

### *A Defence of Simplification*

by *I. S. P. Nation* and *Jean Paul Deweerdt*

This article discusses the appropriate use of simplified readers in the ELT classroom. Critics have argued that such texts prevent language learners from developing important reading strategies, such as the ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary from context. Nation and Deweerdt point out that the exclusive use of graded readers in language classes may indeed lead to this. However, a balanced language course that provides both fluency practice with simplified texts and focused language work with unmodified texts is the most effective way to develop reading skills. To prevent learners from constantly referring to dictionaries as they read, 98% of the words in the text should be familiar to them, according to research cited by the authors. In practical terms, texts chosen to develop learner reading fluency should contain no more than one unknown word every five lines. The authors have applied this formula to simplified and original versions of the novel *Dracula* in order to determine the appropriateness of each version for various types of reading practice.

**Prospect**

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### *Building Community and Posting Projects:*

#### *Creating "Student Pages" in Web-Based and Web-Enhanced Courses*

by *Laura G. McGee*

Language students who have access to the Internet are increasingly developing an interest in designing their own Web pages. Language teachers who also have access to the Internet can take advantage of that interest by having their students combine foreign language study and Web pages. This article describes a project designed by a teacher of German as a foreign language as part of a German Culture and Civilization course she taught entirely on-line. To familiarize students with on-line interaction related to their course, she initially established a threaded discussion board inside a password-protected site where students could discuss reading assignments. They were then asked to design their own Web pages in German and post them on the site. They introduced themselves and presented a research project on some aspect of German culture. The article describes some of the projects that students completed. It also recommends a useful Web site on evaluating Internet research sources (<http://www.virtualsalt.com/evalu8it.htm>) that students can use to evaluate the appropriateness and usefulness of Web sites related to their topics.

**Foreign**

**Language Annals**

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### *Realism and Imagination in the Teaching of English*

by *Anthea Fraser Gupta*

"We forget that countries do not speak languages—people do" (p. 365). This is one of many arguments used by Fraser Gupta to demonstrate that all speakers of the English language, no matter where they live or how they learned the language, are part of "English linguistic culture." She points out that this culture allows for the acceptance of more than one form of English as a norm and that new words are incorporated more readily into English than into other languages. Even with this acceptance of diversity, there are wide areas of agreement among speakers of English as to what constitutes Standard English. For example, norms for written Standard English, given allowances for variations in lexis and orthography, are shared all over the world. Spoken Standard English, however, allows for wider variation in lexis and phonology, in direct contrast to the linguistic cultures of other widely spoken languages, such as French. There is plenty of food for thought in this article for anyone interested in language and language varieties.

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