers. On the basis of a range of data-collection sources, they found that both types of feedback were used by students to improve their writing, but there were differences. Feedback from the teacher was incorporated by students to a greater extent than feedback from peers; it occurred more frequently and led to improvement. On the other hand, there was more actual negotiation of meaning in the peer feedback, with the possibility that deeper processes may have been engaged, leading to enhanced mutual understanding and to reduced miscommunication. Thus, both types of feedback were seen as being potentially acceptable and useful in helping Chinese students of English enhance their essay-writing skills. One suggested scenario was to make use of peer feedback in initial revisions and of teacher feedback for the final draft.

5.19 Corpora and concordancing

The computerised use of corpora and concordancing is becoming well-established in published linguistic research but has received less attention as a means of language learning. Accordingly, O'Sullivan & Chambers (2006) set out to explore the potential of corpora and concordancing for improving the essay-writing skills of students of French at university in Ireland. In particular, they wished to find out what sorts of changes the students make to their assignments, to evaluate how effectively they completed their tasks and to ascertain students' views about the process. It was not that concordancing necessarily competes directly with

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

conventional ways of helping students in their writing. On the contrary, the researchers were interested in the potential of the software for identifying the lexico-grammatical patterns used by NS writers in ways not easily covered by conventional formats such as grammar, course book or dictionary. As such, concordancing might help students to focus on patterns and usages that otherwise might not be too visible to them. A comparison was made between essays produced using traditional resources and those produced with the aid of a corpus. The results did show that use of a corpus was associated with improvements in grammar and vocabulary. Of particular interest were the views of the students, which were generally favourable. They felt that they had benefited from use of the corpus in checking the context of a word, checking sentence structure, identifying exact differences in meaning between words, checking idiomatic expressions, offering many examples (many more than in a dictionary, for example), checking which prepositions to use with which verbs (a well-known problem in French), and searching for noun–verb relationships. The researchers concluded that corpus consultation can have an important role to play in complementing the more conventional modes.

5.20 Face-to-face and on-line interactions

One would assume that there would be differences between tutoring that was face-to-face and tutoring that was synchronous on-line, but what might such differences consist of and where might the balance of advantage lie? Jones et al.'s (2006) paper on this topic is set in a Language Clinic in the Hong Kong university context with students of English. On-line tutoring of course need not be synchronous, since it might be asynchronous via e-mail or message boards, but synchronous in some form of chat has more immediacy. The Language Clinic made peer-tutoring available through both face-to-face and synchronous on-line modes. The peer-tutors were 2nd- or 3rd-year students aged 20–24 years who had received an intensive training in peer-tutoring. The results showed significant differences between the two formats. In the face-to-face mode, there was much more tutor talk and much more tutor control, with more initiating moves and more leading questions coming from the tutors, whereas it was the students who typed more than the tutors in the synchronous on-line mode, and there was a more egalitarian feel to the process. One of the tutors offered a possible explanation in that in the face-to-face mode the students were too submissive, feeling (falsely, in the opinion of the peer-tutor) that they were inferior. There were differences also in the topics chosen, with face-to-face yielding more issues of grammar, vocabulary and style, whereas on-line yielded more issues of content and process. It was concluded that one format is not necessarily superior to the other but that both serve different purposes and might therefore be used in combination.

Another study of the comparative effects of face-to-face and on-line interactions was by Fritze (2006), both modes being conducted by the researcher himself rather than by the usual class teachers. The students were at advanced ESL level in an American university. Two classes were involved, each of which was given equal experience of both modes, and the scheme ran for four weeks. No statistically significant differences emerged in the number of words produced by the students in the two conference modes, but the electronic mode

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

yielded a significantly higher lexical range (with more new words), whereas the face-to-face mode yielded more repetition. In addition, the electronic mode was more interactive, possibly because of the lack of paralinguistic cues in that mode, as compared with the face-to-face mode in which emotions such as curiosity, boredom and agreement can be communicated by paralinguistic means and not necessarily by words. Moreover, in one of the two classes the electronic mode was significantly more balanced that the face-to-face mode, though in the other class the setting made no difference to this aspect. Some valuable implications from the findings are drawn for practice, for theory and for further research.

Also comparing face-to-face (FTF) and computer-mediated communication (CMC) was Vandergriff (2006), this time with a central focus on 'reception' strategies and particularly on 'grounding' in which interlocutors engage in joint activity in order to establish common ground, something which is not necessarily achieved once and for all at one point in an interaction but which may need to be dynamically developed as the interaction proceeds. In this study, four 'grounding' strategies were of particular interest: global reprise, specific reprise, hypothesis-testing and forward-inferencing. The study sought to establish whether specific strategies such as these differed across the two conference modes, across tasks and between individuals. It also sought to find out how these strategies functioned in the context of task-based discussions. The results showed no significant differences between the frequency rates of the four strategies across the two different modes nor across two different tasks. Although the reception strategies did not seem to compensate for students' target language deficiencies, they did form a way of establishing common ground as students sought to build consensus. CMC was therefore considered to be as likely as FTF in building up common ground and in advancing reception strategies at the same rate of frequency.

6. Culture

6.1 Identity in complementary education

Issues of identity in two Gujarati complementary schools in England are discussed by Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani & Martin (2006). They found that the schools not only helped the students with their Gujarati but also provided a safe haven in which the students could explore identity positions and create narratives in new and imaginative ways. Their identities were not fixed, nor given, nor singular, nor essentialised, but could be fluidly negotiated, modified and even contested, around issues such as nationality, culture, ethnicity, religion, bilingualism and learning. This was very different from the mainstream schools which the students also attended, with their predominantly monolingual ethos. The same authors (this time: Martin, Bhatt, Bhojani & Crease 2006) examined teacher–student interaction in two complementary Gujarati complementary school classrooms. What I find striking is how positively bilingual the approach was. Although learning Gujarati was an important objective, there were wider cultural and religious objectives, and it seemed natural to make use of both Gujarati and English, especially as the students' proficiency in Gujarati was not always high. The writers consider that such switching between the two languages is a normal and justifiable facet of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

interaction in contexts such as this and offers an important route towards different, possibly hybrid identities.

6.2 Explaining one's own culture

A merit of the study on computers and intercultural competence by Liaw (2006) is that it requires the students to view their own culture as a basis for their interactions with NS students. Thus, they were in a position to act as mediators between their home and other cultures. The students were tertiary-level EFL in Taiwan. E-forums were used for intercultural discussion with L1 English peer students from the United States, and two on-line tools (a dictionary and a concordancer) were made available to assist the students in reading from an English-language magazine dealing with aspects of their home culture. The findings showed that the students were generally able to state their own positions on their home culture and to exchange views with the USA students. Interestingly, they found little need to use the on-line tools that had been made available. Far from working through a checklist of cultural knowledge, they had engaged on a journey of discovery and reflection as they exchanged, discussed, negotiated and refined their understandings, beliefs, concepts in interaction with their partners at a distance. For readers wishing to make a good acquaintance with the potential of computers for intercultural leaning, I recommend this thoughtful and well-researched study.

6.3 Cooperative learning of culture

The role of cooperative learning in investigating aspects of French culture is discussed by Allen (2006) in the case of students aged 18–24 years at a US university, though she believes the same approach could work with 3rd- and 4th-year high school students also. An attractive feature of the project was that it lasted a whole semester, thereby enabling cooperative learning really to gain momentum and cultural issues to be explored in some depth. A useful six-stage model was adopted: identify topics and form groups, plan the learning task, carry out the investigation, prepare the group presentation, present the group project and evaluate achievement. Nothing fancy here, but sound and achievable, with specific procedures for each stage set out in some detail, and with an exemplary self-evaluation section at the end in which the writer discusses how she would improve things next time round. The results seem encouraging, with, for example, the great majority of students convinced that they had learnt much about France and francophone culture.

7. Young learners

7.1 Age factor update

A selective overview of age and L2 acquisition and processing is offered by Birdsong (2006). For any reader wishing an update on the complexities of the so-called critical period

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

hypothesis (CPH), this is an excellent article to read. The final section claims that there is an understandable tendency to seek to isolate one single mechanism, but Birdsong claims that this is a simplification of what is an extremely textured set of issues. I also applaud Birdsong's view that it is pointless to invoke neurobiological capacities (or deficiencies) in the context of an individual who has no interest in passing for a native. This is well said and in my view takes much steam out of the debate. The CPH is a fascinating topic but arguments for or against the teaching of additional languages to young learners should not be based on claims from this one area alone.

7.2 Teaching different ages

There has been a widespread assumption that the earlier that children are exposed to an L2 in naturalistic settings, the more likely they will be to acquire a NS pronunciation. This was explored by Harada (2006) in the case of 19 Japanese immersion children, all of them beginners at age 5, from Grades 1, 3 and 5, when compared with 12 monolingual Japanese children. The specific interest lay in their capacity to produce two types of stop in Japanese. The results showed that the immersion children succeeded in acquiring a contrast between the two types of stop but that they did so in ways that differed from the monolingual Japanese children, and it was claimed in fact that the immersion children's phonetic categories were far different from those of their monolingual Japanese counterparts. Comparing the three ages, the Grade 5 children were closest to the monolingual norm, suggesting that a greater amount of input might help to modify an existing phonetic category. According to Harada, the study suggests that early immersion children can develop a phonetic category, influenced to some extent by some interaction of their L1 and L2 systems.

Agulló's (2006) rightly argues that there is still debate as to the most appropriate age at which to begin L2 instruction at school, and she draws attention to the many complexities in reaching a justified decision which in fact go well beyond the CPH. At the same time, she rightly claims that for many teachers the debate on the optimum starting age is only of limited relevance, in that they are not the people who decide on this matter; instead, they have their classes to teach. So, it becomes important for teachers to know how they might teach the different age-groups that they are given, and she sets out a scheme whereby the same film (*Shrek*) is used as the basis for developing two quite different teaching approaches: one for older learners and the other for children. Her paper draws on various research findings to provide a useful discussion of where the differences might lie with regard to teaching these two different age-groups.

Pinter (2006) claims that most research on task-related strategies has been directed to adults, so her study aims to explore possible differences between adults and children. Both age-groups were in Hungary learning English, and there was particular interest in the children, aged 10–11 years in their second year of EFL. A referential task based on information-gap activity was chosen, to be done in pairs, enabling participants to check understanding, negotiate meaning, communicate and deal with misunderstandings. Differences became evident in the ways in which the children and adults approached the task, with the children using less time and less language. They did make use of strategies but not so much of the top–to–bottom

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

variety; they tended to use one-word acknowledgements and not much checking, and at times disagreed as to whether the task had been completed. In the light of these interesting findings, there is a useful discussion of how tasks might be adapted to suit different ages of learner.

7.3 A supportive social environment

In discussing young children's bilingual development in New Zealand, Haworth et al. (2006) show how it can be encouraged through interaction with peers and with adults in a supportive environment, in this case an Early Childhood Centre of Innovation, located in a community of low socioeconomic status. A feature of the centre was its strong partnership with the local Samoan community, and the study focuses on the Samoan children's bilingual development. It shows how adults, peers and cultural tools as well as language all have a role in mediating the children's bilingualism. A feature of the language interaction was the spontaneous and natural way in which code-switching took place, thereby enabling the children to draw on the totality of their language resources, rather than being limited to one language or the other. The children benefited too from the opportunity to lead as well as to follow, as they developed important language-for-thinking skills, and thus a genuine community was created in which adults and children alternated roles as teachers and learners.

7.4 Metacognitive instruction for listening

Earlier in the present review there has been discussion of the problem of how input might be converted to intake. An excellent contribution to this area is made by Goh & Taib (2006) in respect of 11–12-year-old children improving their listening comprehension through metacognitive instruction. The children were in their final year of primary school in Singapore and received eight lessons specifically designed to improve their listening. Five of the children were of average or below-average proficiency in English. A three-stage sequence was adopted: 'Listen and answer', 'Individual reflection' and 'Self-report and group discussion'. From this, a number of strategies were identified which were considered useful. A pre- and post-treatment assessment was implemented, and all but one pupil (the very best, who scored almost full marks in both tests) improved their scores. The biggest improvements were shown by those scoring the lowest marks in the pre-test. The writers suggest on the basis of this experience that it is indeed possible to help children benefit from metacognitive discussion through processes of individual introspection and process-based discussion. In addition to benefits in their listening, there also appeared to be some reduction in listening anxiety. This is a brief, well-focused, excellent study. Young L2 learner research needs more like it.

7.5 Collaborative teaching

One of the problems associated with FL teaching in primary schools has been the limited proficiency and confidence of the classroom teachers, no fault of their own since they are

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

generally not specialists but have to cater for their pupils' overall education and not just their L2 learning. A potential benefit to them might lie in the availability of NS support teachers. The paper by Carless (2006) describes a scheme in Hong Kong primary schools based on collaborative teaching between NS English teachers (NETs) and local English teachers (LETs). In principle, each partner can bring something unique and complementary to the partnership, but this does not necessarily happen. Carless found that the scheme did show a positive impact on the pupils but the picture was more variable in respect of innovative teaching and teacher professional development. It was concluded that team-teaching of this sort rests to a large extent on the interpersonal skills of the partners, in their willingness to compromise and on the existence of positive attitudes to collaboration.

7.6 Awakening

While most of the L2-related instruction for young learners at primary school consists of teaching them a particular language, there is an alternative to this which takes the form of seeking to awaken children to languages in general. The paper by Fidler (2006) offers a fair-minded and informative account of an 'awakening to languages' approach in some Slovenian primary schools, within a collaborative approach involving ten different countries. In the Slovenian initiative, 'awakening to languages' material was produced for Grades 1–6. The aims were to develop students' interest in languages (including their mother tongue), to encourage openness to and respect for different cultures, to raise students' language and intercultural awareness, and to encourage the bilingualism of students whose mother tongue was different from the school's language of instruction. The project was evaluated in seven primary schools through the use of a range of different techniques, and particular attention was paid to the views of students and their parents. By the end of the period the project was not officially recognised in Slovenia, but the evaluation showed the Slovenian experience to have been more than encouraging and to have raised children's interest in, and awareness of, both language and languages.

7.7 Effects of different planning times

A practical question which teachers of languages face when teaching children is 'How much planning time to allow them in respect of the tasks they are to perform?' This area was explored by Philp, Oliver & Mackey (2006) in the case of four classes of ESL children in Australia, two aged 5–7 years and two aged 9–11. The tasks were selected in collaboration with the everyday class teachers, based on information-gap activity, and three different planning conditions were incorporated which differed according to the time allowed: 0 minutes, 2 minutes and 5 minutes. The children's performance was analysed in terms of feedback and modified output from the literature on interaction, and on fluency, accuracy and complexity from the task-based literature. In the present paper the results are reported mainly in relation to the three planning conditions rather than according to the children's age. When the children had no time for planning, their feedback to each

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

other was greater and they produced more speech overall. On fluency and accuracy, there were no significant differences across the three conditions. Complexity on the other hand increased in the five-minute planning condition. However, this was possibly a mixed blessing, because the longer planning time might be accompanied by children's attention beginning to wander and also some classroom management problems might arise. This is an intriguing study, and it will be of interest to learn more about possible effects of different planning times.

7.8 Adaptive hypermedia

Also concerned with computers and young foreign language learners is Espada et al. (2006). This interim report covers the initial phases of an intended six-phase project designed to explore the extent to which information technology can generate adaptive hypermedia systems (AHS) geared to the needs, interests and goals of children aged 3–6 years learning English at kindergarten in Spain. The writers consider that AHS can potentially offer this group advantages such as self-pacing, immediate feedback and multimedia presentation, and can be used sequentially or non-sequentially through a variety of resources such as text, graphics, sound and video. The design is intended to cater for children's possibly different learning styles, e.g. some may benefit in their learning of vowels through having these reinforced musically, and also certain traits that are considered to be characteristic of young children, e.g. their curiosity and willingness to explore. I await with interest the next report on the further development of this interesting work-in-progress.

8. Concluding thoughts

Four concluding thoughts suggest themselves. First, although I am not persuaded that the important work on corrective feedback (recasts, etc.) has yielded very many new practical pedagogical insights, I do believe it has considerably helped in clarifying the definition of terms, and that is an important gain. Second, valuable insights do seem to have been gained in the general area of listening comprehension, whether on internal processes of converting input to intake (including understandings of what can go wrong), or strategies that learners might consciously adopt (including strategies of positive attribution), or in developing forms of pedagogical or course-writing support for students. Third, I find the 2006 output on learner strategies to be helpful in two ways. It documents a number of learner strategies that have proved useful in a range of contexts but in addition, and more fundamentally, it offers a useful re-consideration of what learner strategies are and at least begins to confront the criticisms which the concept had previously attracted. Fourth, the notion of language as an 'emergent' phenomenon is one that I find exciting, whether or not at present I fully understand or agree with it. It highlights language's dynamic, protean essence in a complex world and challenges us to think critically about language boundaries, both within the self and in society, and indeed about language acquisition and how this builds up. National and transnational bodies at present are very much in the process of 'systematising' language proficiency and language

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

progression, and of presenting these almost as fully thought-through 'givens' to large numbers of teachers. Valuable though such systems are, and undoubtedly welcomed by many, it is right that through research we should keep them under review, and I believe that 'emergence' helps in this regard.

References

Agulló, G. L. (2006). Overcoming age-related differences. *ELT Journal* 60.4, 365–373.

Allen, L. Q. (2006). Investigating culture through cooperative learning. *Foreign Language Annals* 39.1, 11–21.

Allwright, D. (2003). Exploratory practice: Rethinking practitioner research in language teaching. *Language Teaching Research* 7.2, 113–141.

Ammar, A. & N. Spada (2006). One size fits all? Recasts, prompts and L2 learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 543–574.

Andrews, S. (2006). The evolution of teachers' language awareness. *Language Awareness* 15.1, 1–19.

Bartram, B. (2006). Attitudes to language learning: A comparative study of peer-group influences. *Language Learning Journal* 33, 47–52.

Birdsong, D. (2006). Age and second language processing: a selective overview. *Language Learning* 56, Supplement 1, 9–49.

Borg, S. (2006). The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers. *Language Teaching Research* 10.1, 3–31.

Cañado, M. L. P. (2006). The effects of explicit spelling instruction in the Spanish EFL classroom: Diagnosis, development and durability. *Language Awareness* 15.1, 20–37.

Cao, Y. & J. Philp (2006). Interactional context and willingness to communicate: A comparison of behaviour in whole class, group and dyadic interaction. *System* 34.4, 480–493.

Carless, D. R. (2006). Collaborative EFL teaching in primary schools. *ELT Journal* 60.4, 328–335.

Carpenter, H., K-S. Jeon, D. MacGregor & A. Mackey (2006). Learners' interpretations of recasts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 209–236.

Chang, A. C-S. & J. Read (2006). The effects of listening support on the listening performance of EFL learners. *TESOL Quarterly* 40.2, 375–397.

Creese, A., A. Bhatt, N. Bhojani & P. Martin (2006). Multicultural heritage and learner identities in complementary schools. *Language & Education* 20.1, 23–43.

Dalton-Puffer, C. & T. Nikula (2006). Pragmatics of content-based instruction: Teacher and student directives in Finnish and Austrian classrooms. *Applied Linguistics* 27.2, 241–267.

Ellis, N. C. (2006). Selective attention and transfer phenomena in L2 acquisition: Contingency, cue competition, salience, interference, overshadowing, blocking and perceptual learning. *Applied Linguistics* 27.2, 164–194.

Ellis, N. C. & D. Larsen-Freeman (2006). Language emergence: Implications for Applied Linguistics – Introduction to the Special Issue. *Applied Linguistics* 27.4, 558–589.

Ellis, R. (2006). Modelling learning difficulty in second language proficiency: the differential contributions of implicit and explicit knowledge. *Applied Linguistics* 27.3, 431–463.

Ellis, R., S. Loewen & R. Erlam (2006). Implicit and explicit feedback and the acquisition of L2 grammar. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 339–368.

Ellis, R. & Y. Sheen (2006). Reexamining the role of recasts ion second language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 575–600.

Erlam, R. (2006). Elicited imitation as a measure of L2 implicit knowledge: An empirical validation study. *Applied Linguistics* 27.3, 464–491.

Espada, A. B. C., M. R. Garcia., A. C. Fuentes & E. M. Dominguez (2006). Developing adaptive systems at early stages of children's foreign language development. *ReCALL* 18.1, 45–62.

Farrell, T. S. C. & G. Mallard. (2006). The use of reception strategies by learners of French as foreign language. *The Modern Language Journal* 90.3, 338–352.

Fidler, S. (2006). Awakening to languages in primary school. *ELT Journal* 60.4, 346–354.

Finkbeiner, C., P. H. Ludwig, E. Wilden & M. Knierheim (2006). Bericht über ein DFG-Forschungsprojekt zur Förderung von Lernstrategien im Englishunterricht [Report on a DFG

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

research project on the promotion of learning strategies in English instruction]. *Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung* 17.2, 257–274.
Fitzpatrick, T. & A. Wray (2006). Breaking up is not so hard to do: Individual differences in L2 memorisation. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes* 63.1, 35–57.
Folse, K. S. (2006). The effect of type of written exercise on L2 vocabulary retention. *TESOL Quarterly* 40.2, 273–294.
Fritze, M. (2006). Discourse and participation in ESL face-to-face and written electronic conferences. *Language Learning & Technology* 10.1, 67–86.
Goh, C. & Y. Taib (2006). Metacognitive instruction in listening for young learners. *ELT Journal* 60.3, 222–232.
Golonka, E. (2006). Predictors revised: Linguistic knowledge and metalinguistic awareness in second language gain in Russian. *The Modern Language Journal* 90.4, 496–505.
Graham, S. (2006a). A study of students' metacognitive beliefs about foreign language study and their impact on learning. *Foreign Language Annals* 39.2, 296–309.
Graham, S. (2006b). Listening comprehension: The learners' perspective. *System* 34.2, 165–182.
Griffiths, C. (2006). Strategy development and progress in language learning. *Prospect* 21.3, 58–73.
Hall, J. K., A. Cheng & M. T. Carlson (2006). Reconceptualizing multicompetence as a theory of language knowledge. *Applied Linguistics* 27.2, 220–240.
Harada, T. (2006). The acquisition of single and germinate stops by English-speaking schoolchildren in a Japanese immersion program. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 601–632.
Haworth, P., J. Cullen, H. Simmons, L. Schimanski, P. McGarva & E. Woodhead (2006). The role of acquisition and learning in young children's bilingual development: A sociocultural interpretation. *International Journal of Bilingual Education & Bilingualism* 9.3, 295–309.
Hinger, B. (2006). The distribution of instructional time and its effect on group cohesion in the foreign language classroom: A comparison of intensive and standard format courses. *System* 34.1, 97–118.
Ikeda, M. & O. Takeuchi (2006). Clarifying the differences in learning EFL reading strategies: An analysis of performance. *System* 34.3, 384–398.
In'nami, Y. (2006). The effects of test anxiety on listening test performance. *System* 34.3, 317–340.
James, M. A. (2006). Teaching for transfer in ELT. *ELT Journal* 60.2, 152–159.
Johnson, K. & S. Jackson (2006). Comparing language teaching with other skill teaching: Has the language teacher anything to learn? *System* 34.4, 532–546.
Johnstone, R. (2006). Biennial Research Review: Review of research on language teaching, learning and policy published in 2004 and 2005. *Language Teaching* 39.4, 27 pp. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?jid=LTA&volumeId=39&issueId=04>
Jones, R., A. Garralda, D. C. S. Li & G. Lock (2006). Interactional dynamics in on-line and face-to-face peer-tutoring sessions for second language writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 15.1, 1–23.
Kissau, S. (2006). Gender differences in motivation to learn French. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes* 63.3, 401–422.
Lafontaine, M. (2006). L'utilisation de stratégies d'apprentissage en fonction de la compétence chez des adolescents apprenant l'anglais langue seconde [The use of learning strategies as a function of competence among adolescents learning English as second language]. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes* 62.4, 533–562.
Larsen-Freeman, D. (2006). The emergence of complexity, fluency, and accuracy in the oral production of five Chinese learners of English. *Applied Linguistics* 27.4, 590–619.
Li, N. (2006). Researching and experiencing motivation: A plea for 'balanced research'. *Language Teaching Research* 10.4, 437–456.
Liaw, M-L. (2006). E-learning and the development of intercultural competence. *Language Learning & Technology* 10.3, 49–64.
Lin, H., T. Chen & F. M. Dwyer (2006). Effects of static visuals and computer-generated animations in facilitating immediate and delayed achievement in the EFL classroom. *Foreign Language Annals* 39.2, 203–219.
Lyster, R. & H. Mori (2006). Interactional feedback and instructional counterbalance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 269–300.
Macaro, E. (2006). Strategies for language learning and language use: Revising the theoretical framework. *The Modern Language Journal* 90.3, 320–337.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mackey, A. (2006). Epilogue. From introspections, brain scans and memory tests to the role of social context: Advancing research on interaction and learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 369–379.
Mackey, A. & S. Gass (2006). Introduction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 169–178.
Marsden, E. (2006). Exploring input processing in the classroom: An experimental comparison of processing instruction and enriched output. *Language Learning* 56.3, 507–566.
Martin, P., A. Bhatt, N. Bhajani & A. Creese (2006). Managing bilingual interaction in a Gujurati complementary school in Leicester. *Language & Education* 20.1, 5–22.
Mills, N., F. Pajares & C. Herron (2006). A re-evaluation of the role of anxiety: Self-efficacy, anxiety and their relation to reading and listening proficiency. *Foreign Language Annals* 39.2, 276–295.
Morgan-Short, K. & H. W. Bowden (2006). Processing instruction and meaningful output-based instruction: Effects on second language development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 31–65.
Moyer, A. (2006). Language contact and confidence in second language listening comprehension: A pilot study of advanced learners of German. *Foreign Language Annals* 39.2, 255–275.
Mynard, J. & I. Almarzouqi (2006). Investigating peer tutoring. *ELT Journal* 60.1, 13–22.
O'Sullivan, I. & A. Chambers (2006). Learners' writing skills in French: Corpus consultation and learner evaluation. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 15.1, 49–68.
Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House/ Harper Row.
Philp, J., R. Oliver & A. Mackey (2006). The impact of time on children's task-based interactions. *System* 34.4, 547–565.
Pica, T., H-S. Hang & S. Sauro (2006). Information gap tasks: Their multiple roles and contributions to interaction research methodology. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 301–338.
Pinter, A. (2006). Verbal evidence of task-related strategies: Child versus adult interactions. *System* 34.4, 615–630.
Robertson, L. H. (2006). Learning to read 'properly' by moving between parallel literacy classes. *Language & Education* 20.1, 44–61.
Rubenfeld, S., R. Clément, D. Lussier, M. Lebrun & R. Auger (2006). Second language learning and cultural representations: Beyond competence and identity. *Language Learning* 56.4, 609–632.
Sheen, Y. (2006). Exploring the relationship between characteristics of recasts and learner uptake. *Language Teaching Research* 10.4, 361–392.
Stevenson, M., R. Schoonen & K. de Glopper (2006). Revising in two languages: A multidimensional comparison of on-line writing revisions in L1 and FL. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 15.3, 201–233.
Sugita, Y. (2006). The impact of teachers' comment types on students' revision. *ELT Journal* 60.1, 34–41.
Takimoto, M. (2006). The effects of explicit feedback and form–meaning processing on the development of pragmatic proficiency in consciousness-raising tasks. *System* 34.4, 601–614.
Toth, P. (2006). Processing instruction and a role for output in second language acquisition. *Language Learning* 56.2, 319–385.
Tseng, W-T., Z. Dörnyei & N. Schmitt (2006). A new approach to assessing strategic learning: The case of self-regulation in vocabulary acquisition. *Applied Linguistics* 27.1, 78–102.
Tsui, A. B. M. (2003). *Understanding expertise in teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Vandergriff, I. (2006). Negotiating common ground in computer-mediated versus face-to-face discussions. *Language Learning & Technology* 10.1, 110–138.
Vandergrift, L. (2006). Second language listening: Listening ability or language proficiency? *The Modern Language Journal* 90.1, 6–18.
Vandergrift, L., C. C. M. Goh, C. J. Mareschal & M. H. Tafaghodi (2006). The metacognitive awareness listening questionnaire: Development and validation. *Language Learning* 56.3, 431–462.
Vickers, C. H. & E. Ene (2006). Grammatical accuracy and learner autonomy in advanced writing. *ELT Journal* 60.2, 109–116.
Walsh, S. (2006). Talking the talk of the TESOL classroom. *ELT Journal* 60.2, 142–150.
Wood, D. (2006). Uses and functions of formulaic utterances in second language instruction: An exploration of the foundations of fluency. *The Canadian Modern Language Review/La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes* 63.1, 13–33.
Wright, M. & P. Brown (2006). Reading in a modern foreign language: Exploring the potential benefits of reading strategy instruction. *Language Learning Journal* 33, 22–33.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Yang, M., R. Badger & Z. Yu (2006). A comparative study of teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 15.3, 179–200.
Yoshii, M. (2006). L1 and L2 glosses: Their effects on incidental vocabulary learning. *Language Learning & Technology* 10.3, 85–101.

RICHARD JOHNSTONE is Emeritus Professor at the University of Stirling. Although retired from full-time employment he remains active in languages-related research and publication, e.g, as Director of two national research projects in Scotland and also of the independent evaluation of the national Early Bilingual Education Project in Spain, which runs under the joint auspices of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science and the British Council. He is currently writing a book which draws on the annual/biennial reviews he has done for this journal since 1993.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005223 Published online by Cambridge University Press