SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Summary of findings of a project-based linguistics seminar
held at the Department of English Studies
of the University of Graz, Austria
Oct 2002 – Jan 2003.

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Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the staff of the ECML and the ÖSpK for their assistance and the teachers who contributed to the questionnaire.

Introduction to the project seminar

DAVID NEWBY

This publication is the outcome of a new course which was introduced into the revised curriculum of the Linguistics Department of the Institute of English and American Studies at Karl-Franzens University of Graz, Austria in the winter semester of 2002/3. This course bears the title of a 'project-based' linguistics seminar. Its main aims are to develop the ability of students to engage in linguistic research and at the same time to investigate links between theory and appropriate areas of practice. The course was attended by undergraduate students, all of whom are studying to be secondary school teachers of English.

In addition to the academic aims of this seminar, emphasis is placed on social aspects of learning: the course is structured so that cooperation and teamwork among students is fostered. Rather than writing and presenting individual papers, students are therefore required to work together to produce one single coherent publication, to which each member of the group makes his or her own individual contribution.

The topic and starting point of the students' investigations were theories and applications of second-language acquisition, a complex and multi-faceted area of research, which has exerted a considerable influence on discussions of language teaching and learning in recent years and has had a certain impact on many language-teaching classrooms.

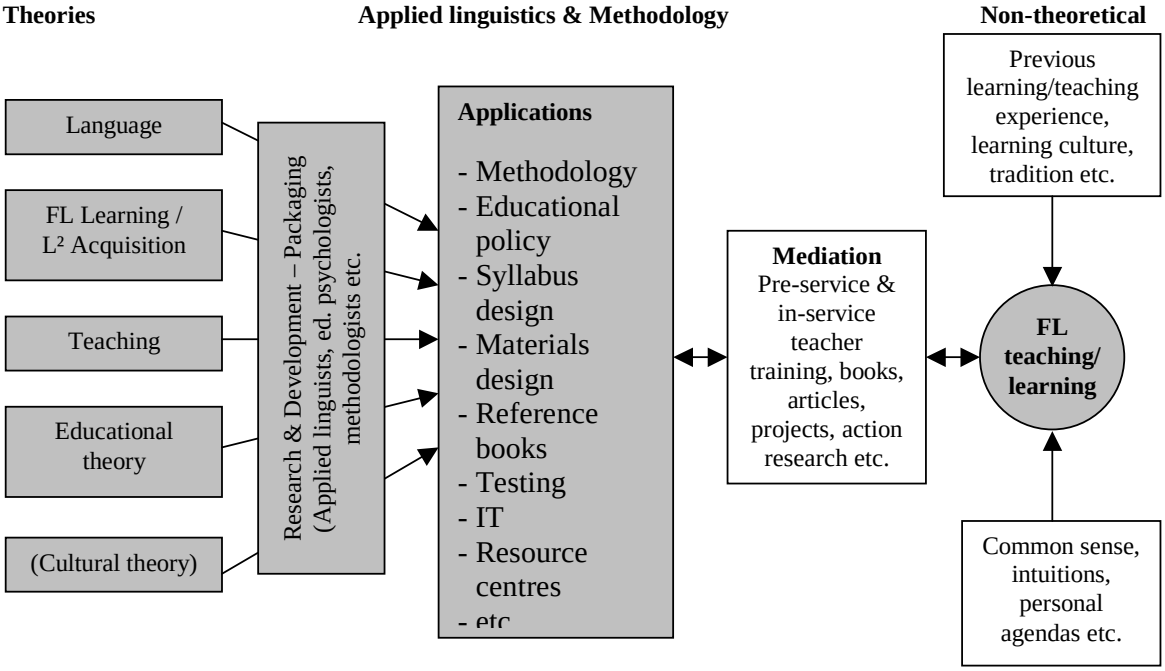
A further requirement of this seminar was that the findings and outcome of the project should be presented to a wider public. This requirement was realised in two ways. The first is the present publication, which in addition to being available in hard copy form is also available on the website of the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (www.ecml.at). The second was an oral presentation: students attending the seminar had the unique opportunity to present their findings to members of the Governing Board of the European Centre for Modern Languages, to representatives of the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe and to other invited experts in the course of a meeting held at the ECML on 30th January 2003. A summary of the findings will also be presented by one of the contributors to the publication, Miriam Meister, at a student conference in Riga, Latvia, in May 2003.

Introduction to the publication

MARTIN HANAK-HAMMERL

The following collection of essays is the result of the first project-based linguistics seminar taught at the English Department at the University of Graz. Our task was to research the influence of linguistic theories on foreign language teaching and learning. The figure below shows the underlying principle of the relationship between linguistic theory and pedagogical practice:

The Interface between theory and practice in foreign language learning and teaching



(based on Newby 2003b)

On the left hand side of the diagram, a number of theories are listed that are used by various linguists and methodologists in order to develop teaching materials and strategies. The white block in the middle functions as a mediator between those applications and pedagogical practice. The circle on the right hand side of the diagram represents foreign language teachers and learners.

In order to analyse the relationship between linguistic theory and pedagogical practice, we divided our seminar group into four research groups. The first research group examined various linguistic theories. Their findings are presented in the first four chapters of this paper. Mediation between the linguistic theories and the pedagogic practice takes place on at least two levels: on an international level and a national level. An example of mediation on an international level would be the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), which is why another group of students examined to what extent linguistic theories have influenced the work of the ECML. Their results are presented in the second part of this paper. Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 comprise a detailed analysis and evaluation of some of the publications by the ECML. As an example of mediation on a national level we have chosen the Austrian Centre

of Competence in Modern Languages (ÖSpK). The essays of part 3 analyse how international trends in language teaching have been implemented by the ÖSpK. Like the ECML, the ÖSpK offers, a large number of publications and it carries out various projects. Chapters 12, 13, and 14 examine and evaluate both its publications and its projects.

The fourth research group devised and administered a questionnaire in order to find out how much of the theories are actually implemented in schools. The results and conclusions of their survey can be found in the final chapters.

The figure above indicates the *horizontal* dimension of our project. To show the coherent structure of this paper, I would also like to point out the *vertical* dimension of our project to the reader. Since four project groups worked simultaneously in various fields of interest, the organisation of our project and the content of this collection of essays can be best described in form of a matrix. The research groups are represented by the columns of this matrix. The rows of the matrix represent the various topics the students were working on:

	Theory	ECML	ÖSpK	Schools
Theories of language learning	**ch. 1**	**ch. 6**	**-**	**ch. 16**
Language Awareness	**ch. 2**	**ch. 7**	**-**	**ch. 17**
Cultural Awareness	**-**	**ch. 8**	**ch. 12**	**ch. 17**
Language Across the curriculum	**ch. 3**	**ch. 9**	**ch. 13**	**ch. 18**
Learner Autonomy	**ch. 4**	**ch. 10**	**ch. 14**	**ch. 19**

Due to the close co-operation of the ECML with the ÖSpK, the results may in some cases be overlapping. In most cases, however, the chapters along a horizontal line complement each other perfectly.

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Part 1: The theories behind the practice

1 Theories of Second Language Acquisition

ALEXANDRA ALTENAICHINGER

1. Introduction

The following chapter will provide information about theories of second language acquisition and teaching. There are numerous approaches and theories which have a huge impact on learning. Generally, approaches provide information about how people acquire their knowledge of the language and about the conditions which will promote successful language learning. In this chapter the main focus will be on three theories which will be briefly described: The *Creative Construction Theory, Communicative Language Teaching* and the *Cognitive Approach.*

2. Creative Construction Theory or the Naturalistic Approach

This approach is based on the assumption that language acquisition is innately determined and that we are born with a certain system of language that we can call on later. Numerous linguists and methodologists support this innateness hypotheses. Chomsky, who is the leading proponent, claims that each human being possesses a set of innate properties of language which is responsible for the child's mastery of a native language in such a short time (cf. Brown 2002: 24). According to Chomsky, this mechanism, which he calls the 'language acquisition device' (LAD), 'governs all human languages, and determines what possible form human language may take' (Dulay, Burt, Krashen 1982: 6ff).

Some linguists, in particular Stephen Krashen, distinguish between acquisition and learning. Acquisition is supposed to be a subconscious process which leads to fluency. Learning, on the other hand, is a conscious process which shows itself in terms of learning rules and structures. Furthermore, Krashen claims that there are three internal processors that operate when students learn or acquire a second language: the subconscious 'filter' and the 'organizer' as well as the conscious 'monitor' (cf. Dulay, Burt, Krashen 1982: 11-45). The 'organizer' determines the organisation of the learner's language system, the usage of incorrect grammatical constructions as provisional precursors of grammatical structures, the systematical occurrence of errors in the learner's utterances as well as a common order in which structures are learnt. The 'filter' is responsible for the extent to which the learner's acquisition is influenced by social circumstances such as motivation and affective factors such as anger or anxiety. The 'monitor' is responsible for conscious learning. The learners correct mistakes in their speech according to their age and self-consciousness (cf. Dulay, Burt, Krashen 1982: 45).

2.1 Krashen's Input Hypothesis

This hypothesis by Stephen Krashen is one of the most controversial theoretical perspectives in Second Language Acquisition. It is based on a set of five interrelated hypotheses that are listed below:

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

As mentioned above, Krashen claims that there is a difference between acquisition and learning. Acquisition is 'a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language, not unlike the process used by a child to 'pick up' a language'. Learning is a conscious process in which 'learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process' (Brown 2002: 278).

2. The Monitor Hypothesis

The monitor has nothing to do with acquisition but with learning. The learned system acts only as an editor or 'monitor', making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced. According to Krashen, three conditions are necessary for monitor use: 1. sufficient time, 2. focus on form, 3. knowing the rules (cf. Lightbown, Spada 1995: 27).

3. The Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that we acquire the rules of a language in a certain order that is predictable (cf. Lightbown, Spada 1995: 27). However, this does not mean that every acquirer will acquire grammatical structures in exactly the same order. It states rather that, in general, certain structures tend to be acquired early and others to be acquired late. (cf. Krashen, Terrell 1983: 28)

4. The Input Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that it is important for the acquirer to understand language that is a bit beyond his or her current level of competence. This means, if a learner is on a level *i* the input he gets should be $i + 1$. This means that the language that learners are exposed to should be just far enough beyond their current competence that they can understand most of it but still is challenged to make progress (cf. Brown 2002: 278).

5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that it is easier for a learner to acquire a language when he/she is not tense, angry, anxious, or bored. According to Dulay and Burt, performers with optimal attitudes have a lower affective filter. A low filter means that the performer is more open to the input language. (cf. Krashen, Terrell 1983: 38)

Krashen's assumptions have been hotly disputed. Many psychologists like McLaughlin have criticised Krashen's unclear distinction between subconscious (acquisition) and conscious (learning) processes. According to Brown, second language learning is a process in which varying degrees of learning and of acquisition can both be beneficial, depending upon the learner's own styles and strategies. Furthermore, the $i + 1$ formula that is presented by Krashen raises the question how *i* and 1 should be defined. Moreover, what about the 'silent period'? Krashen states that after a certain time, the silent period, speech will 'emerge' to the learner, which means that the learner will start to speak as a result of comprehensible input. Nevertheless, there is no information about what will happen to the learners, for whom speech will not 'emerge' and 'for whom the silent period might last forever' (Brown 2002: 281).

3. Communicative Language Teaching

3.1 Background

The communicative approach has its origins in the changes in the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s and more generally in the developments of both Europe and North America. This approach varies from traditional approaches because it is learner-centred. Also, linguists state that there is a need to focus on communicative proficiency in language teaching and that Communicative Language Teaching can fulfil this need. There are numerous reasons for the rapid expansion of Communicative Language Teaching: the work of the Council of Europe in the field of communicative syllabus design; the theoretical ideas of the communicative approach found rapid application by textbook writers; and there was an overwhelming acceptance of these new ideas by British language teaching specialists and curriculum development centres.

Proponents of this approach state that the goal of language teaching is communicative competence. Another aim is the development of procedures for the teaching of the four language skills (writing, reading, speaking, listening). Moreover, the four skills build the basis of the interdependence of language and communication (cf. Richards, Rodgers 1986: 64-66).

According to Littlewood, one of the most important aspects of 'communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language' (Littlewood 1981: 1). One of the most important aspects is pair and group work. Learners should work in pairs or groups and try to solve problematic task with their available language knowledge. Howatt also distinguishes between a weak and a strong version of Communicative Language Teaching. The weak version, which seems to be standard by now, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes. The strong version claims that language is acquired through communication (cf. Howatt 1984: 279).

As mentioned above, there was and still is a wide acceptance of the communicative approach. This approach is similar to the more general learning perspective usually referred to as 'Learning by doing' or 'the experience approach' (Richards, Rodgers 1986: 68). Generally, Communicative Language Teaching focuses on communicative and contextual factors in language use and it is learner-centred and experience-based. There are many supporters but also numerous opponents, who criticise this approach and the relatively varied ways in which it is interpreted and applied. Nevertheless, it is a theory of language teaching that starts from a communicative model of language and language use, and that seeks to translate this into a design for an instructional system, for materials, for teacher and learner roles and behaviours, and for classroom activities and techniques (cf. Richards, Rodgers 1986: 69).

3.2 Theory of language

A central aspect in Communicative Language Teaching is communicative competence. Hymes defines competence as what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. This includes both knowledge and ability for language use. In his book *Teaching Language as Communication* (1978) (quoted in Richards, Rodgers 1986: 71) Widdowson presented a view of the relationship between linguistic systems and their communicative values in text and discourse. Moreover, Canale and Swain (1980) (cf. Richards, Rodgers 1986: 71) found four dimensions of communicative competence that are defined as 1. grammatical competence, 2. sociolinguistic competence, 3. discourse competence, and 4. strategic competence.

3.3 Theory of learning

Although there is little discussion of learning theory, there are still some elements that, according to Richards and Rodgers (1986), can be defined as communication principles, task principles and meaningfulness principles. The first one includes activities that involve real communication which are supposed to promote learning. The second element describes activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks which are also supposed to promote learning. The last one states that language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. Of great importance is meaningful and authentic language use (cf. Richards, Rodgers 1986: 72).

4. The Cognitive Approach

Cognitive psychologists claim that one of the main features of second language acquisition is the building up of a knowledge system that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. At first, learners have to build up a general knowledge of the language they want to understand and produce. After a lot of practice and experience they will be able to use certain parts of their knowledge very quickly and without realising that they did so. Gradually, this use becomes automatic and the learners may focus on other parts of the language.

The cognitive theory is a relative newcomer to second language acquisition and there have been only a few empirical studies about this approach so far. Although we know that the

processes of automatizing and restructuring are central to the approach, it is still not clear what kinds of structures will be automatized through practice and what will be restructured. Also it cannot predict which first language structures will be transferred and which will not. As far as the phenomenon of 'restructuring' is concerned, psychologists state that things that we know and use automatically may not necessarily be learned through a gradual build-up of automaticity but they may be based on the interaction of knowledge we already have. They may also be based on the acquisition of new knowledge which somehow 'fits' into an existing system and may, in fact, 'restructure' this system (cf. Lightbown, Spada 1995: 25).

4.1 McLaughlin's Attention-Processing Model

This model connects processing mechanisms with categories of attention to formal properties of language. Consequently there are four cells. The first one refers to 'focal automatic processes' like the student's performance in a test situation or a violin player performing in a concert. The second one characterises 'focal controlled processes'' such as the learner's performance based on formal rule learning. The next cell refers to 'peripheral controlled processes' such as the phenomenon of learning skills without any instruction. The last cell focuses on 'peripheral automatic processes' and can be related to a learner's performance in situations of communication. 'Controlled processes are "capacity limited and temporary", and automatic processes are "relatively permanent"' (McLaughlin et al. 1983: 142 in Brown 2002). Automatic processes mean processing in a more accomplished skill which means that the brain is able to deal with numerous bits of information simultaneously. According to Brown, 'the automatizing of this multiplicity of data is accomplished by a process of restructuring in which the components of a task are co-ordinated, integrated, or reorganised into new units, thereby allowing the …old components to be replaced by a more efficient procedure' (McLaughlin 1990b: 188 in Brown 2002).

4.2 Implicit and Explicit Models

According to Brown and other linguists, there is a distinction between implicit and explicit linguistic knowledge. Explicit knowledge means 'that a person knows about language and the ability to articulate those facts in some way' (Brown 2002: 285). Implicit knowledge is 'information that is automatically and spontaneously used in language tasks. […] Implicit processes enable a learner to perform language but not necessarily to cite rules governing the performance.' (Brown 2002: 285) Instead of implicit and explicit Bialostok uses the terms 'unanalysed' an 'analysed' knowledge. Unanalysed knowledge is described as 'the general form in which we know most things without being aware of the structure of that knowledge; on the other hand, learners are overtly aware of the structure of analyzed knowledge' (Brown 2002: 286). Furthermore, these models also distinguish between automatic and non-automatic processing which is build on McLaughlin's conception of automaticity. Brown states that 'automaticity refers to the learner's relative access to the knowledge. Knowledge that can be retrieved easily and quickly is automatic. Knowledge that takes time and effort to retrieve is non-automatic' (Brown 2002: 286). Another significant fact in second language performance is 'time'. It takes learners a different amount of time until they produce language orally.

5. Conclusion

All three theories of language learning inter-relate somehow. Many teachers will use classroom methods which may be linked to all three approaches. Teachers who are native speakers tend to use Krashen's Natural Approach more than others. But this approach has been hotly disputed and it seems that it took a back seat in the foreign language learning classroom during the last few years. Communicative Language Teaching has established itself in the last twenty years. It somehow builds the basis of language learning and can now be found in almost every language class and language schoolbook, whereas the Cognitive

Approach is a rather new approach and therefore not very widely applied. All in all, a teacher should be aware of the different theories and approaches and use them as a basis for his/her teaching.

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2 Language awareness

MANFRED JUNGWIRTH

1. Introduction

> The truth of the matter is that about 99 percent of teaching is making the students feel interested in the material. Then the other 1 percent has to do with your methods. And that's not just true of languages. It's true of every subject.
>
> Noam Chomsky

Many contemporary learning theories suggest that learning (in terms of language learning) has to be related to the existing knowledge of the learner. Moreover, the learner has to become aware of the object of learning and the material has to reach the student. From the angle of second language learning Leo van Lier's approach of "language awareness" (van Lier, 1996:12) which seems to be "[…] a crucial aspect of language learning [..]" (ibid.) lends a fresh perspective to the issue of learning. Van Lier states his point of view as follows:

> To learn something new one must first notice it. […] Paying attention is focusing one's consciousness or pointing one's perceptional powers in the right direction and making "mental energy" available for processing [my italics]. Processing involves linking something that is perceived in the outside world to structures [my italics] (patterns of connection) that exist in the mind. (van Lier, 1996:11)

Thus, it may be of considerable interest to look closer into two learning/acquisition theories in order to focus on different models of internal processing and get to know the structures which are relevant for the perception of language. Finally, in order to point out the main differences between van Lier's approach of language awareness and Krashen's Natural approach both theories will be compared. Additionally my personal opinion will be given in the conclusion of the paper.

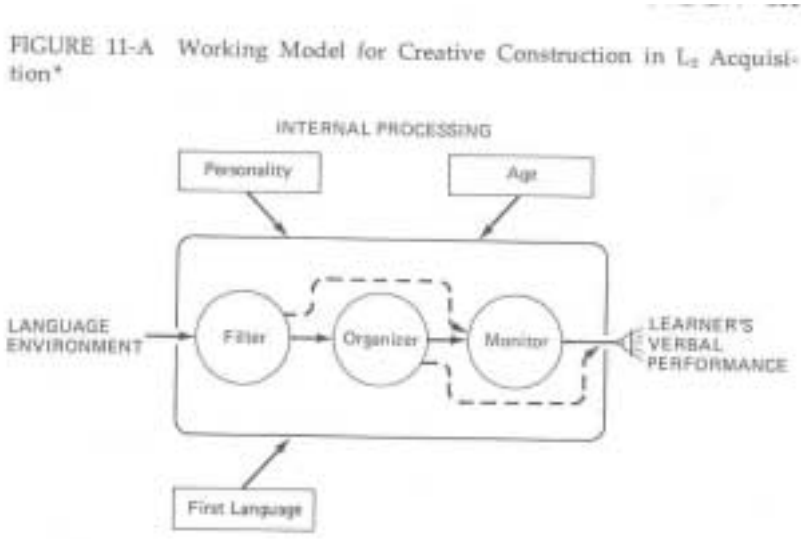
2. Stephen Krashen's Working Model for Creative Construction in L^2 Acquisition

Based on Chomsky's LAD, Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt and Stephen Krashen developed their Working model for Creative Construction in L^2 Acquisition. Like Chomsky they believe that language acquisition is "[...] an interaction between the child's innate mental structure and the language environment [...]" (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:8). Moreover, they suggest that macro-environmental factors" (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:14) such as the "[...] naturalness of the language, [...] the learner's role in communication [...] [and] the availability of concrete referents [...]" (ibid.) profoundly influence the learner's performance.

After a "[...] silent period for one to three months [...] (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:22) during which the student concentrates on comprehension the learner's language may unfold most naturally. The authors, who distinguish between subconscious acquisition of fluency and conscious learning of rules and structures (cf. Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:22), believe that three internal processors, the subconscious "[...] "filter" and the "organizer" [...]" as well

as the conscious "monitor" (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:45) operate when students learn or acquire a second language (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Working Model for Creative Construction in L^2 Acquisition



(Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:263)

Firstly, influence by social circumstances such as motivation but also by affective factors such as relaxation or anxiety, the filter is the main hurdle of incoming language.

Secondly, the organizer, which may resemble Chomsky's LAD, processes data which are passing the filter. In addition, the organizer determines the organization of the learner's language system, the usage of transitional constructions as provisional precursors of grammatical structures, the systematical occurrence of errors in the learner's utterances as well as a common order in which structures are learnt (cf. Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:45). Thirdly, the monitor is responsible for conscious linguistic processing. That means that learners correct or edit their speech influenced by the task they are required to fulfil and by personal factors such as their age and their self-confidence to perform in the target language (cf. Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:59).

3. Language Awareness in Leo van Lier's AAA curriculum

In contrast to Dulay/ Burt/ Krashen's approach of *comprehensible input and L^2 acquisition,* which resembles the *acquisitions of L^1* , van Lier defined a curriculum which is based on the foundation principles of "[...] *Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity* [...]" (van Lier, 1996:5).

This curriculum should be seen in a holistic sense, which means that interaction between every part of the curriculum remains an elementary particle, and in a process-oriented sense, which means that great emphasis is placed on the student's learning process rather than on test scores, assessment and the level of certain competences (cf. van Lier, 1996:3). It should be pointed out that other authors such as Michael Grinder report about the importance of the individual student's learning process as well. Grinder calls "[...] the relationship between CONTENT and PROCESS [...] the "Scales of Learning"" (Grinder, 1991:62).

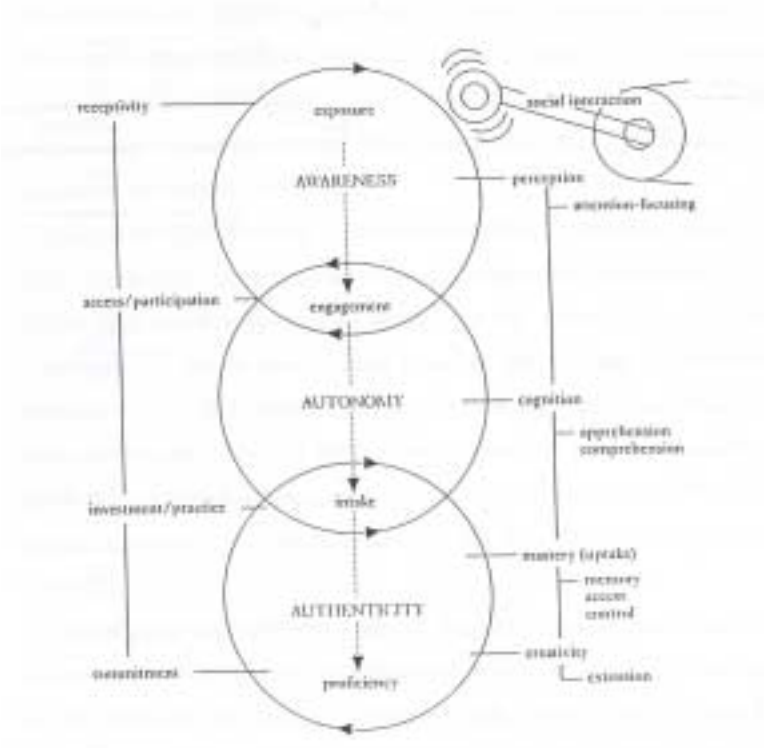
Van Lier formulates the three educational principles *of Awareness, Autonomy* and *Authenticity* to provide teachers with strategies and, to help them develop their own techniques to put those principles into practice. Since the principle of *Awareness* seems highly relevant to the topic discussed in this paper, it will be examined in detail.

As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, new information should be related to the student's existing knowledge. Moreover authors like Michael Sharwood Smith and David Little have pointed out that learning is self-discovered and self-appropriated. "[L]earning is possible only to the extent that the learner is able to integrate the new information that is being offered with the sum of his experience to date." (Little, 1991:13) That means that the teacher should pick up "the [...] fundamental communicative problem [...]" (ibid.) and guide the learner to the starting point of his learning process i.e. the point where the learner first notices new information.

In order to help the learners on their way from "[...] their first exposure to language to full proficiency [...]" (van Lier, 1996:41) van Lier presents a model which he calls a "[...] map travelled by the learners in their language careers [...]" (ibid.). Several preconditions such as *receptivity, access, investment and commitment* lead to a number of simultaneous processes such as *exposure, engagement, intake and proficiency*. As a result, the author describes the possible outcomes as *perception, cognition, mastery and creativity*. Moreover, van Lier regards *social interaction* (cf. van Lier, 1996:41f.) as a vehicle of central importance to start the whole process of learning and keep it going (see Fig. 2).

First of all, the author describes the characteristics of exposure language. Above all the *quality of the language* as well as *possible contextual information* are of vital importance. "Exposure language is usable when the learner can make sense of it [...] and makes an effort to process it." (van Lier, 1996:45) Unlike Krashen, van Lier defines the term *exposure* rather from the learner's point of view, thus he speaks of "language engagement" (van Lier, 1996:48) instead of "comprehensible input".

Figure 2: The growth of proficiency



In order to follow the road *from exposure to engagement* the learner should keep up *receptivity* and *curiosity.* According to the author "[...] engagement with language occurs when the learner's internal knowledge system [...] interacts with the environment" (van Lier, 1996:52). A heightened state of awareness called "vigilance" (ibid.) which occurs in early stages of L^1 acquisitions can no longer be taken for granted, thus attention should be encouraged by making things interesting and comprehensible and promote expectation.

To come *from engagement to intake* an *investment of effort* in the language process has to be made by the student. In this connection the author distinguishes between "[...] apprehension, a kind of intuitive, unverbalized (or unverbalizable) knowing, and comprehension, which includes the more familiar types of expressible and analyzed knowledge" (van Lier, 1996:54). This implies that language learning is not only a question of the left-brain hemisphere but also of the right-brain hemisphere. A very vivid impression of that view is given by Michael Grinder who proposes a teaching model which leads from the right brain, i.e. from the 'known to unknown' (cf. Grinder, 1991:184).
Finally, to reach *proficiency* "[...] mental structures or networks must be activated" (van Lier, 1996:57). In order to remember the learnt information an amount of rehearsal is necessary. When, what and how to rehearse depends on the students' own decision. As far as practice is concerned, the author distinguishes between 'practice' and 'malpractice.' In order to include external control and feedback but also to raise the quality and breadth of tasks and exercises which are beyond the level the learners themselves would be capable of, the author regards ready-made practice collections as very useful (cf. van Lier, 1996:60). On the other hand, he strictly opposes "[...] malpractice, or the dissection of linguistic cadavers" (van Lier, 1996:65).

By introducing four different types of practice van Lier uses *control* and *focus* as defining parameters. Firstly, *controlled and narrowly focused practice* includes mechanical drills, fill-in exercises etc. Secondly, not controlled but focused practice describes the learner's inner speech, private rehearsal and language play. Role play, drama-activities and information-gap tasks are elements of the third, which is called *controlled but not (narrowly) focused practice.* Last but not least, not controlled and not focused practice equals real communication (cf. van Lier, 1996:59f).

Eventually the author gives several examples of practice. He points out that some features such as the "[...] natural sequence or "flow" of utterances [...]" (van Lier, 1996:65), the freedom for students to decide whether to keep close to the task or to use their own imagination, the difficulty level which can be decided by the learners, but also the teacher's attempt to facilitate the student's access to the activity, are likely to create a conversational structure of the exercises used for practice (cf. ibid.).

4. Comparison between Krashen's and van Lier's approaches

The most striking differences between Krashen's and van Lier's approaches will now be examined in detail.

First of all, Krashen's and van Lier's models of SLA themselves differ considerably. Stephen Krashen *describes how language* is organized and processed in the learner's mind whereas Leo van Lier sketches the way in which the *learner* notices new information, makes an effort to process it and finally reaches proficiency. Calling his model a "[...] map traveled by the *learners* (my italics) [...]" (van Lier, 1996:41) van Lier includes the individual learner and their personal way of internal processing. These aspects are not taken into account in Dulay/Burt/Krashen's learning model. Krashen considers an unidentified community of learners to be exposed to comprehensible input and, after a period of silence, to react by showing a more or less uniform verbal performance due to the fact that their language specific "mental structure" (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:6) determines their output. Moreover, the organizer, Krashen's central device to process data, has not been characterized clearly in

terms of its operational principles." [W]e cannot yet fully specify its [the organizer's] operational principles." (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:56)

Contrasting Krashen's model van Lier regards social interaction as the vehicle in order to start the process of second language learning. He exactly defines the starting point as well as the preconditions of the learning process and takes into account the individual learner's cognitive aspects such as learning styles and strategies (cf. van Lier, 1996:41 f.).

Secondly, Krashen distinguishes between subconscious acquisition of fluency and conscious learning of rules and structures (cf. Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:11). In this connection H. Douglas Brown's report on Krashen's input hypothesis may be of comparable interest.

Brown is highly critical in terms of Krashen's strict distinction between learning and acquisition. He shares Barry Mc Laughlin's point of view that Krashen's definition of learning and acquisition as mutually exclusive categories can no longer be tenable since Krashen splits up conscious and subconscious processes in order to distinguish between learning and acquisition. Learning and acquisition, however, can only divide conscious and subconscious processes. Since there is no clear separation into conscious and subconscious processes Krashen's theory, according to Brown, lacks its basic logical rudiments (cf. Brown, 1987:188f.).

As an alternative to Krashen, van Lier distinguishes between "[...] apprehension, a kind of intuitive, unverbalized (or unverbalizable) knowing, and comprehension, which includes the more familiar types of expressible and analyzed knowledge". (van Lier, 1996:54) By no means, however, does van Lier categorize apprehension and comprehension in order to provide a link with learning and acquisition. Additionally, it goes without saying that van Lier, unlike Krashen, does seek to adopt and adapt processes concerning first language acquisition in order to explain second language learning.

Finally, Krashen's approach includes a "[...] silent period for one to three months [...]" (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1982:22) during which the student concentrates on comprehension. After this period the learner's language may, according to Krashen unfold most naturally.

From van Lier's point of view the teacher should, in order to overcome the fundamental communicative obstacle, guide the learner to the starting point of his/her learning process by

taking into account several preconditions such as receptivity, curiosity, access, investment and commitment into account. That means that according to van Lier, the responsibility for the learning process shifts from the teacher to the learner. Moreover, the teacher attempts to facilitate the learner's access to the activities performed. At each stage of the learning process the teacher knows to which extend the learning material has reached their students since they interact and do not remain silent, as Krashen's students do. Krashen's theory that speech will emerge once the acquirer has built up enough comprehensible input makes Brown speculate "[...] about the other half of [...] [the] foreign language students for whom speech does not "emerge" and for whom the "silent period" might last forever" (Brown, 1987:188).

5. Conclusion

Looking at both theories it has been shown that there is a huge discrepancy between the idea of language awareness and Dulay/Burt/Krashen's approach of language acquisition. In my view Krashen's working model for SLA is rather simple. Moreover, there is an over-reliance on affective aspects such as the reduction of stress or the achievement of fun in the classroom whereas van Lier's model includes important cognitive aspects such as individual styles and strategies of the learner. Furthermore, it is the individual learner who is the centre of van Lier's model and not language, which is the crucial issue in Krashen's model. Next, van Lier's model is far more process-oriented than Krashen's. That means that individual learning processes such as the learners' freedom to decide whether to keep close to a task or use their

own imagination are taken into account. All in all, Krashen's simple hypothesis may well have been a step forward against the background of behaviourism. Nowadays, however, van Lier's idea of language awareness may provide a coherent framework of methods and techniques used in FL learning.

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3 Language across the curriculum

MICHAELA ORTNER

1. Introduction

Learning languages, especially the English language, has become more and more important in Austria in recent years. Austria is, according to R. Clément's social context model (1980) 'unicultural', which means it is a country where one language community is clearly in the majority. So the majority of Austrians grew up monolingual and acquired a second language in school. The demand for learning a second language and therefore the number of bilingual schools (in bilingual schools all subjects are always taught in the foreign language) and schools who teach a *Language Across the Curriculum* has risen steadily.

LAC means teaching some of the subjects regularly in a foreign language. Many questions have arisen in recent years, such as what impact does it have on the students' knowledge and what do teachers have to keep in mind when teaching their subject through another language, as well as how can people profit from this 'late bilingualism'?

2. LAC: Origins and development

The term Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) was originally used in English in a mother tongue context, based on the Bullock report "*A Language for life*", a government report published in 1975. Two important elements were stated in the report.

- *"Language crosses the curriculum"*.
  No matter which subject a teacher teaches he uses language, language to communicate everyday matters with the children and specific language for his subject.
- Therefore "*every teacher is a language teacher***"**
  and should be aware of it.

This seems to be quite obvious at first sight but too little attention was paid to this fact. Language is the medium to gather information and also communicate your knowledge in school. Students have different social and linguistic background and therefore different ways and means to comprehend and to produce language and content. Language is the key to learning and therefore needs to be taken into consideration when planning a lesson, and even more so when teaching through a foreign language.

The term LAC today is also used for teaching a subject in a second language and not in the mother tongue (this is the concept I refer to when discussing the term in this paper). This form of teaching a second language was first used in Austria in the late eighties. It was and still is mainly English that is used in the lessons; therefore it is also called '*English Across the Curriculum'*. The Austrian Ministry for Education set up a Project Group for '*English Across the Curriculum'* to develop a concept for teaching a subject through another language and to implement this new concept in Austrian schools. This idea has attracted considerable interest. What are the advantages of this form of language learning, compared to traditional ways?

3. Language in the classroom

According to the two elements of the Bullock report it is import to know how language crosses the curriculum, how information is communicated in the classroom and what impact it has for the teacher. Jim Cummins, an American linguist (2000b), distinguishes everyday language and academic language. He refers to it as '*Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills'* and '*Cognitive/ Academic Language Proficiency'*.

Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) describe "everyday language that is helped by contextual support such as body language, facial expression, straightforward communication skills" (Baker 2001:169). Most interpersonal communication provides a great deal of contextual support. It is fairly easy for a second language learner to pick up the language and skills necessary for such communication. Some conversational situations provide less contextual support, however, such as conversing on the phone. In this case, all aids to comprehension must be provided solely through the medium of oral language. This is why phone conversations are usually difficult for second language learners. Context reduced language is described as *Cognitive/ Academic Language Proficiency* (CALP). "It is the level of language required to understand academically demanding subject matter in a classroom. Such language is often abstract, without contextual supports such as gestures and the viewing of the subject" (Baker 2001:169).

Cummins (1980) describes the difference of competence with the image of an iceberg (Iceberg Theory): **BICS** are the skills above the surface, such as speaking and comprehension, pronunciation, grammar. Below the surface you will find deeper and analytic language skills of meanings and creative composition (Colin 2000:170).

Out of this, Cummins developed a model using a diagram, with one dimension describing context embedded and context reduced language and the other dimension describing cognitively demanding and cognitively undemanding communication.

	Cognitively Undemanding Communication		
Context Embedded Communication	• One to one communication • Feeling, touching things • Viewing objects	• Reciting nursery rhymes • Listening to stories • Describe things seen somewhere else	**Context Reduced Communication**
	• Explaining and justifying • Role play • Solution seeking	• Reflecting on feelings • Discussing the content of a book Relate new information to existing knowledge	
	Cognitively Demanding Communication		

(After Ill. in Baker (2001:176f))

Cummins' model can be helpful for analysing and creating teaching methods. Depending on the language proficiency the information can be more or less abstract, the lower the second language level the more contextual support is needed. "The theory suggests that bilingual education will be successful when children have enough first or second language proficiency to work in the context reduced, cognitively demanding situation of the classroom" Baker (2001:173). Other researchers like Frederickson and Cline (1990:26) criticize the fact that the model is too rigid they find it too

> "difficult to disentangle the 'cognitive' from the 'contextual'. "…as it was found in practice that making tasks or instructions more context embedded also made them somewhat less cognitively demanding. Similarly, changes in cognitive demand may result in tasks actually being presented with greater context embeddedness."

In LAC it can be even more important to support what you say with gestures, objects, elements that help the student to understand the subject more easily. It needs quite a high degree of fluency to understand cognitively demanding subject matters and develop the deeper and analytic skills below the surface (see Iceberg). When teaching LAC these deeper and analytic skills have to be sufficiently developed at least in the first language (L1), so that students can use their knowledge from the mother tongue to understand a subject through a foreign language (L1). Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1977) found that immigrant children who are not fluent in their second language (L2) have difficulties to cope with academic tasks in school but bilingual learners, who are literate in their L1 can transfer to the L2 the system of meanings and concepts they already possess in their own. Bilingual children learn their L1 not as an end in itself but as a means of learning other things through it. The first language can be used as resource for learning.

In Austria, teachers usually work with children who have one sufficiently developed language, usually German. This language should be part of the Second Language Learning process and not excluded. As Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa state that the system of the first language can help the student to understand the second language.

4. LAC vs. Traditional Language Learning

In traditional language learning the language itself is taught through academic language. Although communicative learning has become more and more important in recent years vocabulary still has to be studied in a context reduced way. Lists of words and phrases have to be studied. Grammar and Syntax is a very complicated and abstract system and this system is explained with even more abstract and academic Latin words. Children should learn how to communicate by learning abstract and hardly comprehendible systems. This can lead to a lack of motivation for Second Language Learners or Late Bilinguals (people who learn their second language in school or courses).

5. Motivational Aspects

"Language is central to learning. Learning involves language not just as a passive medium for instruction but as a principal means of forming and handling new concepts"

(Marland: 1977)

What influences the motivation even more is that the late bilinguals already have a language to communicate. Children are highly motivated to learn the first language because children want to communicate. It can be necessary to learn two languages in order to communicate with father and mother or parents and people around. In school children learn languages in an artificial and academic context. They have one language to communicate so the necessity for another one and therefore the motivation to learn the second language is restricted. LAC can reduce this lack of motivation, not learning the language is of major importance but to understand the subject and communicate your knowledge through a second language. According to August and Hakuta (1997) it is important to provide students "intellectual challenging" and "active and meaningful" lessons. There should be a balance between "basic skills" and "higher-order thinking skills". Teaching children not in their mother tongue has been criticized in the past, amongst others by UNESCO (1953:11). It was stated in the report:

> "that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the best system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expressions and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium."

This was mainly meant for immigrant children or children of immigrants, people who don't speak the language of the country they live in. Still I think it has to be considered in LAC as well. Teaching some subject even only sometimes may have consequences for the student's knowledge of the subject.

A school teaching LAC has to be aware of the fact that LAC can lead to a reduction of the quantity as well as the quality of content. The Austrian Ministry for Education and Cultural Affairs (Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten, Abteilung II/317) states in their education law (BGBl. II Nr. 401/1997, § 3 Abs. 1 Z 11a) what schools have to consider when they want to introduce LAC. For teachers they stress the fact that he or she has to consider that slower progress may be made in the subject concerning content because the student will focus on language acquisition, especially at the beginning. So they have to consider both the importance of content in the particular subject and the importance of a well developed second language.

Bilingualism, also late bilingualism, has positive effects on the student. Late bilinguals are people who learn a second language through courses or school. Early researchers on bilingualism believed that bilinguals are inferior to monolinguals. They had an image of a monolingual having one well-balanced balloon (one well-developed language) and the bilingual having two unbalanced balloons one for L1 and the other one for L2, each of them half the size of the monolingual language balloon. An increase in one language would lead to a decrease in the other. Cummins (1980) refers to this as the '*Separate underlying proficiency model of bilingualism*': the two languages are stored separately without any connection.

According to Jim Cummins (1980) languages are stored separately in the bilingual brain but they have one '*Central Operating System*' he calls it the '*Common Underlying Proficiency model of Bilingualism*'. On the one hand the theory of different areas explain why bilinguals can keep apart their two languages easily and on the other hand they have the central processor that enables them to switch between the two languages.

Cummins' **Common underlying proficiency model of bilingualism** can be seen as the basis of modern theories on bilingualism. Bilingualism and also late bilingualism is not seen as a disadvantage any more, but a way of thinking more flexibly, two parts that support each other instead of interfere negatively. LAC can help to develop a larger vocabulary in different fields of study and open learners' minds for different language and cultural systems without neglecting their own.

6. Conclusion

In my opinion LAC, compared to bilingual education, has one big advantage. Children are taught in the mother tongue as well as the foreign language. Therefore students can improve and increase their vocabulary in both of their languages.

Teaching LAC is much more than just using another language in the lesson. Teacher have to consider that they have to find a balance between communicative language and academic language, reduce the content but still fulfil the curriculum and pay attention to the students' linguistic development on the one hand and the understanding of the subject on the other.

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4 Learner autonomy

CHRISTINA SCHUCHLENZ

1. Defining learner autonomy

In several theoretical papers about learner autonomy, the most frequently cited definition is taken from Henri Holec's report for the Council of Europe under the title *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning*, which was one of the first signs of an increasing tendency all over Europe that aimed at redefining the place and role of the learner within the educational system. Holec not only defines autonomy in the context of language learning as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (1981: 3), but he also gives a more detailed definition as follows:

> *To take charge of one's own learning* is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all decisions concerning all aspects of this learning; i.e.:
> - determining the objectives;
> - defining the contents and progressions;
> - selecting methods and techniques to be used;
> - monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.);
> - evaluating what has been acquired.
>
> The autonomous learner is himself capable of making all these decisions concerning the learning with which he is or wishes to be involved. (Holec, 1981: 3)

The autonomy Holec wants to promote is not restricted to learning in European educational systems but has far-reaching implications for our societies and their social structures, which is emphasized by both Benson (2001) and Little (1991: 7). Autonomy, in this sense, is not just a new approach to language learning but it may also help to develop learners into "more responsible and critical members of the communities in which they live" (Benson, 2001: 1).

Although Holec's definition of autonomy covers the main areas of learning in which responsibility can be transferred from the teacher to the learner, other researchers do not entirely agree with Holec. Benson for example criticizes the fact that Holec's definition does not define "the nature of the cognitive capacities underlying effective self-management of learning" (Benson, 2001: 49). For this reason, Benson favours Little's definition, in which Little takes the role of control over the cognitive processes involved in effective self-management of learning into consideration:

> Essentially, autonomy is a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts. (Little, 1991: 4)

Despite these detailed definitions of learner autonomy, there are several misconceptions of this area of language learning, which Little tries to sum up in his definition of "what autonomy is not" (1991: 3): Firstly, Little emphasizes that autonomy is not – as often believed – synonymous with self-instruction, which – mistakenly - indicates that autonomy in the classroom context forces the teacher to give up all initiative and control and, thus, makes the teacher redundant. Secondly, Little makes it clear that learner autonomy is not a new teaching

method that can be programmed in a series of lesson plans. And thirdly, he stresses that autonomy is not a single, easily described behaviour or a steady state achieved by learners.

Benson (2001: 49) points out that another important element of autonomous learning is to give learners the opportunity to take control of their own learning and to determine the content as well as the goals and purposes of learning. Apart from emphasizing this situational aspect, he also refers to the fact that learner autonomy has "a social aspect, which may involve control over learning situations and call on particular capacities concerned with the learner's ability to interact with others in the learning process" (Benson, 2001: 49). Although learner autonomy generally implies that the learner enjoys a higher degree of freedom, the consideration of the social aspect of autonomy makes it clear that this freedom is constrained. "Because we are social beings our independence is always balanced by dependence; our essential condition is one of interdependence." (Little, 1991: 5)

Benson has probably summed up all this definitions and aspects best by describing learner autonomy as " a multidimensional capacity that will take different forms for different individuals, and even for the same individual in different contexts or at different times" (Benson, 2001: 47).

2. Learner autonomy and the psychology of learning

Autonomy is very often linked with constructive theories of learning, the main thesis of which is that knowledge has to be constructed by the learner and cannot be taught. Of special importance for learner autonomy is George Kelly's personal construct theory (1963):

> Kelly's psychology views human thought as a process of hypothesis testing and theory building involving the continual development and revision of constructs, or meanings attached to objects or events, in the light of new experience. Personal constructs are derived from shared assumptions and values, but systems of constructs are unique to the individual since they are shaped through attempts to make sense of experiences that are uniquely one's own. (Benson, 2001: 36)

As far as learning is concerned, this theory holds that every learner brings his or her own system of personal constructs to bear on learning tasks. The new knowledge that the learner gains has to be assimilated to his/her current system of constructs. This assimilation is likely to be unproblematic and easy when the new knowledge is additional information, but it can be difficult if the new knowledge contradicts in some way the existing construct system (cf. Little, 1991: 19).

The implication of the personal construct theory for education and learning is that learning can be facilitated if learners are helped to become aware of and understand their existing personal construct systems and if they are encouraged to assume control of psychological processes. Nevertheless this does not mean that making learners aware of the demands of learning tasks and the techniques with which they might approach it will always be inevitably followed by successful learning. But when the process is successful, learning will become more efficient and purposeful (cf. Little, 1991:21). Benson summarizes the connection between constructive psychology and learning as follows:

> If learning is a matter of the construction of knowledge, effective learners must be cognitively capable of performing actions that enable them to take control of their learning. Similarly, the capacity to manage one's own learning activities must be grounded in certain cognitive capacities intrinsic to the process of learning. The importance of this hypothesis to the theory of autonomy is evidenced in Little's claim that 'all genuinely successful learning is in the end autonomous'. (Benson, 2001: 40)

3. Autonomy and language learning

During the last few decades research on first language development has shown that learning a mother tongue is a – largely unconscious – autonomous process: Children do not learn their mother tongue word by word but pass through a series of stages, which is linked with an accommodation of their existing linguistic knowledge to new structural features. Furthermore, there is no separation between learning language and using language; and, thus, first language acquisition could be seen as a result of the children's communication and interaction with their environment. Another important feature of first language acquisition in connection with learner autonomy is the fact that acquisition "proceeds on the initiative of the child as it gradually learns to meet the communicative needs generated by its interaction with the environment" (Little, 1991: 24).

This unconscious autonomy shows that we are born self-directed learners and that we are naturally inclined to take control over the learning of a language. Benson, however, claims that – on the one hand – we appear to give up much of our autonomy as learning becomes more complex and is channelled through the institution of the school, but that – on the other hand – all of us are able to develop autonomy on the basis of capacities that most learners already possess due to their natural tendency to take control over various aspects of learning (cf. Benson, 2001: 59).

Although people often believe that, in schooling, learning is the result of teaching, in fact, most learning happens casually. In many cases "learning is self-motivated, and undertaken in order to fulfil a personal need" (Little, 1991: 10). However, most learners are not aware of their autonomous behaviour, which shows that unconscious autonomy can also be found in foreign language learning.

Another similarity between first and second language acquisition is the influence of the learners' encounters with their environment: "Social interaction generates communicative needs and provides the learner with input; and the learner's effort to meet his communicative needs by using the target language gradually produces learning" (Little, 1991: 25). This can especially be implied for those people who are learning a second language without benefit of instruction.

Enabling learners to use the foreign language as a medium of communication has always been regarded as the aim of foreign language teaching. But the learners' communicative efficiency in the target language depends on their achieving a substantial degree of autonomy as language users, which includes factors like independence, self-reliance and self-confidence. Consequently, the most important question for language teachers is how to help their students to achieve this autonomy and to maintain it – mainly by becoming aware of the social requirements of the different situations in which they have to use the target language. In fact, learners will become more autonomous if as much of the classroom communication as possible is carried out in the target language and if this communication is "real to the learners in the sense that it engages them in understanding and producing meanings that are important to them" (Little, 1991: 29). Thus, communication is not only the goal of but also a channel for learning; and the target language is not only the target but also the content of teaching.

In order to prevent learners from remaining alienated from the content and process of their learning and to enable them to become autonomous language users, traditional patterns of classroom organization have to be abandoned in favour of learner-centeredness in both curricula and classrooms. The range of roles that characterizes the autonomous language user and that the learners are expected to adopt have to be available to them in the classroom. Furthermore, learners have to be autonomous in the sense that they are allowed to determine the content of their learning and to take responsibility for reviewing their progress. If this is the case, the learners not only communicate meanings that really matter to them but they are also encouraged to explore and make explicit their personal constructs; and engaging the

learners' personal construct systems and giving the learners the opportunity to be in control of their learning has the effect of interesting them in the language learning tasks. "Thus they experience the learning they are engaged on as their own, and this enables them to achieve to a remarkable degree the autonomy that characterizes the fluent language user." (Little, 1991: 31)

In the context of fostering learner autonomy in the classroom, important aspects that have to be taken into account apart from the students' personal construct systems are individual psychological factors, which have a strong influence on the way a person learns a language and on the outcome of her learning efforts. Some of these variables – like learning style, aptitude and personality – are relatively stable conditions that cannot easily be changed. The term learning style refers to any individuals preferred ways of problem-solving and learning. A frequently quoted definition is the one given by Keefe (1979):

> …the characteristic cognitive, affective and physiological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment… Learning style is a consistent way of functioning, that reflects underlying causes of behaviour.

Various dimensions of learning style have been identified. Some of these dimensions are: field-dependence/ interdependence, ambiguity tolerance, reflectivity and impulsiveness as well as visual and auditory styles (cf. Brown, 2000: 114-122). Apart from learning styles, there are other variables like motivation, affective states and attitudes that can influence learning. Benson, however, states that these variables depend on context or experience and can be changed more easily than learning styles. "Although the research evidence is limited, there is good reason to believe that language learners can and do exercise some degree of control over these variables in attempting to overcome obstacles to their learning." (Benson, 2001: 67)

4. Learner autonomy in practice

As mentioned above, autonomy is based on the learners' natural tendency to take control over their own learning, which means that they "[…] initiate and manage their own learning, set their own priorities and agendas and attempt to control psychological factors that influence their learning" (Benson, 2001: 75). Even if learners do take control, this does not imply, however, that they are autonomous. In order to be regarded as autonomous, learners not only have to try to take control of their learning every now and then but they have to do it systematically; and it is the role of the teacher to encourage and assist them in doing so. If autonomy is to be seen as a goal of language education, teachers and educational institutions should attempt to promote autonomy through practices that will encourage and enable learners to take more control of all aspects of their learning and will, thus, help them to become better language learners (cf. Benson, 2001: 109).

Apart from control of the psychological variables mentioned in the previous chapter, learner autonomy involves three different levels of control: learning management, cognitive processes and learning content.

4.1 Learner autonomy and control over learning management

"Control over learning management can be described in terms of the behaviours that learners employ in order to manage the planning, organisation and evaluation of their learning." (Benson, 2001: 76) Learning management – together with self-monitoring, and self-assessment – is regarded as an important part of effective self-directed learning, which is

understood as the key to learning languages and to learning how to learn languages. In order to manage their learning effectively, learners should use certain learning strategies.

According to Brown, strategies are "specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information" (Brown, 2000: 113). Cohen (1998) defines learning strategies as "learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner".

These learning strategies are divided into three main categories: metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective strategies. "Metacognitive strategies make use of knowledge about cognitive processes and constitute an attempt to regulate language learning by means of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. They have an executive function." (Ellis, 1994: 538) Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, are "more limited to specific learning tasks and involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself" (Brown, 2000: 124). Socioaffective strategies concern ways in which learners interact with other learners or native speakers and control themselves in order to improve their learning. In general, strategy use requires the learner to know what language and language learning involve, to plan the content and methods of learning and to be willing to do a self-evaluation of his/her progress and his/her learning experience (cf. Benson, 2001: 81).

The discussion of learning strategies directly leads to the issue of strategy training or learner training, the primary goal of which is to help learners become better language learners and take greater control over their learning by increasing the learners' awareness of themselves as language learners as well as their willingness and ability to manage their own learning. Cohen (1998: 67) defines strategy training and its purposes as follows:

> Strategy training, i.e. explicitly teaching students how to apply language learning and language use strategies, can enhance students' effort to reach language program goals because it encourages students to find their own pathways to success, and thus it promotes learner autonomy and self-direction.

Consequently, learner training and the resulting increase of the learners' learning efficiency seem to lead to the development of greater autonomy.

Strategy training in classroom learning or strategies-based instruction – as Brown (2000: 130) calls it – basically means that teachers assist their students in developing skills in learning how to learn and skills related to strategy use and that they encourage the learners to activate their language outside the classroom (cf. Nunan, 1991: 181). According to Cohen (1998: 65), the underlying premise of strategy training is that "language learning will be facilitated if students become more aware of the range of possible strategies that they can consciously select during language learning and language use".

The implication of this claim for language teaching is that it should have two different goals: The one is to foster the development of autonomy, and the other is to increase the development of learning skills and skills in learning how to learn (cf. Nunan, 1991: 187). In practice this can be done by incorporating elements of learner training as well as learning-how-to-learn tasks into language teaching. The advantages of doing so are that "learners become aware not only of their own preferred ways of learning, but also of the fact that there are choices, not only in what to learn but also in how to learn" (Nunan, 1991: 181). Learning how to learn tasks are able to encourage learners both to be more flexible in the ways they go about learning and to experiment with a wide range of different learning experiences.

The teachers' task is not only to provide the learners with technical know-how about how to tackle a language but also to assist them in becoming aware of their own style preferences and beliefs (cf. Brown, 2000: 131) - for the students' choice of learning strategies is strongly influenced by individual learner differences such as attitudes, affective states and general factors as well as by various situational factors (cf. Ellis, 1994: 529). However, it is important that strategy-based instruction and learner training are not limited to teaching an

approved set of strategies; instead learners should be trained to use strategies flexibly, appropriately and independently, which will help them to become more autonomous.

It has been proved that language learners engage in self-instruction by using a wide repertoire of out-of-class strategies – like reading newspapers and novels or listing to the radio – even when their learning is primarily classroom-based. This out-of-class learning could be seen as a supplement to classroom learning. Its main purpose is the development of proficiency. Because of the fact that learners who achieve proficiency in foreign languages tend to take some degree of control over their learning, self-management, self-instruction and learner training could be regarded as important parts of most language-learning careers and as a key to learner autonomy (cf. Benson, 2001: 61-65).

The control over learning management and the application of learning strategies are part of a movement within educational theory and practice which takes a learner-centred view of pedagogy: "A learner-centred approach is based on a belief that learners will bring to the learning situation different beliefs and attitudes about the nature of language and learning and that these beliefs and attitudes need to be taken into consideration in the selection of content and learning experiences." (Nunan, 1991: 178)

4.2 Learner autonomy and control over cognitive and content aspects of learning

As already mentioned above, a learner-centred approach to foreign language learning does not only consist of giving learners the opportunity for self-directed learning but also of involving learners in the majority of decision-making processes concerned with the day-to-day management of their learning. Only if students are given the opportunity to take a certain degree of control over the planning and assessment of classroom learning and only if they are supported appropriately in doing so, will they have the chance to acquire the ability to develop control over all three aspects relevant for learner autonomy – learning management, cognitive and content aspects of learning. According to Benson, there are some pre-conditions for the development of these levels of control:

> Learners may develop the capacity to control cognitive aspects of their learning through the opportunity to take decisions in the classroom, but this will depend in part on the extent to which their decisions are limited by or go beyond learning procedures with which they are already familiar. Similarly, they may develop the capacity to define and determine the content of their learning, but this again depends on the extent to which decisions are constrained by pre-determined learning content. The risk in implementing learner control in the classroom when the scope of decision making is constrained is that the learners will feel that their decisions have little real consequence or that they are being given responsibility without genuine freedom. (Benson, 2001: 161-162)

Benson also emphasizes that giving learners the opportunity to make decisions regarding their learning within a collaborative and supportive environment is a key factor in the development of autonomy and that – because of this – teachers should surrender "their prerogative of making most or all of the decisions concerning the students' learning" (Benson, 2001: 152). When they finally do so and learners are encouraged to take control over the planning of classroom activities, the result is a positive effect on both learner autonomy and language learning.

Experimental programmes involving group work in language classes or giving students a certain degree of control over the content of their learning within a teacher-directed classroom had the effect that the students felt more free to speak, to make mistakes and to contribute their own experience, which lead to a feeling of being supported in their learning difficulties. In fact, group work and peer teaching result in "gains in motivation, participation, 'real' communication, in-depth understanding, responsibility for learning, commitment to the

course, confidence, mutual respect, the number of skills and strategies used and accuracy in written outcomes" (Benson, 2001: 154).

As far as control over the learning content is concerned it is very common that the general learning goals are determined by the National Curriculum. Nevertheless it is possible to give learners at least some control over the content by allowing them to select the order in which they work on these goals, to choose their own tasks for practice and to plan activities within the classroom. In fact, increased learner control is beneficial to language learning because, according to Benson, "transfer of control also often involves an increase in student-student interaction and increased opportunities to use and process the target language in group work" (Benson, 2001: 154).

Another advantage of this learner-centred approach is that students are encouraged to reflect consciously on the learning process, on their goals and learning activities and they are trained in self-evaluation and self-assessment of the effectiveness of their learning and their language performance; and while self-evaluation is beneficial to learning in itself, conscious reflection on the learning process is a distinctive characteristic of autonomous learning.

5. Conclusion

In the last few years quite a lot of research has been done on learner autonomy and its effects on and implications for foreign language teaching. According to Benson (2001: 104-105), fundamental findings on autonomy are:

1. Learner autonomy means for the learner to take an active, independent attitude to learning and to undertake a learning task independently and, thus, is beneficial to learning.
2. The concept of learner autonomy is supported by some evidence that language learners have a natural tendency to exercise control over their learning.
3. Learner autonomy is a systematic capacity of effective control over various aspects and levels of the learning process; and this personal involvement of the learner in decision making leads to more effective learning.

Although the advantages of learner autonomy for the language learner seem to be quite obvious, fostering autonomy amongst learners in practice can be very difficult for teachers because of the social and political problems involved in changing the traditional structure of the teaching and learning process. Benson managed to summarize the problematic nature of fostering autonomy very aptly:

> One clear outcome of the research is that any attempt to transfer control over one aspect of learning is likely to have complex effects on the system of learning as a whole. Flexibility in the guidelines for the implementation of a curriculum often creates spaces in which individual teachers can allow learners a degree of control over aspects of their classroom learning. However, if the curriculum itself lacks flexibility, it is likely that the degree of autonomy developed by the learners will be correspondingly constrained. (Benson, 2001: 162)

Despite these difficulties, I personally have the impression that, in Austria, learner autonomy is becoming more and more frequent in foreign language learning and teaching. Although the curricula are still quite inflexible and rigid, the number of teachers who try to foster learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom by helping their students to take greater control over their learning and to become autonomous learners is rising; and I even think that this tendency will increase over the next few years when a new generation of language teachers will start teaching at Austrian schools – because, in my opinion, the foundation of learner

autonomy lies in teacher training, and there, the issue of fostering learner autonomy is certainly more important than ever.

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Part 2: Research at the ECML

5 About the ECML

MARTIN HANAK-HAMMERL

The European Centre for Modern Languages, or ECML, is an institution of the Council of Europe. It was founded in 1994 to improve communication between its member states and their citizens and therefore to achieve better European integration. The ECML has currently 33 member states, including Albania, Principality of Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the United Kingdom. [1]

Following an initial period from 1994 until 1998, the Committee of Ministers decided in February 1998 "in favour of the continuation of the European Centre for Modern Languages; convinced that the continuation of the activities of the European Centre for Modern Languages will contribute significantly and specifically, within the framework of cultural co-operation and respecting the rich linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe;"[2]

The ECML sees its main task in the promotion of modern languages. It was founded as a "forum in which the responsible persons for educational policy can meet up with specialists in language teaching methodology as well as with language experts."[3] The ECML has its premises in Graz at the Nikolaiplatz. It is interesting to note that despite its central location, many students from our seminar group were unaware that the ECML even existed, let alone that it had its seat in Graz. The Graz centre has well equipped conference facilities, a library and resource centre which specialises in modern language learning and teaching, and offices for administration. Its aim is to offer "a meeting place and working platform to work out projects for officials responsible for language policy, specialists in didactics, teacher trainers, textbook authors and other multipliers in the area of modern languages."[4]

NOTES

[1] European Centre for Modern Languages. http://www.ecml.at/faq/answer.asp?f=3 [12 Jan 2002].

[2] Ibid. http://www.ecml.at/aboutus/aboutus.asp?t=resolution [12 Jan 2002].

[3] Ibid. http://www.ecml.at/aboutus/aboutus.asp?t=promotion [12 Jan 2002].

[4] Ibid. http://www.ecml.at/aboutus/aboutus.asp?t=promotion [12 Jan 2002].

6 Theories of language learning

MIRIAM MEISTER

1. Introduction

The question that I took as a starting point was: "To what extent are learning theories reflected in the publications and activities of the ECML?" During my own research work for this essay, I realised that learning theories have never been explicitly examined within the work of the Centre. I am convinced that all practical or research work has to be based on a theoretical background, but until now, learning theories as such have only once been a topic of interest in the workshops or activities of the ECML: There was one workshop held on "Mediating Between Theory and Practice", the publication of which will appear shortly.

Where theories of learning do enter as well, however, is within the discussions on learner autonomy, intercultural awareness, young learners and bilingual education. Yet, the three different approaches to learning theories (the naturalistic, communicative and cognitive) mentioned by Alexandra Altenaichinger in chapter 1, do not play a significant role.

2. Learning Theories and Learner Autonomy

From 1996 onwards, learner autonomy has made up an important part of the work and activities of the ECML. Many workshops have been held on the topic; three books have been published so far. Anne-Brit Fenner, in her "Learner Autonomy - résumé of the work from 1995 to 1998", presents several definitions of the term which have been taken as a basis for the activities of the ECML. Where autonomy is regarded as a kind of learning approach, it describes learner independence in a more general sense. In that case it is considered more a methodological than philosophical concept. Learning theories that influenced definitions of learner autonomy were mainly those of constructivism and cognitive learning strategies.

An important reference in Fenner's résumé was made to George Kelly's constructivist theory of 1955. It is seen as the psychological basis of learner autonomy. Kelly, a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, was one of the pioneers of the constructivist movement and his *personal-construct-theory* is of importance for both teachers/teacher-trainers and educational psychologists.

We can find a good explanation of his theory in Williams/Burden *Psychology for Language Teachers*:

> "People carry out their own personal experiments, construct hypothesis and actively seek to confirm or disconfirm them. In this way they built up theories about the kind of place that the world is and the kind of people that live in it. These personal theories or *constructs* are rather like templates which people place over their impressions of any new events or persons with which they come into contact, in order to establish some kind of reasonable 'fit'. To Kelly, learning involves learners making their own sense of information or events. Learners are actively involved in constructing their own personal understanding of things, and this will be different for different people." (Williams and Burden 1997: 27)

Consequently, learning is seen as an individual process in which learners become actively involved. The learners' individuality and their personal ways of tackling a problem have to be considered and, as far as possible, encouraged. Learner autonomy, as a student-centred approach to learning, gives us a good opportunity to do so.

Apart form that, students have to be conscious of their individual ways of learning and have to become responsible for it. As Fenner also states in her résumé, learner autonomy is a cognitive as well as a metacognitive process: on the one hand, students have to learn the foreign language; on the other hand, they have to become aware of their own learning and have to learn how to learn. A few workshops of the ECML have discussed both these cognitive and metacognitive aspects.

3. Learning Theories and Cultural Awareness

Learner autonomy, language awareness and cultural awareness have been linked in several workshops. What they all have in common is the concept of learning awareness. However, Fenner argues that they "function on different theoretical levels" and underlines that "autonomy constitutes diverse individual approaches which aim at developing competence and awareness of culture and language" (Fenner 1998: Learner Autonomy - Résumé).

Being conscious of foreign cultures - and one's own - makes up an important part of FL learning. In the activities of the ECML cultural awareness has been dealt with since 1995.

What has to be considered is that "Developing intercultural awareness is not a teaching method, but a learning process" (Fenner 1998: Learner Autonomy - Résumé). Awareness is nothing that can be taught, willingness on the part of the learner to meet the 'other' and unknown has to be present. A term that occurs often in connection with cultural awareness is "meta-cognitive reflection" - reflection on one's own language and culture is a prerequisite for developing cultural awareness.

3.1 On the Publication of Anne-Brit Fenner, (2001): *Cultural Awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning*

The publication "*Culture Awareness and Language Awareness based on Dialogic Interaction"* deals with the way texts in the foreign language classroom can contribute to an exploration of cultural awareness, language awareness and learner autonomy. The basis of all the four articles is the communicative approach to learning English. In her own article, *Dialogic interaction with literary texts in the lower secondary classroom*, Fenner mentions the term behaviourism, which considered language learning as a sort of 'technique' that had to be learnt - with literature being something only for students on higher levels, specialising in languages. However, an important aspect of literary texts in any FL classroom is their authenticity, their rich semiotics and their openness. Fenner states that many teachers understand communicative teaching only in the context of oral language. In this publication, however, reading is regarded a communicative experience as well - and interpreting consequently as a way of communication. Readers have unanswered questions in their minds and can often find answers through the text's statements. "(...), the literary text offers a cultural meeting point. This encounter with the text is a dialogue..." (Fenner 2001: 17)

Later, Fenner compares the hermeneutical view of the process of reading literature with any learning process. "Statements are seen as answers to questions we have - open questions we carry around with us all the time. The statements we encounter can answer our questions, or, in other words, fill gaps. This view is also the basis for autonomous learning." (Fenner 2001: 21) Individual learners have also individual questions. "Each individual learner has his own questions dependent on his pre-understanding (...). Whether the answers given in the classroom fall into line with the questions each individual has, depends on his pre-knowledge. If and when it does, it constitutes a communicative experience and learning can take place." (Fenner 2001: 21f)

Fenner underlines the importance of literature, the dialogue between reader and the text and the resulting learning process from it. The reader in this process is regarded as a co-

producer of language and meaning. Thus, reading is not, as traditionally seen, a receptive but a productive process.

4. Learning Theories and Young Learners

The work of the ECML on the topic of young learners can be seen as a sequel of the project called "Language Learning for European Citizenship" of the Council of Europe, which was taking place from 1989 - 1996. Seven workshops have been held by the ECML on the topic.

Questions that necessarily come into our minds when we are talking about young learners are: What age are we speaking of? What is meant by "early language learning"? In its activities, the ECML agreed to differ between two age groups: pupils belonging to "primary" educational institutions, i.e. children between 5/6 and 10/11 years of age, and those belonging to "pre-primary" institutions, which are children from 3 to 5/6 years. Within its activities, the Centre focussed on the first group of learners.

In his résumé of the work on Young Learners from 1995 to 2000, Peter Doyé asked the important question: "Why is it desirable to start foreign language learning and teaching early?" To present a rationale to all the people doubting the efficiency of early foreign language learning, Doyé put together principal theoretical arguments from four relevant schools of thinking:

- **Developmental psychology**: References to the ideas of psychologists such as Arnold Gesell or Frances Ilg are made, who were both convinced that the only effective FL learning has to be started before the age of 10. They were speaking of the *critical period*, a term that has widely influenced theories of learning. Also in discussions about "How Children Learn", many participants of the workshops favoured the idea of the critical period. However, some psychologists, like the Swiss Hans Aebli, question Gesell's and Ilg's ideas, arguing that it is mainly the educational environment that influences the learning of a foreign language. Another important name mentioned in this context is that of David Singleton, who stated that "the younger = the better only in the long run" (Mitchell and Myles 1998: 18)
- **Neuro-physiology:** Doyé presents theories of neuro-physiologists such as Penfield and Roberts who have explored the human brain and reported about its biological time-table. They found out that the human brain was able to recover completely after an injury before the age of nine. The plasticity of the young brain is considered useful for second language learning. These views have been criticised later by researchers like Van Parreren, Ekstrand or Larsen-Freeman and Long.
- **Anthropology:** A central idea in the anthropological argument is the individual's openness at birth. In theory, at the beginning all babies are equal and share the same possibilities for development. Growing up, they are facing different social, cultural and linguistic surroundings. They are losing their openness and thus develop differently. The open human brain becomes restricted by norms and the older a person gets, the more fixed his/her ideas become. Learning a foreign language by some anthropologists is regarded as a way of preventing individuals from becoming too restrained in their ideas. Doyé points also to the belief of the German philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt who was convinced that the learning of new languages was essential for people who wanted to get to know different world views.
- **Pedagogy:** Naturally the educational aspect cannot be left aside when speaking about young learners. Children have to be prepared for encounters with foreign cultures and speech communities as early as possible. If, as we have seen above, children at a young age have the best prerequisites to acquire, for example, communicative competence in a foreign language, educators should support them in their development as much as possible. Apart from that, primary school is seen as the institution that lays the

foundations of all the learning that follows. This can also be understood in the FL learning context.

In the workshops several key issues arose, mainly regarding methodology and organisation of FL teaching in primary institutions. Doyé has presented these issues in six dichotomies:

1. Integration vs. separate subject

Which position should the foreign language have in the curriculum? Separating it from the other areas of teaching would be useful from one point of view, because it would allow the teacher to create a foreign language teaching with clear outlines. From another point of view this contradicts to the holistic learning approach (no teaching of separate subjects, but the creating of a 'meaningful whole'), that is usually followed in primary educational institutions. Therefore, the integration - the embedding - of the foreign language into normal teaching is the preferred solution and also the participants of the ECML workshops supported this idea.

1. Systematic course vs. occasional teaching

Should early FL teaching proceed systematically or should it be given only occasionally, when the opportunity presents itself? Embedding the language as suggested in a) is dangerous, because it then cannot be taught systematically (including also grammar and vocabulary for example), but is topic-centred. Yet, the holistic approach does not allow the dominance of one subject in primary education. The logical solution to this problem is a compromise between the two possibilities. Early FL teaching should thus be taught content-based as well as language-based. The Council of Europe proposed a notional-functional approach - children should learn the linguistic necessities from the notions and functions they have to acquire.

2. Language learning vs. linguistic and cultural awareness

Should early FLE concentrate on language learning or also help the children to acquire cultural and linguistic awareness? Certainly a combination of both would be the best solution, a view that also the experts at the ECML workshops supported. FLE should promote intercultural communicative competence and include all its three dimensions:

- savoir faire (skills)
- savoir (knowledge)
- savoir-être (attitudes).

3. Communicative competence vs. sensitization

What are the aims of primary FLE? Communicative competence or the sensitization for languages in general and the language studied? In primary FLE, the aim is to lay a basis for communicative competence. The advantage that young children have is that they are usually ready to participate in language activities. Experiments have shown that pupils who learned a foreign language already in primary school were superior to their peers in secondary school. Teachers of both primary and secondary school have to cooperate, children in secondary school should not be treated like beginners. This 'need for continuity' is not so important when regarding sensitization for languages in general as more important than the knowledge of a specific language. Secondary school in that case does not need to build on the formerly acquired instructions. The participants of the ECML workshops have agreed on regarding communicative competence as the superordinate aim of FLE, because it makes use of the child's potential and readiness for learning a foreign language.

4. Class teacher vs. subject teacher

Who should teach the foreign language? The class teacher who teaches also all the other subjects or a specialist teacher? Class teachers usually do not have the required knowledge of the FL. However, most of the specialist teachers have problems to work with young learners. A solution would be courses that allow the combination of primary education and FLE - but not all teachers will qualify in both. As a consequence, Italy for example has created a new system called *moduli didattici*, where a group of three teachers is assigned to two classes.

Together they are responsible for the children's language education, a system that has met with approval so far.

5. Part of the core curriculum vs. optional activity

Should the FLE be integrated in the core curriculum? If language education is regarded as an important part of school education, there can be no doubt that an integration in the curriculum would be useful. The only argument against it is that FLE would then become compulsory and many parents want their children to concentrate on the 'really important subjects'.
The ECML workshops, however, were in favour of the integration.

Within the work of the Centre a topic which was also discussed is how primary school children were capable of coping with the three dimensions of intercultural communicative competence described above. Doyé presented a hypothesis by Jerome Bruner, professor of psychology, who said that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development" (Doyé 2000: Young Learners - Résumé). As a result, early FLE will be effective only if it is learner-appropriate.

In one session of workshop 6/95 the participants concentrated on the question how children learn. After a short brainstorming they discussed four theoretical key issues, all connected in a way to the ideas of Piaget, Vygotsky, Donaldson and Bruner. These four principles are:

1) Children learn by doing
2) Children need to make sense of the world - they can 'grasp' meaning even if they do not fully understand language
3) The process of learning is as important as the product
4) Success breeds success (Stros 1995: 6/95)

At the end of the session the participants' brainstormed terms and ideas were compared and linked to the ideas of important theorists.

5. Learning Theories in the Field of Bilingual Education

From 1995 to 1998 the ECML has organised 6 workshops on bilingual education. The participants came from many different European countries, which provided an international view on the topic. As bilingual education is a fairly new concept in some countries, the main problems that arose were those concerning the actual implementation of bilingual education and the planning of it (including methodology, materials or teacher training). Two workshops confronted the problem of methodology: WS 8/1997 and WS 18/1997. Antoinette Camilleri in her lecture during WS 8/1997 mainly dealt with the question of code switching.

Workshop 18/1997 focussed on the examination of the relationship between formal L2 instruction and bilingual instruction. In the bilingual classroom learners are faced with a large amount of (comprehensible) input and especially their receptive skills are trained very well - but less their productive ones, i.e. their oral and writing skills. Merril Swain took up this problem and emphasised the importance of the learner's output. In his workshop report 18/97, Glenn Ole Hellekjaer contrasted Stephen Krashen's theories of comprehensible input critically with Merril Swain's Output Hypothesis.

Krashen's input hypothesis "claims that exposure to comprehensible input is both necessary and sufficient for second language learning to take place" (Mitchell and Myles 1998: 126). Consequently language learning would be a subconscious process; grammar for example would no longer have to be taught separately, but would be acquired automatically by listening and reading in the FL. In order to learn a foreign language we have to receive an input i+1, which means that the content of the input has to be just beyond our level of comprehension. Krashen also argued for the bilingual classroom as the ideal setting for FL

acquisition, because the main focus there does not lie on the language but how to make the subject comprehensible.

Experience has shown, however, that comprehensible input is not sufficient enough for efficient FL learning. Merril Swain, a Canadian researcher, has examined English-speaking Canadian pupils in so-called French immersion classes. After years of instruction the students' receptive skills reached almost native speaker level. Yet, when it came to writing and speaking, the students had enormous phonological and grammatical difficulties. Swain therefore argued for the importance of the productive output. "She suggests that it is the effort of composing new utterances which is more likely to drive learners to form new hypotheses about target language syntax and to try them out. Thus she sees the acquisition of new syntactic structures in particular as more likely to result from learner's attempts at L2 production, than simply from the struggle to comprehend i+1 utterances." (Mitchell and Myles 1998: 127). One of the few problems that had occurred in Canada was that the pupils' errors were largely tolerated. For Swain it was also important that the students receive feedback and instructions on how to perform better.

Hellekjaer also dealt with the question of how to apply Swain's Output Hypothesis, giving some practical suggestions. What he proposes is a combination of both the subject matter and FL class, for example when dealing with the topic of biotechnology. Whilst in the biology class genetics or current applications of biotechnology could be taught, in the FL class pupils could read novels dealing with the same topic, such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* for example. In addition, newspaper or magazine articles could be read. Such a project offers many advantages: students can gain knowledge of the subject, they are exposed to varied linguistic input and there are many opportunities to produce some kind of (written or spoken) output: pupils could write laboratory journals or research papers, literary analyses, short stories, plays, they could participate in panel discussions on the topic or stage a play. On the linguistic level, teachers could provide feedback telling them for example how to organise an argumentative text, how to use sentence connectors etc. There would also be the opportunity to instruct them how to give an oral report.

A remark by Hellekjaer that I found important was that the applications of the Output Hypothesis discussed by him are not only useful for bilingual instruction – "the opportunity to produce extended output in authentic tasks and for authentic audiences is just as important in traditional FL instruction" (Hellekjaer 1997: 18/97).

As Antoinette Camilleri, Z. Dziegielewska, and Glen Ole Hellekjaer proposed, a lot of linguistic research still needs to be done in the field of bilingual education.

6. Summary

In this essay I have attempted to give a short summary of how learning theories have been reflected the work of the ECML so far. As we can see from my results, learning theories have played only a small role in the Centre's activities. I ask myself why theories of learning have not been analysed in more detail. Even if the ECML concentrates on instruction and methodology, learning theories should figure more heavily, because teaching should take place on their basis. Knowing how learners learn has to be considered carefully. Taking into account that there are always many experts meeting at the Centre, I think that interesting discussions on the topic of learning theories should figure more prominently.

Another point that I would like to make is that I found few of the workshop reports really informative. One useful one, for example, was the report written about workshop 18/1997 by G.O. Hellekjaer. He not only presents the theoretical background (Krashen's and Swain's Hypotheses) clearly, but also puts it in an understandable practical context. I wish I had found more reports of this kind. In writing my article, I mainly examined the expert résumés about the individual topics.

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7 Language awareness

DAGMAR GROMANN

1. Introduction

The projects presented in this paper were conducted and published by the European Center for Modern Languages (ECML). In the workshops and publications of the ECML several approaches to language awareness as an alternative method to traditional teaching methods are presented. In the first part I shall present the dialogic interaction with literary texts as a means to create language awareness in pupils. The focus is on the reader's interpretation and emotional response. This approach of employing literary texts to develop language and cultural awareness is quite unusual and new. Furthermore the development of language awareness through the mediation of media is explored. The second part of this paper is dedicated to the introduction of language awareness into the curriculum. This section includes reasons for using language awareness in classrooms, problems of its implementation, advantages and objectives. To introduce language awareness into the curriculum is not a new approach but it is becoming more and more important. Due to the increasingly multiethnic reality of the classrooms, it is essential that children learn how to cope with diversity.

2. Definition of Language Awareness and its use

According to Penz (2001) the approach of language awareness was first made use of in Great Britain in the 1980's and aimed at creating curiosity about language in school children. The main focus of language awareness is individual exploration of language.

Language awareness is created when learners are guided to focusing on a certain aspect of language and when they are encouraged to explore for themselves how language works. It is most essential that the learner is provided with enough room for personal reflection and opinion forming. If the teacher's view is the only valid perspective in the classroom, the learner's motivation to explore aspects of language individually will be limited.

We acquire rules of communication through social interaction. Linguistic contacts are part of our everyday lives. Language awareness is an essential aspect of communicative competence and inseparable from it. Communicative competence means being able to understand, analyze, explore and react to various linguistic situations. Communication is non-finite and spontaneous. In other words dialogic interaction does not consist of pre-empted questions and answers. As a learner we are seeking answers, consciously or unconsciously, to our questions about the foreign language we are learning. If learners are not aware of their questions, they are not able to utilize the answers to them. Through performing tasks aimed at language awareness, the learners gain an awareness of their own questions. Once the learner understands the aspect of language that is being questioned, he is likely to employ the knowledge gained about language in his own dialogic interaction.

Another way of creating language awareness is the comparison of two or more languages. Through comparison of two languages the features of both will stand out more clearly and will be recognized strongly as maxims of politeness, hesitations in speech, differences in intonation, and so on. The teacher is a facilitator but not the sole source of knowledge. The learner's own interpretations are at the centre of all practical approaches aimed at language awareness. Language awareness means a better understanding of the basic concept of language itself through personal exploration.

3. Language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts

The European Center for Modern Languages published a collection of articles with the title "Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language teaching" in September 2001. The collection of articles was initiated during Workshop No.5/98 when one network group focused on the topic mentioned above. The outcome of the network group was this collection of articles by the four members of the group: Anne-Brit Fenner, Marina Katnić-Bakaršić, Mária Kostelníková and Hermine Penz. Anne-Brit Fenner and Mária Kostelníková dealt with dialogic interaction with literary texts in general. Fenner conducted her research with 14-year-old school children in Norway. Mária Kostelníková based her article on a survey with teachers and school children in Slovakia. Marina Katnić-Bakaršić focused on the 'Neglected Child' of literature, namely drama. Hermine Penz approached the media as a means to increase language awareness. She based her findings on projects with Austrian and British pupils as well as university students.

The communicative approach serves as a basic theory to the publication. Communication or dialogue is not to be seen as oral language only but as a process between learner and text, peers, teacher and learner. "All language is in a sense dialogue" (Bakhtin 1991). Through interactive dialogic reading the learner's attention is focused on various aspects of language e.g. metaphors.

Dialogue is usually defined as oral language. Dialogic interaction, however, can also take place between reader and text. During the reading process the reader is already an active participant in the dialogue with the text. The reader's inherent questions and the potential meanings of the texts lead to different interpretations. Each reader brings his/her own individual pre-knowledge, expectations, prejudices and social context to the dialogue. All these factors determine what a reader will gain from the textual dialogue.

Reading literature is described as a dynamic process in the publication, as language itself is dynamic. On the whole, all four authors agree on Wolfgang Iser's (1991) idea that literary texts have so called 'gaps' that need to be filled by the reader. Reading is an investigation of meaning where the reader applies his prior knowledge and pre-experience to fill the 'gaps'. Due to the fact that meaning of literary texts is not pre-empted and individually investigated, individual readings emerge. The dialogue with the text enhances the learner's language competence due to its productive element.

According to Fenner's article on *Dialogic Interaction with literary texts in the lower secondary classroom*, there are several types of textual dialogue. Various dialogic interactions in the practical approach enhances the learner's communicative competence and language awareness. First the dialogue between the reader and the text takes place. Secondly, the reader communicates his personal reflection and interpretation in an oral form to his peers and a discussion might evolve. The language that is prompted in this sort of dialogue is spontaneous since the learner is focusing on the content and not on formal aspects. Thus an authentic reaction is fostered. A third kind of dialogue is the written dialogue between the individual reader and the teacher. And the last dialogic interaction takes place between learners and teacher. The written responses are discussed in class and form a basis for further discussions. Basically all four authors describe similar types of dialogues to the types described above in their practical approaches.

Literature is 'authentic' material, which means it is written or spoken language which is addressed to the native speakers of the language. Literature offers learning potential, it contains a 'multiplicity of meaning' according to Fenner. Foreign language learning with literary texts means learning in a context of meaning. Children gain the awareness that the

interpretation of words depends on the text as a whole. Additionally lexical and syntactical phrases, idioms and styles are remembered easier in association with meaning.

Due to the authentic character of literary texts they work as a model for learners, linguistically, structurally and content-wise. The reader's attention is focused on the content rather than on formal aspects. "The acquisition of basics of a language is best accomplished in contexts where the learner is focused on understanding or expressing an idea, message, or other thought in the new language" (Dulay, Burt, Krashen : 1982). The reader's self-esteem is increased when he/she is able to express an idea in the new language. Carefully selected texts positively influence the reader's motivation for reading in general. Kostelníková (2001) argues that literary texts are the perfect complementary material for "authentic situations" presented in textbooks because they are updated, authentic and broaden the learner's perspectives not only linguistically but also culturally.

It is interesting that Fenner as well as Kostelnikova use texts with surprising endings in their examples. This might raise the question of whether literary texts with unexpected endings constitute a more efficient mean of creating language awareness than texts with unsurprising endings. Fenner and Kostlenikova both state that the children commented on the endings in particular. Thus it might be drawn from these learner responses that the unexpected element increases the interest and the emotional response of the learners. This might be an interesting topic for research.

Since language is dynamic and spontaneous, the course of a conversation cannot be predicted. Knowing a language means being able to react to the unexpected – to interpret, analyze and explore a situation. The examples that literature provide of various life situations are not meant for mere imitation but to enhance the learner's linguistic repertoire. Reading literature requires the reader to relate to the meaning personally. In other words reflecting on a text requires the reader to turn the interpretation upon him/herself and consequently will create a certain self-awareness. Through the awareness of his/her own identity, the ability to empathize with other identities is fostered. Empathy i.e. can be defined as the ability to imagine what other people think and feel.

The ability to empathize with the author and the characters in a literary text is essential to the process of reading. Literary texts are usually not copies of reality but create their own fictional reality. Often authors use their creative freedom and break with so-called 'rules'.
For example dialogues in drama are often rather abstract if compared to every-day language, which I will discuss in more detail in the course of this paper. In poems, language is often distorted to create a certain emotional response in the reader. These distortions of linguistic 'rules' enhance the reader's text competence.

Katnić-Bakaršić focuses on drama in particular. She claims that dialogues in drama resemble everyday conversations. However dramatic dialogues are more organized, represent various stylistic and register variations, and violate the principles of everyday language. Katnić-Bakaršić lists the violations of the Grice's principle of co-operation, containing several maxims. The learner will gain an awareness of the differences and thus features of the language he/she uses are emphasized.

One major advantage of using literature in the classroom is that through the emotional and personal response of the readers, the teacher gets an insight in how far the learners have developed some kind of language awareness. The teacher takes over the role as a mediator and assistant rather than sole provider of knowledge. It is essential that the teacher does not have any preconceived ideas when interpreting and discussing literature. Otherwise the teacher's necessary function to promote dialogue cannot be fulfilled. All activities should be aimed at motivating the students to interpret the texts individually.

Penz employs media in her project *Cultural awareness and language awareness through dialogic social interaction using the Internet and other media*. The Internet serves as

a medium to enable classes from different countries to communicate electronically, via mail, chatting, etc. The main thesis of this article is that the best way to increase language awareness is through social interaction with native speakers of the target language.

Additionally Penz claims that peers have a positive effect on motivation, increasing each other's willingness. The children of one class prepare material in their mother tongue for the other class and vice versa. The material is based on all kinds of media in the native country e.g. newspaper articles, videos, radio reports, etc. According to Penz the children are very interested in how and what the other class prepared for them and differences and/or similarities between the languages and the cultures become evident to them.

Questions that force the reader to concentrate on the text, topic and individual reading foster the gaining of language awareness. The emphasis is put on communication with and about the text. Fenner claims that if young learners take an interest in a text they can cope with a surprisingly difficult texts as regards length. An inadequate length, however, might cause frustration in the reader. Therefore Kostelnikova suggests working with excerpts instead of books. Too difficult texts, if understanding is no longer guaranteed, cannot cause an authentic reaction in the reader and the emotional response is the main element of this approach. If students do not relate emotionally and personally to the text, it presents an obstacle to their ability to question and interpret aspects of language and meaning.

4. Introduction of language awareness into the curriculum

The new approach of language awareness has a two-fold purpose: to teach children how to learn a language and to develop an understanding and curiosity about language and culture in the pupils. The political goal will always be peace. Children who have experienced the 'outsider's' point of view will have a better understanding for ethnic minorities.

Due to migration, globalization and European integration, the classrooms become increasingly multilingual and multicultural. A diversity of languages is a part of almost every classroom nowadays. In general this linguistic richness is completely ignored in the curriculum. The ECML Project 1.2.1 *The Introduction of Language Awareness into the curriculum* Workshop No.1/2000 aims at giving language awareness a bigger place in the curriculum, helping children to cope with diversity and developing 'metalinguistic skills' in pupils which is applicable to language learning in general.

To explain the language awareness approach to the participants of the Workshop No.1/2000, the Co-ordinator Michel Candelier conducted several activities with the group.

One example was that all participants had to introduce themselves and then ask 'Do you like Graz?' in their mother tongue. Several discussions of grammatical and semantic aspects of the languages evolved. Thus the participants personally explored differences and similarities between several languages. Through this activity the participants experienced a language awareness situation. As a starting point the Co-ordinator assessed motivation, interest and expectations of the participants of Workshop No.1/2000. The above mentioned elements should be exploited by the teacher in the classroom situation when approaching a task aimed at language awareness. In the workshop the participants were asked to make suggestions for and deal with the topic before it was introduced. Additionally the participants got to know each other. In the same way the teacher should try to motivate the pupils to make their own suggestions before introducing a new topic. Thus the children are motivated to hear whether their suggestions were appropriate or not. One example would be pre-reading activities when dealing with any kind of text. If the teacher shows the title of a text to the pupils and asks them what they think the text is going to be about, students become quite keen

to read the text in order to find out whether their suggestions came close to the real content or not.

By using tasks aimed at language awareness all participants acquire different or new perspectives concerning language. Not only the participants but also the Co-ordinators or teachers acquire a new perspective and understanding through such activities. They get an insight into the learning process of the students and their expectations and interests. Apart from enhancing the teacher's insight, the students gain an awareness of the position of ethnic minorities. They experience the role an 'outsider' has when encountering the language of the majority. The intercultural dialogue creates a certain language awareness in the students that can also improve their view of their immediate environment. In the increasingly multicultural and multilingual reality of the classrooms, increasing language awareness is an important approach to help children cope with their daily situation. It is a means to create a positive attitude towards language diversity in classrooms.

Several tasks may be a good starting point for discussions in class as well as a means to enhance language awareness. One example of an activity is that every student has to write down his name and the whole class guesses what the meaning of the name can be in several languages or what the student's mother tongue is, an activity described by Ingelore Oomen-Welke in the course of Workshop No.1/2000. According to Oomen-Welke the children enjoy explaining what certain names mean in their mother tongue to children who do not know the language. Another task described by Martin Kervran during the same Workshop was comparing excerpts of fairy tales in different languages. The task with the names also reveals what an important role language plays in creating a person's identity. A new sensibility to the question of identity is developed.

When attempting to launch a project, some problems will always occur. The main problem of introducing language awareness into the curriculum might be the teacher's attitude towards multilingual classrooms. If languages that the teacher does not understand are spoken in the classroom, he/she may fear losing control over the class, according to Ingelore Oomen-Welke (Workshop No.1/2000). With clearly structured tasks that employ the cultural richness that is present in the classroom, this fear is superfluous. The teacher has to overcome his/her personal prejudices and stereotypes. To keep an open mind is essential in order to create a positive attitude in the students towards multiethnic classrooms. Oomen-Welke suggests that pupils should be seen as language experts who make useful contributions.

Some of the positive objectives of language awareness certainly are curiosity concerning language and culture as well as listening skills. The first step to understanding ethnic minorities is active listening. If you are not willing to listen to the cultural and linguistic differences that people from other cultures observe, you will never be able to understand their perspective. Through several activities prejudices and 'negatively-charged concepts' (Workshop NO.4/2000) can be revealed as a first step. Secondly they can be identified, analyzed and criticized rationally. 'Taking the legal concepts used in politics, the idea of cultural mediation is here explored as a means of realising the political project in the field of education." (Workshop NO.4/2000). The first key to launching such a project is to provide information on cultural representations, for example media. Information and advice for teachers is to be taken under consideration as well.

Workshop 11/2000 draws upon the problems existing in the current school situation. The argument of a lack of links between the mother tongue and the target language(s) was brought up – often caused by the fact that teachers are only trained in one foreign language. Another problem is different teaching methods in language lessons, depending on the teacher's training and the teacher's choice of method. Several different approaches to foreign language learning within one classroom might confuse the students. Additionally there are no

classes offered to students for certain languages. Also Michel Candelier lists some problems that were revealed in the Workshop No.1/2000. The participants had to face a lack of material on language awareness in English. This problem might be solved by Hermine Penz, (see 'Language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts' in this paper) who conducted several projects where the students prepared the material themselves for peers learning their mother tongue as a foreign language.

The main aim of developing links between languages and making children aware of their existing knowledge or their lack of such is to enhance their cultural understanding and learning ability.

5. Conclusion

As outlined in this paper, I attempted to incorporate several different approaches to language awareness published by the ECML. All approaches basically aim at creating curiosity about language so that children are keen to learn more about the foreign language and become interested in the perspective of other cultures or ethnic minorities.

I personally found the new approach of developing language awareness through the mediation of literary texts particularly interesting. It describes a dialogue between reader and text. Literary texts contain 'gaps' that need to be filled with the readers prior experience. Meaning is created through the dialogue between reader and text and several different interpretations and emotional responses evolve. Through reading literature the learner becomes aware of his/her own questions concerning language and is provided with several answers within the text, due to the authentic character of literary texts. Authentic texts foster

authentic reactions. Furthermore literature functions as a model for learners and learning a language is more efficient in a context of meaning. To obtain the aim of creating language awareness the use of literary texts has to be accompanied by several activities.

As revealed in Hermine Penz's approach, media can be used as a means for social interaction with native speakers of the foreign language. This interaction can function as a positive influence and increase the willingness of students to engage in activities in the foreign language. As I see it, this approach is an adaptation to our age of technology. Since an increasing number of schools in Austria employ computers in their classrooms, the required devices would already be available.

The second part of this paper dealt with an approach aiming at language awareness as a means to help children cope with the multiethnic and multilingual situation in the classroom. Children experience the role of an 'outsider' when they are encountering a language unknown to them. This experience helps them to understand ethnic minorities. In a practical approach it is essential to reveal prejudices and stereotypes as well as xenophobic attitudes and discuss them rationally. The objectives of this approach are to teach children how to learn a language and to create an understanding for and a positive attitude towards diversity. Our identity is to a certain extent created through language. Thus an awareness of one's own identity and the identity of other people can be gained through language.

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8 Cultural Awareness

BARBARA MAIRITSCH

1. Introduction

In this paper I shall endeavour to discuss the role of cultural awareness in the research of the ECML. Cultural awareness increases and enriches communication with others and adds to the learners' capability to understand themselves as cultural and linguistic beings. Foreign language learning not only contributes to the learners' linguistic and functional capacity but much more so to their social and cultural education and awareness. Discovering the foreign culture is seen by experts working at the ECML as a dialogue and part of a communication process which influences participants in a dialectic interrelationship. As much as learners are influenced by the foreign culture, at the same time they are influencing that culture. Thus culture has to be regarded as a dynamic rather than a static body.

In the last few years a number of workshops on cultural awareness have been held by the ECML. In order to build a bridge between theory and practice the various workshops focus on the theoretical basis of culture, specific principles and practical examples.

In this essay I would like to deal with two very interesting workshops facilitated by the ECML, which are:

1) Workshop No.5/98: *The specification of objectives for learner autonomy and cultural awareness within syllabus development at secondary level* (Malta, 7 – 11 April 1998)
2) Workshop No. 2/2001: *Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in pre- and in-service language teacher training* (Austria, 2 – 7 April 2001)

2. Workshop No. 5/98: *The specification of objectives for learner autonomy and cultural awareness within the syllabus development at secondary level*

In this workshop the workshop participants try to clarify the role of cultural awareness in the syllabus and focus on research in the field of cultural awareness in relation to textbooks, that is to say how to implement cultural awareness in textbooks. It soon becomes apparent that implementing cultural awareness in textbooks appears to be a challenge. The main problem is how to teach pupils an awareness of other cultures which is neither only fact-based nor full of cliches and stereotypes or generalizations. One approach to the issue is to try to transmit cultural awareness in the form of attitudes, value systems, expectations, etc; always in accordance with and drawing conclusions from one's own culture. The aim must be "to give the learner the opportunity to develop cultural knowledge, competence and awareness in such a way that it might lead to a better understanding of the foreign culture, the 'other', as well as of the learner's own culture, the 'self'" (Fenner and Newby 2000:142).

A rationale of cultural awareness can be found in two major publications: "Approaches to Materials Design in European Textbooks: Implementing Principles of Authenticity, Learner Autonomy, Cultural Awareness" (Fenner and Newby, 2000) and "Cultural awareness and language awareness based on dialogic interaction with texts in foreign language learning" (Fenner, 2001). Both works are very fascinating and that's why, in this essay, I predominantly rely on these publications. Furthermore I additionally use for my analysis in this field the intercultural communication textbook "Mirrors and Windows" (Huber-Kriegler et al. 2003).

A very comprehensive and interesting account on the subject is given by Anne-Brit Fenner, who provides a sound theoretical introduction on the topic as well as providing the reader with valuable examples. Therefore I shall mostly refer to her elaborations of the topic.

Anne-Brit Fenner particularly focuses on the role of written texts, as transmitters of culture, and cultural awareness, that is to say how to use written texts, especially pieces of literature, for culture-related activities. To her, cultural awareness is a part of language awareness, and both are regarded as essential aspects of communicative competence and inseparable from each other. A text as a whole is an entity of form and content and carries an expression of culture. She strongly emphasizes that practical work should be based on authentic texts.

Following Byram (2000) she adopts the now common distinction (see Common European Framework 2000) of 3 major areas:

1. 'Knowledge' (savoir)
2. 'Socio-Cultural Competence' (savoir-faire)
3. 'Attitude' (savoir-être)

1. Knowledge

The first term 'Knowledge' (savoir) means that cultural awareness is based on the knowledge of the foreign culture, preferably gained in a wide field of aspects of life in a foreign culture; this includes, traditions, history, literature and politics, as well as the knowledge of one's own culture. However, Fenner stresses that "Culture is more than what is 'out there', it is also what we see what is out there" (Fenner and Newby, 2000:145). This entails that gaining cultural awareness is a two-way process: On the one hand you have to assimilate a large body of information about the foreign culture and on the other you have to put this into relation with your perceptions of your own culture.

A very good example of how a textbook could be based on this concept can be found in the intercultural textbook "Mirrors and Windows. Looking at Cultures - Your own and others". This textbook explores cultural distinctiveness, cultural norms and values. Stereotypes are not excluded but consciously dealt with and analysed. This textbook works on the basis that you first deal with your own culture before turning to the other. Thus the learner is made aware of cultural differences and is prepared to accept them and treat them in a non-judgemental way. I personally appreciated very much that in the textbook this concept is applied to common topics in schoolbooks like 'Food', 'Time', etc.

'Knowledge' also includes a certain amount of factual information, which means that facts must not be excluded and neglected in language teaching as they tended to be in communicative teaching. In this respect I absolutely agree with Anne-Brit Fenner as I consider it problematic to narrow down language teaching solely to communicative topics about everyday life like, for example 'Hobbies', etc. Unless these topics contain a certain amount of cultural information, as exemplified in "Mirrors and Windows," I would prefer topics which provide an overview of cultural aspects and facts.

Concerning what materials to use it is stressed that texts, pictures, photographs, etc should be authentic, since authentic texts have an advantage over specifically constructed texts, as they do not necessarily reflect the foreign culture but are rather aimed at specific needs of foreign language learners.

Furthermore Anne-Brit Fenner strongly proposes the use of literary texts which according to her represent a "personal voice of culture" and "a voice that young people can easily identify with" (Fenner and Newby 2000: 146). She claims that this area of language teaching has been neglected and its importance for linguistic and cultural awareness is underestimated. To her, reading literary texts entails a personal encounter with the foreign culture.

I personally think that this is a very appealing approach and that literary texts are likely to be a good and stimulating way of discovering certain cultural conventions. However, I would rather use literary texts to focus on other aspects of foreign language teaching, as in my opinion learners would tend to focus on the comprehension of the surface content, vocabulary and organisation of the text.

2. Socio-Cultural Competence

The second principle is 'Socio-Cultural Competence' (savoir-faire), which refers to the skills a foreign language learner should acquire in order to cope in the target country; that is to say, how to behave in a foreign culture. Formerly this was transmitted through dialogues with traditional speech patterns in which the learner had to deal with social situations of the target country. Anne-Brit Fenner stresses that these patterns become rather ritualistic and inflexible and don't encourage learners to adapt and act flexibly in real life situations. She favours a more process-oriented interaction and appeals to more individuality-raising approaches. As every act of communication is unique, learners have to be prepared to be able to interact on as many levels as possible.

Another very important aspect is that the learner should become aware of misunderstandings; and aware that they are commonplace in communication processes.

3. Attitude

The third principle is 'Attitude' (savoir-être), which hinges on the idea of developing a better understanding and tolerance towards others. Interaction is a process in which participants have to continually alter and readjust their points of view. It is important to prepare the learners for the fact that they will never be able to understand the foreign language completely and thus shouldn't despair when comprehension problems occur.

In addition emphasis should be placed on ways of dealing with stereotypes by making simplified and stereotyped views apparent. An interesting idea is to use overgeneralizations in exercises in order to make prejudices visible and help to minimize these ideas.

3. Workshop No. 2/01: *Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in pre- and in-service language teacher training*

I consider this workshop to be very interesting and valuable as it is designed to investigate how far English teachers include culture-related activities in their teaching of English as a foreign language. It aims at shedding light on the question why culture-related activities are hardly integrated in the teaching of English. The major reason for this is that teacher training itself lacks in efficient intercultural communication training.

From among the various issues the workshop deals with I want to focus on the following aspects:

1. Definitions of key concepts
2. Culture-related activities in the language classroom: an intercultural study
3. Cultural content in coursebooks

1. Definitions of key concepts

Very important information referring to cultural awareness resulting from this workshop is presented in the definition of the key concepts. There, culture and language are perceived as inseparable. The workshop coordinator gives the following definition: "Cultural awareness can thus be defined as sensitivity to the impact of culturally induced behaviour on language use and communication" (Workshop Report 2/2001: 16). The aspects socio-cultural competence and attitude Anne-Brit Fenner defined, seemingly here are combined into the term intercultural communication, that is to say as an all-encompassing term concerning communication between people from different cultural backgrounds.

2. Culture-related activities in the language classroom: an intercultural study

In contrast to other pieces of research on cultural awareness, this workshop interestingly investigates how teachers of English actually pay attention to prompt learners to develop skills, knowledge, attitudes necessary for the intercultural speaker. In order to examine this, a questionnaire was designed and a survey was carried out.

Among other aspects, it was discovered that most culture-related activities are undertaken in relation to literature, discussions on cultural differences and current events. The somewhat surprising result is that art, songs, videos are hardly used in order to acquaint learners with the foreign culture. Concerning the fact that literature is considered as an important means of undertaking cultural-related activities I think it is interesting to mention that this result does not really correspond to Anne-Brit Fenner's argument that "the literary text has been greatly underestimated in recent foreign language learning." (Fenner and Newby, 2000:146).

It was furthermore discovered that most of the teachers who actually use culture-related activities have experienced a stay abroad and/or cultural awareness or intercultural communication training. That means that the teaching of cultural awareness depends heavily on whether the teacher has had close contact with a foreign culture him/herself, or more importantly, whether he/she has gained knowledge of the subject/matter in teacher training. I personally consider this a very important aspect and totally agree with the fact that developing cultural awareness in classrooms heavily depends on the teacher's experience and training in this area. I also believe that Austrian university education for future teachers lacks significantly in cultural awareness-raising courses and in this respect I consider the pilot model 'Intercultural competence in EFL, BA Seminar Third Year' of the university of Bialystok, Poland, which is exemplified in the workshop, very interesting and anticipating the path of future language teacher training. In these BA courses future teachers are made familiar with aspects of culture and cross-cultural activities.

3. Cultural content in coursebooks

This project also investigated the amount of cultural content in coursebooks. To a certain degree this aspects has already been dealt with in the previous section, so I shall only mention a point that caught my attention. This project points out that the amount of cultural content in coursebooks depends crucially on the culture in question. Whereas in a foreign language course book in French a number of culture-related tasks and aspects can be found, those for the English language seem to be several steps behind. The reasons for this are, for example, that the influence of political correctness leads to a desire not to present British culture as superior or that English as the language used globally is attempted to be presented in a neutral way and as standing above cultural values.

4. Conclusion

When examining the work of the ECML it becomes clear that a lot of effort is placed on promoting the importance of cultural awareness. It is argued that grammar and lexical competences alone will not enable a non-native speaker of English to successfully socialize, negotiate or complain in the foreign language. Besides communicative competence alone will not necessarily help native or non-native speakers of English to communicate with each other.

The approaches in the work of the ECML are various. Therefore it is interesting that the issue of cultural awareness is tackled by encouraging cultural awareness on various levels of language teaching. It needs to be fostered in teacher training, that is to say at the root of the educational process, as well as in language text-books, which means directly affecting the "end-product" the learner.

By and large the publications of the ECML give a very comprehensive, well-elaborated and worthwhile account of the issues.

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9 English across the curriculum

THERESA GRADNITZER

1. Introduction

Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), which is a specific type of bilingual education, is a new approach to teaching a foreign language, which has caused a lot of enthusiasm among experts. Several activities of the ECML have focused on bilingual education in general. Various workshops concerning this topic have taken place since 1995 and in 2000 the ECML also issued a publication on LAC. In order to illustrate the work or the ECML on this topic, I chose to focus on two works. The first of these was the Expert's Résumé *Bilingual Education – Résumé of the work from 1995 – 1998* by Gunther Abuja, which provided a very good overview on the work the ECML had done in the field of bilingual education from 1995 – 1998 as well as a very good introduction to bilingual education in general. The second was the publication by Ewa Kolodziejska and Stuart Simpson *Language across the Curriculum: Network Processing and Material Production in an International Context*. I have also used some quotes from specific workshops as the overall outcomes of the workshops were of importance. These are summarized in the expert's résumé.

2. Bilingual education

Gunther Abuja's Bilingual *Education – Résumé of the work from 1995 – 1998* makes an important contribute to the topic, since it is concerned with the basics of bilingual education. It focuses on the definitions as well as on the work the ECML has done in this field and looks at general aspects and concerns that are important to take into account when concerned with bilingual education. As there is only one publication on Language Across the Curriculum, I found it important to mention this résumé, because as Language Across the Curriculum is a specific form of bilingual education, all these topics are relevant for it. I particularly liked the idea of the expert's résumé because it provides a very good introduction for the reader to a the topic which the ECML has worked on. These résumés are available on the internet and will soon be available in printed form (Newby 2003).

As Abuja states, it is important to recognise different types of bilingual education. The aim of such programmes is enhanced foreign language training in comparison to mainstream education. We can distinguish three different types. Firstly, programmes in which the learners are partly or fully immersed in a foreign language with the aim to achieve an almost native-like language proficiency. This type is usually applied in bi- or multilingual countries or areas (e.g. Canada, Luxemburg, Malta), where the ability to communicate in two or even several different languages is a necessity. Secondly, there are bilingual schools or classes, which are used in monolingual countries and complement formal foreign language instruction by the teaching of many or all school subjects in a foreign language. Here the aim is that students become almost equally proficient in the foreign language as in their respective mother tongue. And finally there are programmes in which the foreign language is used as a medium of instruction alongside the use of the students' mother tongue. Both languages are usually used as classroom languages in different subjects or at different times. This is called Language Across the Curriculum, although as Abuja points out, the target language of these [bilingual] programmes is – for political, economic and social reasons – almost exclusively English.

It is important to differentiate between these programme types when we discuss Language Across the Curriculum. The various forms of LAC represent a fairly new approach to teaching

and differ from the very first programmes, under which multilingual countries have been teaching in many languages for a very long time, e.g. Luxemburg and Malta for over 100 years.

What all these programmes have in common are special strategies and materials for dealing with the following problematic areas:

- Teacher training
- Materials and methodology
- Financial and 'moral' support
- Flexibility of the curriculum.

All these areas are crucial and important. The area focused on in the ECML publication by Ewa Kolodziejska and Stuart Simpson *Language across the Curriculum: Network Processing and Material Production in an International Context* was the second area: teaching materials. This is certainly the area in which they can give most immediate help to 'willing teachers', even though one should not neglect the other areas.

3. Language Across the Curriculum: Network Processing and Material Production in an International Context

The above-mentioned publication is divided into three parts:

- the development and logistics of the network;
- the results of the network co-operation;
- the sample teaching materials

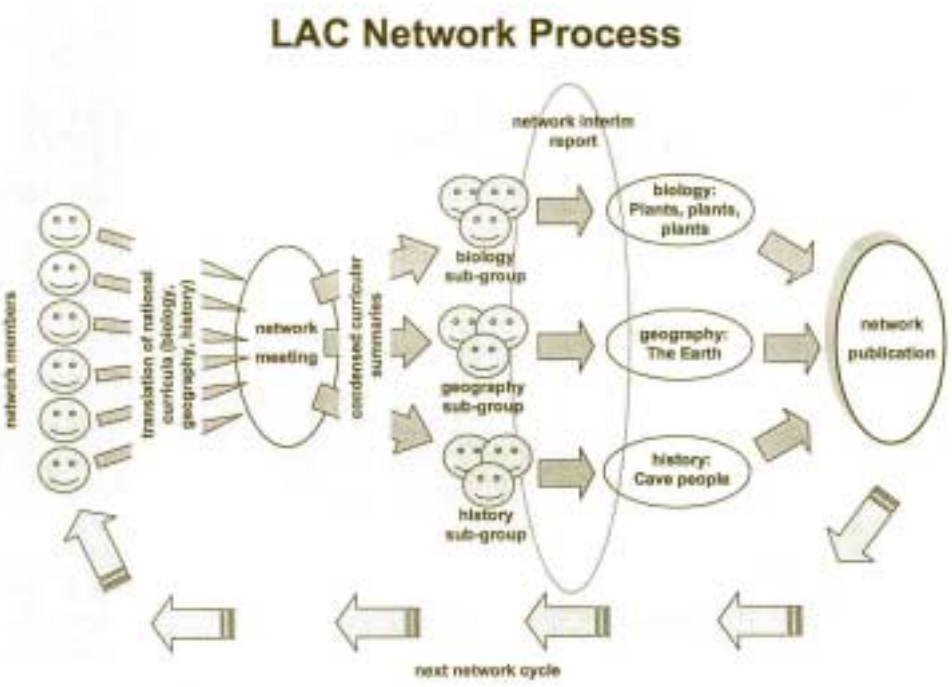
Despite a growing interest in Language Across the Curriculum there is a definite lack of LAC materials and a documentation of specific LAC methodology. This publication was based on the results of the first and second network meetings on Language Across the Curriculum. The first network meeting took place in Vienna from 14 – 16 September 1997 and was financed by the ECML and hosted by the Europe Office of the Vienna Board of Education. The second network meeting took place in Graz from 12 – 15 June 1998 and was financed and hosted by the ECML. The aim of the first meeting was:

> to draw up English summaries of national curricula for the age group 10 – 12 years in three subjects: history, geography and biology. On the basis of these summaries the aim was to identify common curricular areas and to produce exemplary teaching units for the above-mentioned age group and common curricular areas. (Kolodziejska 2000: 22)

In the second network, the same aim was followed but for the subjects maths, art and music. As the experts have a sound knowledge of the theoretical background of language teaching, this teaching material is the link between theory and practice.

The chart below shows how the LAC network process worked. Before the network meeting started the experts were given the task to translate the curricula of their countries into English. Then the experts met up and compared their different curricula and in smaller groups wrote up summaries. Afterwards sub-groups were formed and each sub-group worked on a different subject. Each group tried to find a certain topic that was covered in all the curricula and the experts produced teaching materials for this topic. This publication contains teaching material

for the three subjects: biology, geography and history for students of the age group 10 – 12 years.



LAC Network Process -- Kolodziejska (2000: 24)

Now I want to give one example of the subject biology to give one example of the teaching material and get an idea of the outcome of the network and the teaching material. This is the beginning of Unit 1 on plants.

Sample teaching material – BIOLOGY

Plants, plants, plants

Written by Hetty Mulder, Simona Rosetti, Valentin Moshkov
Illustrated by Timothy Simpson

Unit 1: Plants, plants, plants

In this unit you will learn about:

- the main parts of a plant
- how the parts of a plant help it to grow

1.

How many plants or flowers do you know? Write down their names.

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More than 10 names = you are a PE (Plant Expert)
5 names = you are very good
less than 5 names = keep trying!

Kololodziejska (2000:46)

4. Teaching material and methodology

When developing teaching material, one must also be aware of the needs and the motivations of the students. When learning a first language, people are motivated to learn it so they can

communicate. This is the idea of the approach of teaching a language across the curriculum. Also "using English [or any other foreign language] as a medium to study authentic topics, remains challenging and therefore motivating" (Bierbaumer 1995: 41) for the students. Students learn more easily and are more interested if the topics are of interest for them. Mifsud (1998: 30) states that whatever resources are presented to young learners to use the second language, the needs of the learner determine successful experiences immensely.

One specific question is asked quite often in discussions of LAC: whether using a foreign language as a means of instruction restricts the knowledge in the specific subject taught. Opinions diverge on this point. In a later chapter of this publication, the schools' group considered this question and asked the opinion of 88 teachers. More than 90 % stated that the foreign language hardly, or did not influence the knowledge in the taught subjects at all. I thought this finding quite interesting. Nevertheless, a lot of teachers complain about the problem of teaching content in their subjects when using LAC. But with the help of experts and the development of appropriate teaching material, it may be the case that methodological techniques to reduce the content-language dilemma will be developed. Teaching strategies and methodologies are changing all the time. And because Language Across the Curriculum has not been in use for very long in Europe, it will probably still take a few years to design teaching material which make optimum use of this approach.

5. Conclusion

Because Language Across the Curriculum is a fairly new approach to teaching, teaching material is still needed. It would be very useful if more subjects for different age groups could be added to the teaching material already produced in the network. It would also be good, if teachers would share their material within a country, because then the problem of different curricula would be avoided. The ECML's teaching material is very good and developing more material should be continued and supported by any institution which has the opportunity to do so.

I would also recommend that the ECML's resources should be given more publicity, as there is quite a range of very good material for teachers in the library, which, however, are not used as much as they could be. As mentioned before, there is a great need among teachers for teaching material on Language Across the Curriculum. It requires a lot of work to create one's own material, but this is often necessary. Whilst various countries make use of Language Across the Curriculum, the school textbooks of these countries are not always transferable. That is why I would think it a good idea, if teachers who have already produced some materials would share their material with others. Then experts in the specific subjects as well as in the foreign language should edit these materials.

Language Across the Curriculum is a new approach to language teaching, which seems quite promising but to date not enough research has been carried out. As Abuja states, linguistic research on language acquisition and language learning in the bilingual classroom with a focus on the linguistic outcomes of bilingual programmes is still needed. By developing teaching material, the input is provided, but the outcome remains unclear.

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10 Learner autonomy

BETTINA STEURER

Learner autonomy has been one of the central issues in the work of the European Centre of Modern Languages located in Graz from 1996 onwards, since many workshops have been held on this topic and a series of books has appeared until today. First of all, I was curious to find out why this was the case. To answer this question, one has to mention that the ECML was founded in 1994 as an Enlarged Partial Agreement by the Council of Europe. The main purpose of its activities is "to develop a type of education in Europe which meets the needs of present-day society, and to draw the peoples of Europe closer together by fostering their awareness of a sense of common European identity" (Harris 2001:1). It seems that promoting autonomy through language learning and teaching is *the* answer to the above mentioned aim of the ECML. Industrial societies of today require from their citizens a high degree of flexibility and mobility. Traditional work patterns do not exist anymore and, as a consequence, a static knowledge is no longer sufficient. Therefore, what really is required is the ability to organize one's own further learning in order to be capable to adapt to changing conditions and to interact with different people from different countries. Furthermore, many experts working at the ECML believe that an individualized, learner-centred "autonomous" approach is the most appropriate methodology for intercultural learning. In short, with this new approach the individuality of the learner can be developed on the one hand and a tolerant, multicultural, European society on the other hand. Looking at these arguments, it seems clear why the ECML is so interested in promoting learner autonomy through workshops and research work done in the last couple of years.

The books I have chosen and which are both published by the ECML are: *Approaches to Materials Design in European Textbooks: Implementing Principles of Authenticity, Learner Autonomy, Cultural Awareness* by Anne-Brit Fenner and David Newby (2000) and *Helping Learners learn: Exploring Strategy Instruction in Language Classrooms across Europe* by Vee Harris (2001). They not only seemed most interesting to me, but were also the most recent publications by the ECML on the specific subject matter of learner autonomy. I have decided to leave out the workshop reports, since they did not seem very informative to me. One has to say, that they are basically detailed descriptions of the course of the workshops but, unfortunately, do not contain much valuable information to draw on.

I think it is not necessary to explain the term 'learner autonomy' again, since this has been done in great detail by Christina Schuchlenz in chapter 4. Therefore, I would rather focus on the research done by the ECML on this specific topic. One of the characteristic features of the ECML is that it does not concentrate too much on theoretical definitions but rather on the important question of how theoretical principles of learner autonomy can be implemented in classroom situations. In my opinion this is especially important, since language autonomy is a rather new approach and not much practical information is on the market for a modern thinking teacher.

The first book *Approaches to Materials Design in European Textbooks: Implementing Principles of Authenticity, Learner Autonomy, Cultural Awareness* is written by textbook authors and aims at the specific target group of materials developers and teacher trainers in order to provide impulse concerning what an autonomy-orientated textbook could look like. However, I am convinced that any person (teacher or future teacher) interested in learner autonomy can be recommended to read this book, since it offers many guidelines, checklists and other useful materials and ideas which a teacher could use in her classes. The book, which consist of three main chapters, uses a twofold approach: every chapter includes a

clear-structured and very interesting introductory article about the principal theoretical issues of the subject matter and is followed by textbook examples in order to show how theoretical aspects and principles can be integrated in textbook activities.

The book raises an interesting question in the introductory article about learner autonomy: Can a textbook be used if the learning process varies from one student to another? This question could be answered by the following argument:

> The textbook can provide the learner with models of a variety of learning styles and strategies through diverse tasks and suggestions of how to approach texts and tasks. In this way the textbook can become a tool that the learner can use while trying out different activities, and thus gradually develop his own styles and strategies. (Fenner and Newby 2000: 111)

It is true that a textbook always limits the student's choice in a way but, nevertheless, it can offer a certain range of tasks which help the student to become aware of her own learning process and progress. This book provides valuable textbook examples in reference to the pupils' reflection (about their own choices and learning), objectives and levels (determining their own level, short and long-term objectives, and establishing their own rate of learning), evaluating learning (to monitor their own learning, develop learning strategies and to assess their own learning progress with checklists), learning styles and strategies (to choose and monitor their own learning strategies), materials and classroom activities (to choose content and learning tasks, bring own materials into class, decide on quantity of activities, develop social aspects of learning by group), external resources (to use other resources than textbook and teacher, such as dictionaries, information technology, etc.), and language awareness (to activate already existing knowledge about language before being confronted with new items of language).

In my view, questionnaires and checklists are of high importance in order to help the student to become an autonomous learner. For example, a retrospective checklist at the end of each unit in the textbook (cf. Fenner and Newby 2000:106) can help the pupil not only to become aware of the objectives in the last unit, but also to help the pupil to become aware of her own knowledge and shortcomings in the use of the foreign language. Ideally, the answers form the basis for determining what the next step in her learning process will be. A checklist could also serve the purpose of revision and even as a kind of self-evaluation. On the whole, questionnaires and checklists appeal to the student's metacognitive thinking: the student should become aware that she should learn for herself and not for a mark at the end of the course. In general, it can be argued that "autonomous learning describes a fairly complex process, and one which does not come naturally to the learner. It has to be learnt, at least in a traditional school context, and the textbook can function as a good tool in providing guidelines" (Fenner 2000:79).

Another important point to achieve a shift from the exam-orientated student to a person who learns for her own purpose is the principle of giving the pupil her own freedom of choice concerning material, task and level. This learner-centred aspect, which is also reflected in different textbook examples of the book, leads the pupil out of her -usually- passive consumer role. Being able to choose makes the pupil feel that she is actually the most important person in the learning process. She feels that the teacher cares for her interests and this alone will definitely enhance her motivation. Another important aspect of letting pupils choose is that they will feel more commitment for a classroom activity, since they were not forced to do something but chose a specific task themselves. Similarly, providing different levels of a certain task could also lead to an increased level of motivation. It might be a challenge for the student to aim at a more difficult level in order to feel proud and gain more satisfaction.

The book also stresses the important idea that the teacher's traditional role will have to change. She will not spoon-feed her pupils with knowledge anymore but will have the role of assistant, guide and most valuable resource in the learning process that goes on in each pupil. By helping the students to find out about their own learning style (for example with the help of plenary discussions and questionnaires that are handed in to the teacher), the teacher has the possibility to learn more about her students, their interests and needs and, consequentely, can create a more interesting class reflecting the needs and interest of her pupils.

Another point which I especially liked in this book is that grammar should be taught inductively using various principles of learner autonomy. Instead of presenting isolated grammar-input to the students, the teacher should structure a kind of discovery process by providing examples of language for analysis and by setting specific tasks and questions. The student should be encouraged to activate her already existing knowledge of language before she learns something new. It is not only more motivating to find out the answer to a question by yourself, but it also will be stored in the mind for much longer, since the new item is put in association with knowledge already in the mind. In my opinion inductive teaching should not only be used in grammar teaching but in any kind of teaching. The traditional way of presenting isolated knowledge to the pupil without making her want to know it, is not interesting and therefore the new item will be soon forgotten.

The other interesting book *Helping Learners Learn: Exploring Strategy Instruction in Language Classrooms across Europe* is written by teachers for the specific target group of teacher trainers and teachers. Again, it seems to me that this book is of interest for any person in the professional field of teaching languages, since it provides many insights and practical, concrete advice about teaching learning strategies. The book is intended to be a practical handbook and the reader is invited to jump from one chapter to another according to her own personal interest.

The principal purpose of this book is to encourage teachers to teach learning strategies in the classroom and to provide at the same time a clear guidance on how to set about teaching them. The book consists mainly of various case studies in different contexts (secondary school context, university context) and reveals the results and practical experiences of these action research projects.

In my opinion it is very useful to give a so-called "cycle of strategy instruction" at the beginning of the book, which summarizes not only the "golden rules" in the project of strategy instruction, but also gives a clear guideline of the different steps and in which order they should be performed. Furthermore, the book offers – in the appendix and also within various chapters - a great number of practical checklists of all different learning strategies, such as, strategies on reading, writing, listening, speaking, memorising vocabulary, memorising grammar rules, checking written work, and on metacognitive strategies. All these checklists are written in user-friendly terms and could be easily copied by the reader and handed out in her own language classes.

I especially liked the fact that the case studies are described in great detail and, what is more important, in a very honest way. This means that teachers not only admit their difficulties, but also their failures and how they sometimes had to change their approach in order to achieve better results. It is true that a book cannot save you from all possible risks, but the guidelines given in this book and the "lessons to be learned" help and motivate a teacher a lot. The book stresses the idea that it may be difficult to teach learning strategies, especially if the teacher has never been instructed to use them herself. On the whole, the book puts great emphasis on the fact that it is worth trying, since teaching learning strategies is the key to autonomous learning.

Another important aspect of the book is that the voices of both teachers and learners are taken into consideration. The remark of one pupil (average attainer) shows how important it is to talk about individually preferred learning strategies in plenary discussions or group

work. “I will try mind images because this seems very strange to me but Dani [a high attainer] has been so successful with it.” (Harris 2001:77) This quotation goes in line with the fact that low attainers are more willing to use new strategies, whereas high attainers - who use various strategies mostly unconsciously - very often consider them a waste of time, since they believe they do well enough without them.

The book *Helping Learners Learn* leaves no doubt that learning strategies not only save time but also make learning more interesting and, consequently, increase the level of motivation in the classroom. In traditional classes pupils are – usually - only told which tasks they have to perform but never how they could tackle them. The remark of the following pupil shows her relief after having been instructed in learning strategies: “No one had shown me before how to do what there is to do, think of ways to do it – the best or quickest way. And super – you really showed us how to do it, not just the usual ‘You do this and that’. ” (Harris 2001:112) This idea of motivation is also expressed by Graham, who is quoted in Harris’ book as following: “If pupils are helped to notice a link between the strategies they have employed and the resulting outcome, their sense of control over their learning could be enhanced and a powerful source of motivation harnessed” (Harris 2001:98).

This all sounds extremely good but, nevertheless, many teachers feel worried about teaching learning strategies, since it seems impossible for them to fit strategy instruction into an already overcrowded scheme of work. It is true that teaching strategies is time-consuming at the beginning (in terms of time needed for class preparation and also in terms of class time) but it is important to emphasize that in the long run it saves time, since the pupils will learn in a more efficient way. Furthermore, advice is given not to teach learning strategies separately, but to integrate and practice them in each normal lesson for about five to ten minutes. This is also important, because the student needs continual and extensive training if using learning strategies is to become a sort of natural behaviour for her.

It might be tempting for the teacher to use the traditional top-down method, instead of the more difficult and challenging inductive teaching method or to spend less time on explaining one particular task, instead of teaching strategies which would help the student to tackle *any* task. In the end it all comes down to one moral question which all teachers have to ask themselves: Do I want good exam results at the end of the semester without much effort (by both teacher and student, but at the cost that everything will be soon forgotten) or do I want to help the individual to become aware of her own learning style, needs and interests, which in turn will enable the student to organize her own life-long learning? Since all knowledge which can be possibly taught at school and university is not sufficient for life and, furthermore, is generally doomed to be forgotten within short time, it seems much more intelligent to me to provide learners with the tools and motivation necessary to study anything which happens to interest them. The future classroom will be characterized by an important shift in teaching methodology: Not the question ‘how to teach?’ will be of importance, but ‘how to learn?’. What is expressed by the following quotation is definitely true: “I don’t remember what I was taught, I only remember what I learned.”

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Part 3: Research at the Austrian Centre of Competence in Modern Languages (ÖSpK)

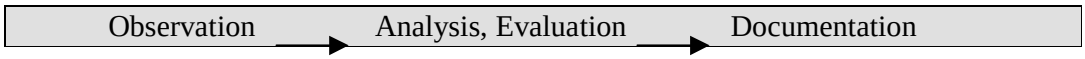
11 About the ÖSpK

MARTIN HANAK-HAMMERL

Evolving from the Centre for School Development, the Austrian Centre of Competence in Modern Languages, or ACCML (Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum, ÖSpK), has its seat in Graz. It is a department of the Centre for School Development, and funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Founded as an institution to facilitate innovative approaches to language learning, the ÖSpK functions as a mediator between theory and practice on a national level.

The work of the ÖSpK can basically be divided into three fields.[1] One main aspect is the co-operation with international organisations and institutions, including various boards of the European Union and the Council of Europe. International trends are closely followed, analysed, evaluated and documented.

International Trends



Secondly, the ÖSpK tries to implement these international trends by national and regional projects. Recent projects have included the implementation of teaching English across the curriculum, early language learning, and the development of a Language Portfolio for Austria. The third aspect of their work is the dissemination of information. The ÖSpK promotes networking and helps to carry out projects by publishing their findings, in print as well as online.

NOTES

[1] Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum. http://www.sprachen.ac.at/oespkinfo.htm [12 Jan 2003].

12 Cultural awareness

CHARLOTTE FINK

Based mainly on materials produced by the “Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum” (“Austrian Center of Competence in Modern Languages”), this chapter focuses on the topic of cultural awareness, emphasizing both the relationship between language and cultural awareness, as well as on the importance of teaching cultural competence in schools, and finally presenting projects and concepts by the ÖSpK concerning cultural awareness as well as cultural education.

1. The relationship between language and cultural awareness

The starting point for research on cultural awareness is the assumption or belief that language teaching does not equal teaching a language only, but also involves cultural, political, economical, and societal aspects of the country or countries whose language one wants to learn. As Martin J. Gannon points out in *Understanding Global Cultures*: “[...] it is not surprising that culture is important when individuals must communicate directly” and also that “knowing a country’s language [...] is no guarantee of understanding its cultural mindset” (2001: 18). That gives support to the fact that even a high level of fluency, say for example in English, can exist without a high level of cultural understanding. The cultural mindset, as it is called here, refers to what Kroeber and Kluckhohn named the culturally based patterns of and for behavior whose core is tradition, i.e. tradition-related ideas and values (cf. 1952: 181). To realize these cultural patterns and behave and act accordingly to them is the essence of cultural awareness and intercultural competence.

Communicative competence is considered essential in concepts of social as well as intercultural competence because it includes "the awareness of communicative processes and the ability to understand and make understood informational messages" (Müller 1995: 46). In other words communicative competence, which is obviously linked closely to the concept of language itself, enables someone to realize communication processes and also transmit them to others, which is considered a core skill concerning cultural competence, too. Language, as our main communication tool, and language awareness therefore play an important role in the concept of cultural awareness.

According to Michael Byram, when it comes to foreign language teaching, it is important to use both the students’ first and second language because it is necessary that students are able to understand the concepts of the other culture presented. Therefore, he says, the use of the mother tongue in language teaching can indeed support the development of an understanding of the other language, culture, and of language awareness as such (cf. 1995: 94). A high level of fluency in the foreign language should be used as a means of understanding the other language’s and cultural basis, which again refers to the communication processes and interactions lying underneath what we call culture.

2. The importance of teaching cultural competence in schools

Teaching cultural awareness and learning requires different elements and strategies to do so. It clearly is more than simply telling students of Italian for example that Rome is a big city, wine is what Italians like most, and the Italian opera is something known all over the world. It includes supporting the development of a social and cultural identity on the one hand, and fostering intercultural competence on the other, the latter referring to the fact that both students and teachers are supposed to learn how to deal with social and intercultural situations, and how to communicate verbally as well as how to interpret non-verbal signs of

speakers of another language. In order to be actually able to do that, cultural awareness and subsequently intercultural competence is needed. So, achieving inter- and multicultural competence is both a teaching and learning goal.

But what does intercultural competence actually refer to and what does it imply? It embodies the ability to be able to transcend the cultural and social system of one's culture in order to realize the rules of social interactions there, but also to do so with any other culture (cf. Müller 1995: 36). The ability to be able to realize these different cultural patterns requires cultural awareness; and as I have already said, to behave and act accordingly to them is the essence of social and intercultural competence, the latter being linked to the cultural patterns of others.

Another definition of (inter)cultural competence is given by Riall Nolan in the first chapter of *Communicating and adapting across Cultures*. Like Gannon, he points out the importance of a cultural mindset:

> "The ability to function in another culture doesn't just require knowledge, but the development of a *cross-cultural mindset*. A cross-cultural mindset helps you look behind facts and figures to uncover meanings and patterns, learn in unfamiliar surroundings, and gain entrance into the cultural world of others." (1999: 2)
>
> and further:
>
> "Rather than memorizing the details of culture, acquiring skill at entering new cultural contexts and determining what is appropriate within them gives us an ability to manage difference that we can use everywhere, over and over again, as we move through our changing world." (1999: 11)

So in order to prepare children and teenagers for a life in multicultural pluralism, (inter)cultural competence needs to be taught by means of (inter)cultural education.

It should be added that the terms cultural competence and inter- or multicultural competence are often used to refer to the same skills, yet the word intercultural explicitly attaches importance to the interaction between cultures, whereas the term multicultural simply refers to the existence of more than one culture and further the skill to realize the different cultural patterns of these cultures.

The development of a cultural identity is based on the idea of an individual's social identity in the sense that the individual is supposed to be able to deal with his or her environment in a differentiated way (Delanoy 1995: 21), i.e. the individual needs to become aware of the influence that his or her environment, including family, peer groups and the like, has on him or herself. This individual awareness is related to social competence, because as I have stated the individual communicates with others on different communication levels, and being able to do that implies social competence. Communication always includes, or else requires, among other skills, communicative competence (Krappmann 1988). In order to foster the individual identity and support the development of social interaction skills, communicative competence needs to be supported first. And since communicative competence, in relation to language, is transmitted in language classes, language education always includes more than the mere transmission of language awareness, but also of social competence and last but not least cultural competence, too, which is the basis for teaching and learning intercultural competence.

3. The ÖSPK Project "Sprach- und Kulturerziehung" ("Language and Cultural Education")

The project entitled "Sprach- und Kulturerziehung", also referred to as "SKE", derives from the fact that in a diverse society like ours a greater social as well as cultural and language competence is needed). It focuses on the societal expectations of language and cultural competence and also what language and cultural education is for, giving goals and methods to help schools to integrate and deal with teaching cultural awareness.

SKE centers on the question how cultural awareness and intercultural competence can be taught in Austrian classrooms. In class, cultural aspects of the culture of the target language should be covered and explained and questions like "What does the country look like?", "What are people there like, and what do they do?" be answered. Obviously, the difficulty in teaching and learning the culture of the target language is the difficulty of defining and explaining what culture is and what it includes. Yet a discussion and precise definition and explanation of the term culture is not what the ÖSPK aims for; rather they take the existence of multicultural societies as well as their patterns of values, beliefs, and (role) expectations as the realistic starting point of their discussion and work.

Basically, SKE is based on the following two premises: First of all, it must be stated that societal expectations of language and cultural competence are growing. This is related to the phenomenon that our society is becoming more and more diverse (what I have referred to earlier as multicultural pluralism), and as different cultures and subcultures evolve in one society, greater social and cultural and language competence is needed. Concerning our life in a multicultural society, it quickly becomes obvious that we are living in a world of difference: "Globalization, as we're finding out, does not at all imply homogenization; quite the reverse. It means that we now have to deal with difference directly, instead of at a distance" (Nolan 1999: 1).

In the process of becoming aware of cultural differences and similarities, which is the basis for intercultural education, role expectations change in so far as intercultural awareness and competence is required, and this intercultural competence must always be seen in connection with language awareness and language competence. The more diverse a society becomes, the more important is language competence in order to be actually able to articulate oneself because one can no longer count on other members of society having the same background of language and culture (cf. Huber 1996: 113). What schools are expected to do now is to teach cultural competence and cultural awareness in connection with language competence and language awareness.

The second premise is to answer the question of what language and cultural education is ultimately for, i.e. to show goals and methods of cultural education in schools because the crucial question of how to actually teach cultural competence and cultural awareness arises. Concerning the question how schools might integrate language and cultural education in class, SKE shows four approaches to it (cf. Huber 1996: 127ff).

First of all they point out the importance of generally integrating language into the concept of teaching, i.e. not to teach languages individually, but to integrate language in general into the concept of teaching. "Englisch als Arbeitssprache" (English across the curriculum) is a typical example already practiced in some schools. Another is the concept of teaching in "tandems", namely teaching a subject (like science or history) in German together with a second teacher whose native tongue is another.

Second, there is a call for an integration of culture and teaching cultural awareness as a part of every class, not just the language classes, also referred to as "Kulturelles Lernen". SKE suggests to extend the principle of "Interkulturelles Lernen" so that it becomes a central

thread that everybody feels tied to, and to offer teachers help and give them advice and guidance how to integrate cultural education in their own classes. The latter is linked to the fact that many teachers, even those teaching a language, either do not feel able or just don't know how to explicitly integrate the concept of cultural awareness in their teaching, and often lack the competence to do so. This leads to the fact that the education of teachers themselves plays an essential role in the issue of cultural education in schools. The aim is to make teachers realize the requirements for a multilingual environment and the chances that their students have when dealing with it, too. Within the framework of their own education, teachers therefore especially need to concentrate on their own perception of language and language awareness, to take part in the creation of teaching materials, to develop an understanding of culture and have encounters with other cultures, to focus on the requirements that evolve in multicultural contexts, and furthermore call into question the traditional role model of the teacher (cf. Huber 1996: 133). Obviously, societal and social expectations of teachers are growing, too.

The third approach towards integrating cultural awareness in schools is related to an integration of language and cultural education into the general curriculum, namely to see SKE as a part of both language classes and science classes. In science classes students should also be able to utter subject-related ideas or positions in another language that is not their mother tongue, which means that teaching in a foreign or the students' second language is meant to help students to acquire subject-related knowledge in language other than German.

Integrating language and cultural education into the regular curriculum, however, must not be seen only as teaching and supporting the development of language competence and cultural awareness. In other words, these skills must not be taught as a mere part of language and cultural education classes. More specifically, there must be an additional focus not only on general language-related skills but on learning strategies that help students acquire other languages more easily, as well as on general social skills that reflect social patterns and rules. Consequently, SKE not only points out the importance of the concept of social competence but also enlarges it.

4. Conclusion

Clearly, cultural diversity and its successful integration in the educational system requires great flexibility and the questioning of traditional teaching methods, as well as a closer collaboration of theory and practice. Therefore, the analysis of existing teaching materials, a change in (teaching) didactics, and a change in the role of the teacher are three key elements for the integration and practice of cultural education in schools. Cultural education, however, is not to be seen as a part of language classes, but teaching language competence in relation to cultural awareness and (inter)cultural competence has the aim of preparing students to deal with multicultural pluralism. Communicative competence as part of language competence must always be seen within different cultural frameworks and contexts.

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13 English across the curriculum

NINA LEITNER

1. Language across the curriculum- a project by the ÖSPK

The project LAC was started in 1992 by the Zentrum für Schulentwicklung III (ÖSpK). The principal objective of this project was to develop teaching methodologies that would help learners to improve their knowledge of and communicative competence in the foreign language and so prepare them for today's professional and social challenges. Teachers and students can use a foreign language as a tool in subject specific lessons. That is to say in subjects like geography, history or physics, a foreign language can function as an instrument to treat subject specific contents.

By introducing LAC in Austrian schools, the ÖSPK wanted to achieve the following goals:

- An increase of the language competence within different school types and in different ways, also under subject specific circumstances
- An increase of the intellectual competence and the social awareness
- To raise the student's awareness of the benefits of a foreign language as it is used in subject specific contents, which consequently raises the motivation for foreign language learning.
- To provide a better preparation for the workplace as a result of the contact with subject specific language.

Throughout the development phase, the project group who was in charge of this project-closely observed international developments in the area and established links with the Council of Europe and the European Union.

In LAC, language is used as a tool that can be employed to teach subject specific content. By temporarily merging content teaching and language learning, LAC seeks to equip learners with the skills necessary to successfully cope with a variety of workplace related settings in a foreign language. It has be designed as a very flexible system, which can be used for different target groups in different school types.

There are four ways of using LAC in the classroom

1. The first is an annual program, which means that one or more subjects are taught in a foreign language all through the year. Here, especially geography and history are used.
2. The second option is to teach certain projects in English in the form of short intensive courses, lasting for one or two weeks.
3. Another option is to teach EAC in "Unverbindliche Übungen" or "Wahlpflichtfach"
4. The fourth option is to teach subject specific skills which is mainly used in the upper levels because a fairly high cognitive and a high language competence is necessary For instance, in geography students are taught to read maps and map signs, to interpret satellite photos, to describe the environment, to forecast and to predict.

2. LAC in Austrian schools

According to a study by the ÖSPK in 1996/97, LAC is quite commonly used in Austrian schools. In fact, 14,5% of all Austrian schools teach LAC in one of the forms mentioned above. Out of these, 26,8% of the AHS and 31,9% of BHS use it and even more schools planned to introduce it in the near future.

Schools which do not teach LAC yet have of course some reservations about this form of teaching. Most of these reservations come from the secondary modern schools, because they believe that the capability of their students is not high enough for LAC. Furthermore, they believe that the system of dividing students into groups, according to their learning ability might hinder the use of LAC in secondary modern schools. Another problem of HS is that there are quite a lot of students whose mother tongue is not German, which can also be a reason for not introducing LAC.

Other schools do not teach LAC because they are of the opinion that it does not make sense without a native speaker. That is only true to some extent, because although a native speaker can be very helpful in an LAC classroom he/she is no guarantee for an efficient LAC class. Another reason why LAC is not taught is the insufficient qualification of the teachers.

All schools which used LAC evaluated it as very positive for both students and teachers. The project is known by half of all Austrian schools. What is very significant here is the large number of BHS using LAC. In this type of school, foreign language learning did not play such an important role in the past, but this is now changing. The use of a foreign language in other subjects corresponds perfectly with the needs of these students: to have a good foreign language education beside a subject specific education.

Moreover, the use of LAC depends on the size of the schools. It is used more frequently in larger schools. The number of foreign language teachers also plays an important role. It is mainly English which is used as a foreign language in LAC classes but there are also a few schools which use French or Italian across the curriculum. In most of the AHS and BHS, LAC is taught over a longer period, mostly for one year. In secondary modern schools, LAC is mostly used in short intensive courses, which last a few weeks. The subjects that are taught in a foreign language differ, but very often geography and history are used.

3. LAC & new learning strategies

As LAC is a very innovative approach to language learning, different forms of methodology are used. The teaching of language competence and the contents of a subject go together.

First of all, different forms of new learning strategies have to be clarified. One of this strategies is self- directed learning, which means to open the classroom in terms of the interests of the students in order to make them more independent. Another strategy is learning by doing, which focuses on teaching the students that first hand experiences are far more important than second hand experiences. Other strategies are also project work and free activities. In this paper, the term self- directed learning is used for all different forms of new learning strategies.

When teaching EAC in self directed learning, teachers have to take into account the individual interests of the students and let them decide what they want to do/learn. In contrast to conventional teaching methods, which are very much teacher centred, new learning strategies focus much more on the students. They have the chance to choose from a variety of materials they can discover and explore and so take the responsibility for their learning process themselves. Consequently, teachers are no longer the only centre of knowledge. The focus of the teacher’s work is here more on preparation, planning, and organisation of the learning process. There are different methods to integrate self- directed learning in the LAC classroom. It can, on the one hand, be used instead of conventional teaching methods and on the other hand, be integrated in them in order to provide more freedom in the learning process for the students.

The advantages of the combination of LAC and self- directed learning are an increase of the language competence and the motivation of the students. That is to say that when a subject is taught in a foreign language, it increases the language competence anyway, but

when students take the responsibility for their personal learning process themselves, they become more motivated for learning a specific subject matter in a foreign language. For instance, they can choose in which order they want to do their exercises and sometimes even the topic, they want to work on. So, they find out about their individual learning speed, their difficulties and their strengths. Another advantage of this combination is that it prepares the students perfectly for the workplace. LAC increases the receptive and productive foreign language competencies and self directed learning promotes above all the social competencies and the capability to work in a team, which is becoming more and more important nowadays.

The main disadvantage of the combination of LAC and self directed learning is an increase of organisational work for the teacher, so teachers should be aware of this. The other problems that might show up can all, according to the ÖSPK, be solved quite easily. For instance, if not enough room is available for self directed learning, which obviously needs a lot of room, teachers could provide a perfect learning circle in one room and achieve the same effect- to provide a variety of different exercises and media. Also other problems, such as time or assessment can be solved with the right management. (cf. transl. Serviceheft 5.)

4. The advantages of LAC

- It allows students to improve the language competence while at the same time enabling them to acquire specialised terminology
- It makes it easier for learners to acknowledge the immediate relevance of foreign language skills which increases the motivation for learning a foreign language
- It can be used to introduce subject specific English which helps to prepare the learner for the workplace.

5. The role of the ÖSpK

The ÖSPK has set up the project LAC in Austria, which was implemented in certain steps. First of all, it analysed the curriculum in order to find out where it is possible to teach LAC. That helps to decide what content areas are suitable for teaching in a foreign language. Moreover, the ÖSpK defined the term LAC in combination with Austrian schools. The most important achievement of the ÖSpK in this field is the design of teaching material for LAC, which is very useful especially for teachers who have never taught their subject in a foreign language and are not sure how to start. Of course this also helps teachers who already have experience with LAC because they can first of all share their experiences and also look for further hints in the teaching materials. Some of these teaching materials have also been designed based on new learning strategies, which is extremely useful for teachers because it reflects a modern approach.

Furthermore, the ÖSpK works on projects dealing with the use of LAC in different school types. It investigates how LAC can be used in different forms according to the type of school at which it is taught. Very recently the ÖSpK has also dealt with the question of how LAC can be used for very young learners in primary schools.

The ÖSPK has intensive contact to bilingual schools in Austria: the GIPS in Graz, the LISA in Linz and a bilingual school in Vienna. It also woks together with other European countrries in the field of bilingual education. Moreover, the ÖSPK provides in service teacher education together with the *Pädagogisches Institut* and the *Pädagogische Akademie* in Austria. The projects of the ÖSPK are documented on the web- page and the institute is planning to open a LAC portal in the internet.

6. Conclusion

In recent years, the teaching of language across the curriculum is increasing in Austrian schools. As it is a very innovative and also popular approach to foreign language learning, it

is often considered as an excellent way of teaching nowadays. That can certainly be the case, if it is done in the right way. The ÖSPK contributes a lot to make LAC teaching in Austria easier for teachers and more efficient for students. What is particularly interesting here is the combination of LAC and new learning strategies which makes foreign language teaching even more efficient, leaves the students enough freedom to decide about their personal learning processes, and prepares them perfectly for their future workplace.
All in all, LAC is a tool for students to improve their knowledge of and communicative competence in a foreign language and the ÖSPK shows teachers how to handle it.

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14 The European Language Portfolio as an Example of Implementing Learner Autonomy in the Classroom

ULLA MEISTER

1. Introduction

The European Language Portfolio is aimed at providing documentation, evaluation and planning of a student's experience with languages in and out of school on a common Europe-wide basis. It is a folder which contains forms in which pupils note their progress. The main feature of the Portfolio, besides its Europe-wide implementation, is that it belongs to the pupils and must not be misused by teachers for evaluating students. It is a widely accepted means of implementing learner autonomy, a desire to show learners how much progress they actually make, to make them aware of their daily exposure to language and to give them helpful advice.

2. History of the European Language Portfolio

Portfolios as a way of promoting learner autonomy have existed for years. The idea of introducing the European Language Portfolio, a portfolio with a standard Europe-wide background and recognition, was first raised at an international symposium of the Council of Europe in Rüschlikon, Switzerland, in 1991 (cf. Matzer 2001: 6; Thürmann 2001: 20). However, it was to take another six years before the actual work of the European Centre of Modern Languages and a panel of experts was to commence. Between 1998 and 2000, experts from fifteen European countries[1] created first drafts which were also tested and evaluated during this period. Based on the European Framework of Reference (see below), each country was asked to develop its own national version of the Portfolio (cf. Keiper 2002; Matzer 2001: 6).

3. What is the European Language Portfolio?

The European Language Portfolio is a folder which consists of three different parts. It is structured so as to give pupils an overview of their personal achievements. It also makes it easy for outsiders such as teachers or job interviewers to find the information they need (cf. Keiper 2002).

3.1 The Language Biography

The first part of each Portfolio, regardless of country of origin, deals with the leaner's history of language learning, as well as useful advice on how to improve their learning strategies. Pupils are asked to judge their own abilities and exposure to language in general within the Common European Framework of Reference (see 5.1 below). The criteria for this assessment can easily be understood by children. For instance, the learners may be asked whether they have got foreign relatives and if so, which language they speak, how easy it is to understand them or whether the learner's own competence in this language is sufficient to communicate with them (cf. Keiper 2002). Furthermore, the learners are asked to set themselves goals and to check whether they are achieved (cf. Thürmann 2001: 17).

3.2 The Language Passport

The Language Passport is the sole part of the Portfolio which is standard across Europe and is thus internationally comparable. It is a brief summary of the learner's abilities and successfully completed courses, be it at school, at private language schools, etc. It is essential that the assessment of these competences always refers to the Common European Framework of Reference (cf. Keiper 2002; Thürmann 2001: 17).

3.3 The Dossier

The Dossier is a report of the learner's achievements and the results of their work. Pupils are asked to file certificates or written work here which they themselves find representative of their progress and abilities. For instance, it may also contain video or audio tapes, confirmations of participation in exchange programmes, etc. (cf. Keiper 2002; Krieger 2001: 14; Thürmann 2001: 2).

4. National Models of the European Language Portfolio

The Council of Europe expects countries to develop their own model Portfolio. This is due to the great diversity we find among European educational systems. There will be only one official Portfolio per country, and it needs to be approved by the Council of Europe[2]. In Austria, for instance, several unofficial versions are being developed (for example by the Stadtschulrat Wien), however, only the one being developed by the ÖSpK will have official status (cf. Keiper 2002).

The Portfolio's unified and unifying character, despite national variations, is guaranteed through the introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Foreign Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

4.1 The Common European Framework of Reference

In order for the Portfolio to be internationally comparable, the Council of Europe have drawn up a common framework of reference. This framework of reference is divided into several "Levels of Comptence", allowing assessment according to Europe-wide rules, thus making it easy to ascertain the level the pupil is at.

The Common European Framework of Reference has the following aims:

(1) to promote and to facilitate cooperation among educational institutions in different countries
(2) to provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications
(3) to assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educationals administrators to situate and coordinate their efforts. (Thürmann 2001: 5)

The levels of competence within the Common European Framework of Reference can be roughly demonstarated as shown below (cf. Thürmann 2001: 5):

A = Basic User → A1 – Breakthrough → A2 – Waystage →
B = Independent User → B1 – Threshold → B2 – Vantage →
C = Proficient User → C1 – Effectiveness → C2 – Mastery

The different stages, A1 to C2, are all specified according to certain criteria dependent on the learner's reading ability, his or her language production capabilities, listening and comprehension skills, etc.

5. The Aims of the Portfolio

By choosing the name "European Language Portfolio", the Council wanted to emphasize the three main focuses of the project: the "European Dimension", the "Dimension of Multilingualism" and the "Dimension of Learner Autonomy" (Thürmann 2001: 1). The main aim behind its introduction is to develop children's sensitivity to the learning progress and of language in general by fostering Learner Autonomy. The Portfolio serves the learner as a means of "assessing their communicative abilities and their learning success" (trans. from Thürmann 2001: 3); and to accompany them throughout their lives. It belongs to the pupils, and is not designed as a help for teachers, who are merely acting as mediators, to monitor students. The teachers' job will be to encourage pupils to make use of the portfolio, to guide them and offer advice. After the learners have left school, they will be encouraged to keep their portfolio up to date, leading to the idea of "*lifelong language learning*" (cf. Krieger 2001: 16).

5.1 Benefits for Learners

The Portfolio's concept is based on the assumption that children are usually unaware of language in their daily life. Learning a foreign language usually takes place in the classroom, and for many pupils it is seen as more of a duty than a challenge or a benefit. Tests and exams often discourage children, as they stress their mistakes and weaknesses rather than focussing on their achievements.

The Portfolio, on the other hand, tries to focus on the 'can-do' aspect (cf. Krieger 2001: 15). The children are encouraged to assess themselves[3], to look at their progress objectively, and to compare their current achievements to previous ones. It offers clear guidelines and check points so that even young children can see how much they already know in the target language (cf. Thürmann 2001: 4). For instance, some of the pupils might not even be aware of how many words they know in Italian if they have spent several summer holidays in Italy. Also this exposure to language outside the classroom, not usually a part of curricula, is included in the Portfolio.

Another important issue addressed by the Portfolio is that of *Cultural Awareness*, which is of increasing importance in today's world. Becoming aware of one's own cultural background, one's value system and so on is the basis for exploring the customs and ways of life of other cultures. Language is one of the key elements of each country's identity, offering students direct access to foreign cultures.

5.2 Benefits for Teachers and Employers

Even though the European Language Portfolio is primarily for the learner themselves, there are also benefits for people interested in the learner's abilities. Teachers are asked not to misuse the Portfolio for assessing or marking students, as this would convert the Portfolio's purpose from encouraging students to monitoring them. Students should actively build up their Portfolio and not be passively assessed by it through teachers. Yet the Portfolio could assist the teacher's preparation of lessons. For instance, if a teacher, when looking at the pupils' Portfolios, finds that the majority are not very confident in speaking the target language, the teacher can react to this lack of confidence by putting more emphasis on talking in the classroom (cf. Keiper 2002).

Another aim of the Portfolio is to simplify the process of finding qualified staff for employers. Here, it is also important to have a common European system, as the demand for employees capable of using several languages as well as an interest in working abroad are increasing. In these cases, the European Language Portfolio will provide detailed information about the applicant's experience with languages. Here, the Common European Framework of Reference will ensure that High Schools can confirm that its graduates will be competent in, for instance, English up to level C1 and Spanish up to B1. Thus, a graduate, no matter of which nationality, can choose to apply for a job where C1 English and B1 Spanish is required.

On the other hand, were an employer seeking a candidate with C2 Italian, he can be sure of the candidate's competence.

6. The European Language Portfolio in Austria

During the Language Portfolio's trial phase from 1998–2000, Wernfried Krieger tested the Language Portfolio for Berufsbildende Schulen in Vienna. However, the ÖSpK only got the go ahead in March 2001 from the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture to create a European Language Portfolio for a broader target group. In February 2002 the project group at the ÖSpK was founded and has been working on creating a Portfolio ever since. The first printed version will be available as of the second week of January 2003.

The trial phase for the ÖSpK-Portfolio for learners aged ten to fifteen[4] will commence in March 2003 and will proceed until summer 2004. During this period, the Portfolio will not only be tested but also evaluated. The pilot teachers were carefully chosen, they were given handbooks and attended tailor-made seminars. They will be accompanied by the ÖSpK throughout the trial phase in order to guarantee the proper application of the Portfolio. Also, the ÖSpK want to see where the Portfolio's weaknesses lie and how pupils, teachers and parents react to the Portfolio. As of September/October 2004, the ÖSpK wants to introduce the Portfolio in all schools (cf. Keiper 2002).

7. Conclusion

The European Language Portfolio appears to be a valuable, far-reaching project for a Europe that is becoming ever more networked. It unites both learner autonomy as well as cultural and language awareness in an exciting experiment, which puts 'life-long learning' into practice. The pilot teachers are certainly highly motivated and see the Portfolio as a chance of guiding learners to more autonomy. Whether it will be as enthusiastically received and implemented on a broader scale remains to be seen.

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NOTES

[1] Among others: Austria, Germany, Finland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom.

[2] The validated Portfolios will be recognizable by the logo of the European Council which will be imprinted on the front of the folder.

[3] According to pilot teachers implementing portfolios in Elementary Schools, about 80% of the children assess themselves correctly (Felberbauer 2001: 20).

[4] Portfolios for other age groups are to follow.

Part 4: From Theory to Practice: the Schools Group

15 The Organisation of the Questionnaire

GUDRUN FRANK

The schools group consisted of Petra Deutsch, Iris Portschy, Pia Maria Fauland, Ingeborg Nawratil and myself. It was our aim to find out about the interface between the theories which the Theory, ECML and ÖSPK groups examined and the extent to which these theories were put into practice in schools. We therefore developed a questionnaire[1] on foreign language teaching and learning, which we divided into four sections:

1. Language Awareness/Cultural Awareness
2. Learner Autonomy
3. Theories of Learning and Teaching
4. Language across the curriculum (LAC).

We took this questionnaire to 17 schools. 14 of these schools were in Graz: BRG Kepler, BRG Petersgasse, Akademisches Gymnasium, Bischöfliches Gymnasium, Gymnsium der Ursulinen, BG/BRG Dreihackengasse, BG/BRG Kirchengasse, BG/BRG Klusemann, BG/BRG Lichtenfels, BG/BRG Oeversee, BG/BRG Seebacher, BG/BRG Wiku, HAK Grazbachgasse and HAK Monsberger. The others were in Gleisdorf: BG/BRG Gleisdorf and two schools in Burgenland: BG/BRG Eisenstadt and Gymnasium Wolfgarten.

By the end of our survey we had found 88 teachers who were willing to answer our questionnaire. All these teachers teach at grammar schools and their pupils are between the ages of 10 and 19. Whilst most of them have been working in this job for many years, others started relatively recently.

The questions of our survey were developed in arrangement with members of the other three groups. Whilst carrying out our survey we realised that some of the questions were not as explicitly formulated as they should have been. For example questions number 1.2 or 2.5.

1.1 How much do you focus on the following aspects of culture in your lessons?

2.5 Do you discuss "Learning to learn" with your students?

Some of the teachers interviewed told us that the answers to these questions depended on which classes they referred to. They said they do focus on e.g. stereotypes in the 3rd class but not in the 8th class. On the other hand, they do not focus on politics in the 3rd class but they do in the 8th class. Therefore we should have made a distinction between Unterstufe (lower intermediate) and Oberstufe (upper intermediate).

Another question which should also have been formulated differently was number 4.4.

4.4 **How familiar are you with the publications and activities of the Österreichisches Sprachen-Kompetenz-Zentrum (früher Zentrum für Schulentwicklung) and the ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages)?**

We should have given two questions instead of one since some teachers knew the ECML and some the ÖSPK but only a few were very familiar with both institutions.

Nevertheless, the results of our questionnaire, which are presented in the following contributions to this paper, give a good overview of the relevant aspects of the teaching situation in Austria.

NOTES

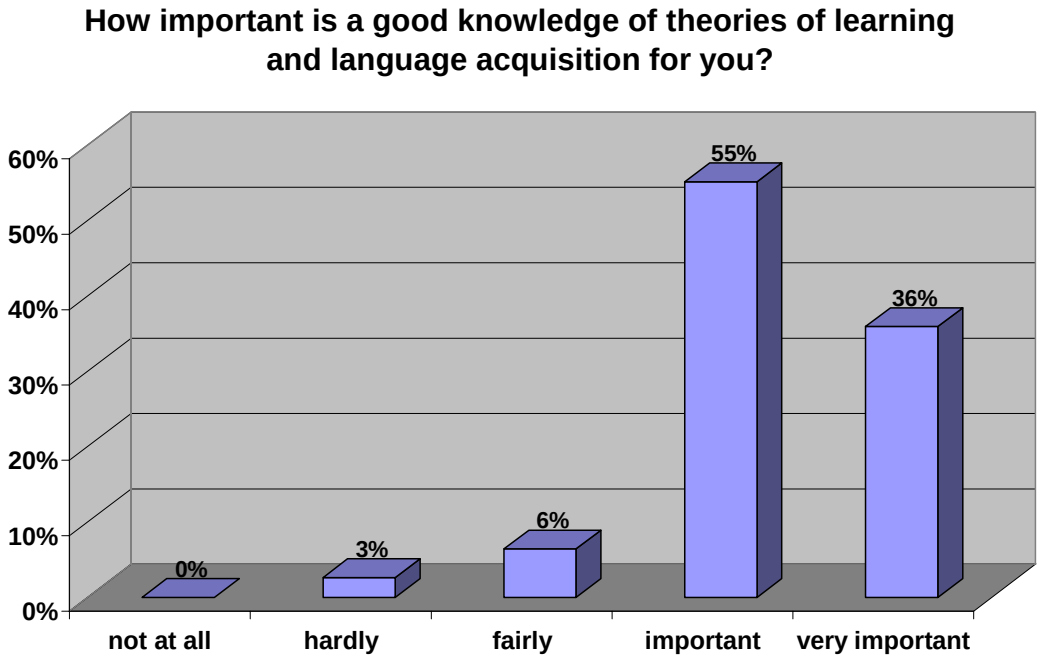
[1] A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A

16 The Impact of Theories of Learning and Teaching on Austrian Schools

PIA M. FAULAND

1. How important are theories of learning and teaching for Austrian teachers?

A good knowledge of theories of learning and teaching seems to be high priority for Austrian



teachers. Of the 88 teachers who filled in our questionnaire, 91% think that it is important or very important for teachers to have a sound knowledge of different theories of learning and teaching (cf. answers given in 3.1). The answers given in 3.5 show that the focus of attention in this connection is not at all exclusively on the latest and most innovative theories. Only one third of the people interviewed state that they keep themselves informed about and/or take part in workshops on current learning and teaching theories quite a lot (28,2%) or very much (5,1%). What is worth mentioning here is the fact that within the group of teachers with less work experience (working as teachers for less than 10 years), almost 60% ticked off that they keep themselves informed quite a lot. On the other hand, the majority of the people asked who have been working as teachers for more than 20 years answered that they only keep themselves informed a little. The question whether this has to do with a lack of interest, time or opportunity, however, has to remain unanswered.

Concerning the use of literature on learning and teaching theories we can state that the majority of the people asked (58 out of 88) sometimes consult books, articles, websites, et cetera. The 9% who hardly ever and the 3,8% who never consult specialised literature are both teachers with a lot and teachers with little work experience.

2. Teachers on different Learning and Teaching Theories

In 3.2 teachers were asked how well informed they were about seven different theories of learning and teaching. Generally speaking, we can state that the answers about each theory often do not indicate a trend in one direction or the other. For instance when we look at the section concerning teachers' answers about the **Naturalistic Approach**, we find that the answers given vary greatly: 28% of the people asked do not know anything about this approach at all; while 12% are hardly and 38,7% a little informed about it, 14,7% know quite a lot and 6,7% very much about the Naturalistic Approach. As this approach is not very familiar to most of the people asked, it also does not influence their teaching strongly: not even one of the 88 teachers who filled in our questionnaire is influenced by this approach very much and only 5,6% are quite a lot influenced by the Naturalistic Approach.

The **Communicative Approach** is well-known by a very high percentage of teachers: 50% of the people asked state that they know quite a lot and 29,5% that they know very much about this approach. Although it is only a very small percentage (2,6%), it is still surprising that there are teachers who have *never* heard about this approach as the Communicative Approach has been the predominant approach in Austrian schools since the 1980s. Those who know a lot about the Communicative Approach, however, are to a great extent (39,2% very much; 44,6% quite a lot) influenced by it as well. This was also confirmed in conversations we had with several teachers: most of them explained that in their opinion acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language (so-called natural communication) in which speakers are not concerned with the correctness and form of their utterances but with the message they are conveying and understanding. Moreover, most teachers try to focus on topics their students are interested in and which lead to lively conversations and discussions.

Traditional Methods are familiar to the biggest percentage of the people asked: all in all 91% state that they are quite a lot or very much informed about Traditional Methods. What is surprising is the fact that on the one hand teachers do inform themselves about current teaching and learning theories (cf. answers given in 3.5) but on the other hand traditional methods (class teaching, "chalk and talk") still influence their teaching to a great extent (62,4% are influenced by traditional methods quite a lot or very much).

The **Cognitive Approach** is not very familiar to most of the people asked. What is worth mentioning here is that the answers given in 3.2 correspond approximately with the answers given in 3.3. To put it another way we can say that almost as many teachers (33,3%) ticked off that they know a little about the Cognitive Approach as answered that they are a little influenced by it (35,1%); while 37,7% know quite a lot about this approach, approximately the same percentage (35,1%) are quite a lot influenced by it.

Learning by doing is a method which encourages students to actively acquire knowledge. This approach is not only known by many teachers (22,8% know a little, 39,2% quite a lot and 34,2% very much about it), but also applied frequently. 43,4% of the people asked answered that they are influenced by Learning by doing quite a lot and 28,9% answered that it influences their teaching very much. In several conversations we discovered that Learning by doing is a relatively "young" approach in Austrian schools. For many years most of the teachers applied traditional methods in their lessons. In the last few years, however, it has become popular to give pupils more autonomy and encourage them to actively participate in class. Furthermore, many teachers say that they have realised that Learning by doing gives them the chance to find out relatively easily whether the pupils have understood the material or not.

Student Centred Approaches most strongly influence the teaching in Austrian grammar schools and are familiar to the biggest percentage of teachers: while almost 60% know quite a lot or very much about Student Centred Approaches, 63,5% of the people asked are influenced by them and try to give the student tasks which require their active participation. This is a trend which will certainly (and hopefully) continue in the future. Many

teachers told us that they do not so much see themselves as directors but as advisers who help pupils to find ways to effectively acquire knowledge and even more important to know how and where they can get information.

Learner Autonomy is also quite familiar to the people asked but does not influence their teaching very strongly: of the 4,1% who know hardly anything about this approach, the 32,4% who know a little, the 41,9% who know quite a lot and the 21,6% who know very much about this approach, 2,6% are not at all, 9,2% hardly, 35,5% a little, 42,1% quite a lot and 10,5% very much influenced by it. However, especially younger teachers told us that they do not see the whole class as a homogenous group of teenagers but they consider each boy and girl as an individual and thus think that learner autonomy gives each pupil the chance to realise their individuality.

3. Teachers about learning foreign languages

In 3.6 we asked teachers at what age they think people are best at learning a foreign language in language courses (and not in a natural acquisition situation). This issue has already often been raised and debated and not even linguists have come to an agreement yet. The answers the people we were given also vary greatly: 24,5% want foreign language teaching to start at kindergarten, 22,4% think that pupils should not have to learn a foreign language before primary school, 44,9% believe that 10-14 year olds and 8,2% that 15-18 year olds are best at learning a foreign language in language courses.

It is very interesting that the teachers who think that very small children (attending kindergarten) are best at learning a foreign language are predominately teachers who have been doing their jobs for more than 20 years. On the other hand, younger teachers (who have been working for less than 10 years) most often decided for 10-14 year olds or 15-18 year olds. Moreover, many teachers stated that they believe that if the teacher is using the right method, people at every age can successfully learn foreign languages.

4. Closing Words

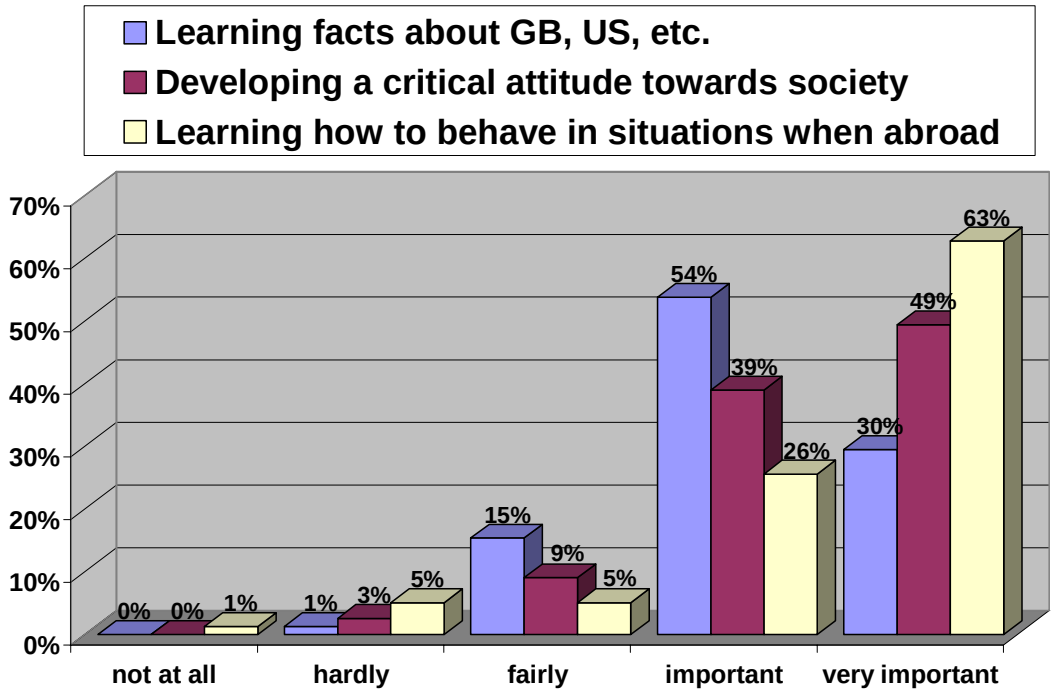
Summing up we can state that the findings of our questionnaire show that theories of learning and teaching have a great impact on foreign language teaching in Austrian schools. Most teachers are not exclusively influenced by one outstanding or characteristic approach, however, but their lessons contain different elements of several approaches.

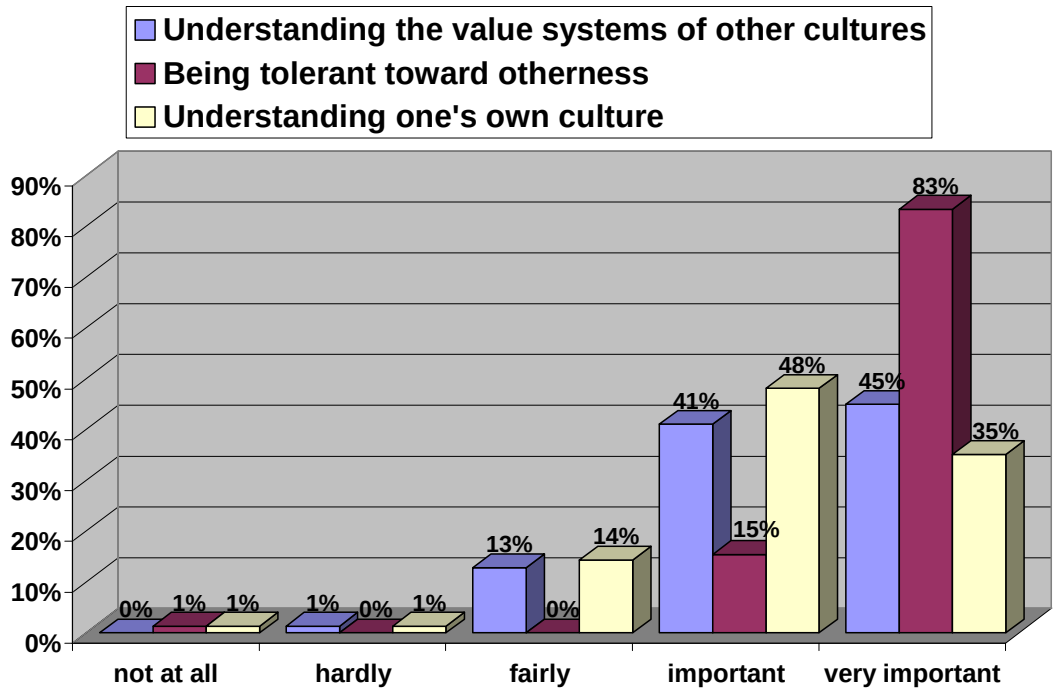
17 Analysis of the Questionnaire: Questions on Cultural Awareness

PETRA DEUTSCH

1.2 How important are the following aims of teaching "Landeskunde"?

	not at all	hardly	fairly	important	very important
Learning facts about Great Britain, US, etc	**0,0**	**1,3**	**15,4**	**53,8**	**29,5**
Understanding one's own culture	**1,3**	**1,3**	**14,3**	**48,1**	**35,1**
Understanding the value systems of other cultures	**0,0**	**1,3**	**12,8**	**41,0**	**44,9**
Developing a critical attitude towards society	**0,0**	**2,6**	**9,1**	**39,0**	**49,4**
Being tolerant toward otherness	**1,3**	**0,0**	**0,0**	**15,4**	**83,3**
Learning how to behave in situations when abroad	**1,3**	**5,1**	**5,1**	**25,6**	**62,8**





The purpose of this first question was to examine why teachers thought it important to teach this subject. The answers to the first part of the questionnaire on cultural awareness show a relatively homogeneous picture of the teaching situation in Austria. The main aims show a clear tendency towards seeing 'Landeskunde' (culture) in broadly humanistic terms.

Imparting facts about the country of the target language (e.g. about history or geography) still ranks quite high in the opinions of many teachers (83 percent of those interviewed think that learning facts about foreign countries is "important" or "very important") but humanistic aims exceed this factual information distinctly:

88 percent of the teachers think that "Developing a critical attitude towards society" is "important" or "very important". This compares with 89 percent for the aim "Learning how to behave in situations when abroad"; 91 percent for "Understanding the value systems of other cultures" and the aim that ranks highest in the minds of teachers is "Being tolerant toward otherness" reaching 99 percent.

I found it surprising that "Understanding one's own culture" ranks quite high, too, with 83 percent of the teachers saying it is an "important" or "very important" aim in the teaching of a foreign language.

1.3 How much do you focus on the following aspects of culture in your lessons?

	not at all	hardly	sometimes	quite a lot	very often
History	**1,3**	**8,9**	**55,7**	**20,3**	**13,9**
Geography	**0,0**	**15,4**	**42,3**	**28,2**	**14,1**
Politics	**0,0**	**6,3**	**45,0**	**33,8**	**15,0**
Racial Minorities	**1,3**	**1,3**	**27,8**	**50,6**	**19,0**
Youth culture	**0,0**	**0,0**	**32,9**	**39,2**	**27,8**
Customs	**0,0**	**3,8**	**36,3**	**35,0**	**25,0**
Stereotypes	**0,0**	**9,0**	**38,5**	**37,2**	**15,4**
Social expectations	**1,4**	**5,4**	**44,6**	**35,1**	**13,5**
Arts (literature, film)	**0,0**	**10,3**	**30,8**	**46,2**	**12,8**

The outcome of the second question shows a slight mismatch compared to what one would expect having read the answers in question number one. The question is “How much do you focus on the following aspects of culture in your lessons?”

For history, geography and politics approximately half of the teachers say that they treat this part of “Landeskunde” only “sometimes” whereas 83 percent claimed before that this is an important aim in teaching.

The topics that ranked highest were “Racial minorities” which received the answer “quite a lot” or “very often” by 70 percent of those interviewed, “Youth culture” by 67 percent, “Customs” by 60 percent and “Literature” by 59 percent. “Stereotypes” (53 percent) and “Social expectations” (49 percent) which would lead into the direction of cultural awareness and social criticism are lower than one would expect. Maybe there is a gap between idealism and reality.

1.4 How often do you use the following material for teaching about other cultures?

	not at all	hardly	sometimes	quite a lot	very often
Textbook	**2,6**	**6,4**	**14,1**	**42,3**	**34,6**
Internet	**10,0**	**16,3**	**41,3**	**21,3**	**11,3**
Magazines and newspapers	**0,0**	**1,3**	**14,1**	**66,7**	**17,9**
Radio and TV	**3,8**	**16,3**	**55,0**	**25,0**	**0,0**
Videos	**1,3**	**11,4**	**55,7**	**27,8**	**3,8**
Literature (novels,...)	**5,1**	**8,9**	**39,2**	**36,7**	**10,1**

The last question was “How often do you use the following material for teaching about other cultures?”

Many teachers still seem to rely on the textbook as the main source for preparing their lessons (77 percent use the textbook “quite a lot” or “very often”). 85 percent say they use magazines and newspapers a lot and 47 percent read literature with their students.
Sources that are not so frequently used are the internet (only 33 percent of the teachers use it often), videos (32 percent) and radio and TV (25 percent).

So to sum it up one could say that in the minds of the teachers a lot has changed in the last few years. Foreign language teaching is no longer concerned with “Landeskunde” as a vehicle for teaching geography or history but it has broadened its view to a wide range of topics that have a common interest: the human being as a member of the society and the culture he or she lives in.

18 Language across the curriculum (LAC) / Fremdsprachen im Fachunterricht

INGEBORG NAWRATIL

4.1 Is LAC used in your school?

yes	no
69.5 %	**30.5 %**

69.5 % of the teachers asked stated that LAC was used in their school. However, these statistics are not necessarily completely reliable since there were some teachers who did not in fact know that LAC was used in their schools. Another complicating factor was that some interviewees continued to answer all the questions on LAC despite the fact that they had been asked to do so only if they had given a positive answer to the first question. On the other hand, there were teachers who did not answer any of the questions of section 4 at all. As all of these aspects might have had an influence on this percentage, this result has to be seen in relative terms.

4.2 How is LAC used in your school?

This question focussed on three types of LAC: individual subjects taught in the 'Unterstufe' (lower secondary); subjects taught in the 'Oberstufe' (upper secondary); LAC (the German term EAA – 'Englisch als Arbeitssprache' is usually used).

According to the questionnaire LAC is used in the schools of those interviewed as follows:

	in English	in another language
Several classes of the Unterstufe have certain subjects... [1]	**82.4 %**	**17.6%**

	in English	in another language
Several classes of the Oberstufe have certain subjects...	**97.1 %**	**2.9 %**

	in English	in another language
AC/EAA is used in projects with teachers of other subjects (fächerübergreifend)	**93.1 %**	**6.9 %**

Interestingly enough, the percentages are very high, something we did not expect as we did not distribute our questionnaire in schools that specialize in bilingual education (e.g. the Graz International Bilingual School - GIBS).

4.3 Do you sometimes teach your second subject in English (e.g. Geography - topic Australia)?

never	hardly ever	sometimes	often	almost always
23.8 %	**9.5 %**	**33.3 %**	**16.7 %**	**16.7 %**

Two problems occurred which make it necessary to see these findings in relative terms: First, the questions can only be answered if the respondent is an English teacher (and we asked teachers of other languages as well!). Secondly, whether they can answer this question, depends on their second subject. Teachers of other languages are not likely to teach in English in Austrian schools. Despite of all this, it is interesting to see that at least a third out of the people asked, sometimes teach their second subject in English, a sixth often and another sixth almost always. That means that out of 88 teachers interviewed 76.2 % make use of LAC.

4.4 How familiar are you with the publications and activities of the ÖSPK and the ECML?

not at all	hardly	fairly	well informed	very well inf.
28 %	**24 %**	**30 %**	**14 %**	**4 %**

Of the teachers asked 28 % indicated that they do not know anything at all about the activities and publications of the ÖSPK and the ECML. In addition, more than half stated that they are hardly familiar with these institutions (24 %) or know about them only fairly well (30 %). Although it would have been interesting to ask this question for each institution separately, what we can conclude from this is that there seems to be a need for an increase of information.

4.5 To what extent does LAC increase the language competence of your pupils?

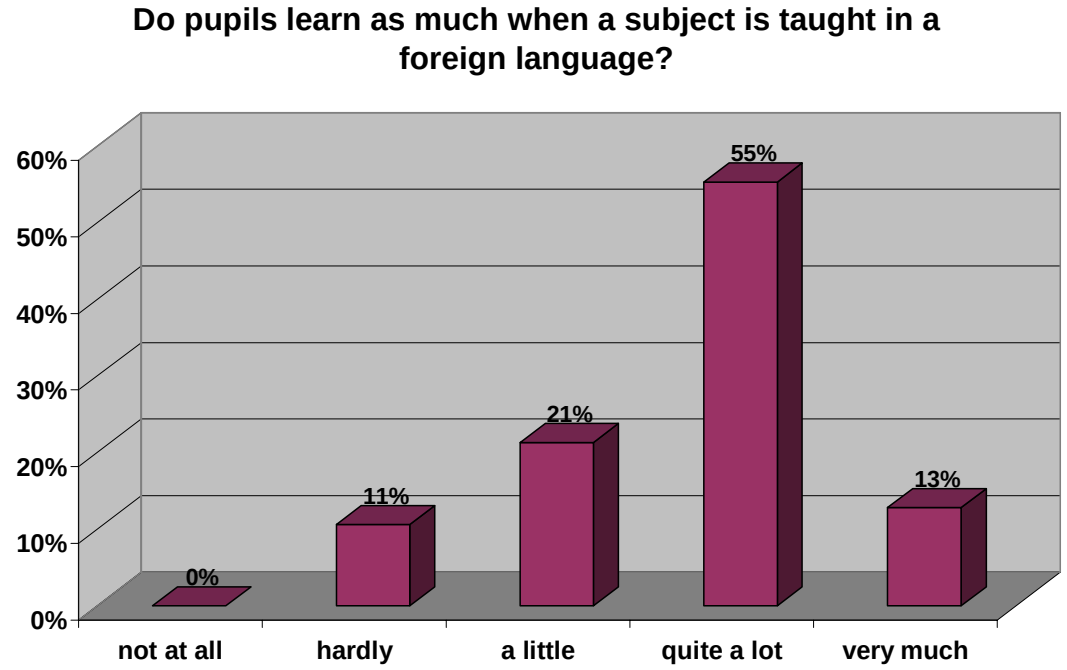
not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
0 %	**1.8 %**	**23.6 %**	**50.9 %**	**23.6 %**

The percentages show that teachers who work with LAC seem to be convinced of the use of what they are doing. 74.5 % consider LAC as an important factor in improving students' language competence, and another 23.6 % think that there is at least a small influence.

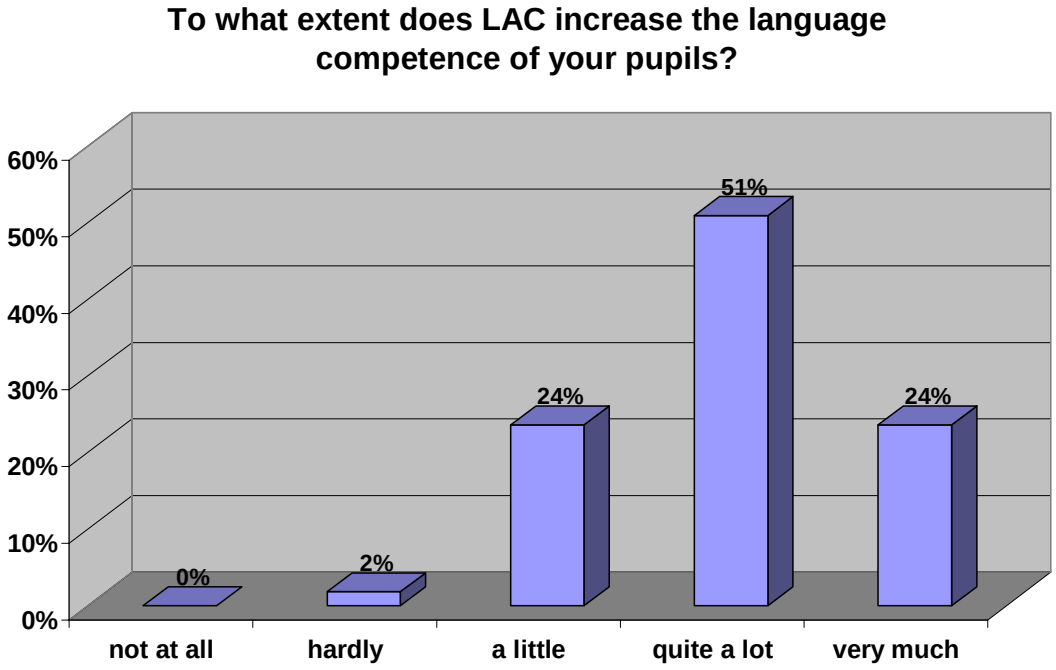
4.6 To what extent does LAC influence the contents you teach to your pupils?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
4.8 %	**9.5 %**	**35.7 %**	**45.2 %**	**4.8 %**

More than 85 % of the teachers interviewed thought that there is an influence, whereas only 9.5 % thought that there is hardly any influence and 4.8 that there is no influence at all.



In order to interpret this result, it is important to mention that two problems occurred concerning this question. Firstly, this question is directed at the general impressions teachers have about the influence that LAC has on their teaching, which makes it very difficult to answer as teachers are required to make a generalization about all their pupils. Teachers did not seem to know what to make of this question. This is what several additional comments of interviewees which accompanied the question showed. Another problem is that the result does



not tell us whether this influence is seen as a positive or a negative aspect.

4.7 Do you think that your pupils learn as much when a subject is taught in a foreign language as they would when it was taught in their mother tongue?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
0 %	**10.6 %**	**21.3 %**	**55.3 %**	**12.8 %**

More than 60 % of the respondents seemed to be very content with LAC, 21.3 % agree at least a little with the statement that their pupils would learn as much if it were taught in their mother tongue. Only 10.6 % thought that pupils hardly benefit from LAC, and no one thought that this is not the case at all!

NOTES

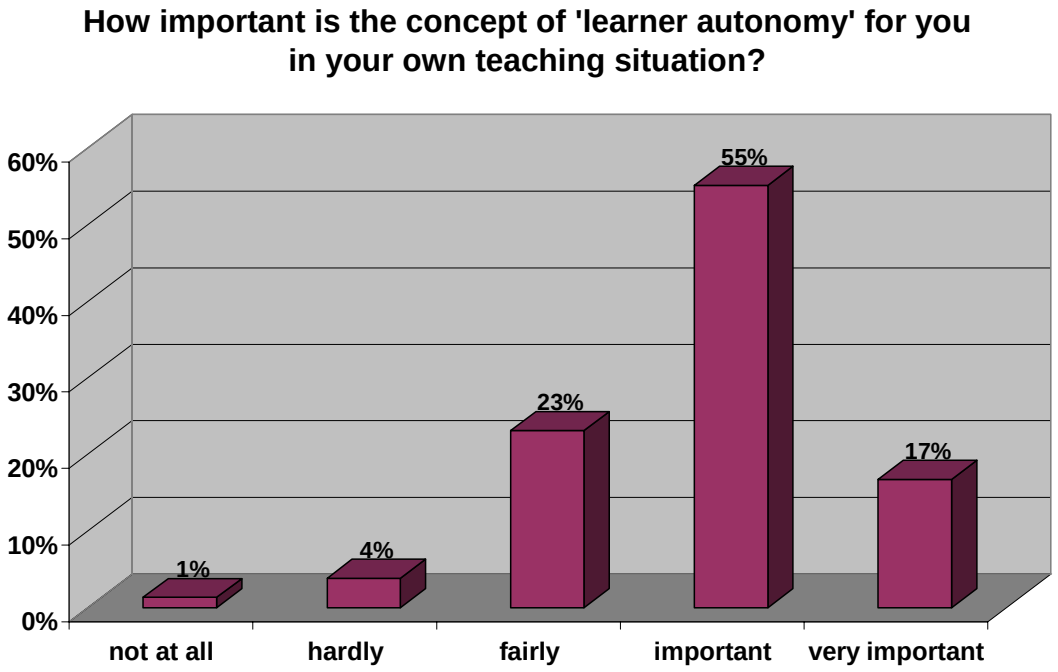
[1] Number of teachers asked 75, as 13 interviewees worked at a school without Unterstufe (Handelsakademie 10; Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium 3).

19 Evaluation of the Learner Autonomy Section

IRIS PORTSCHY

2.1 How important is the concept of 'learner autonomy' for you in your own teaching situation?

not at all	hardly	fairly	important	very important
1,3	**3,8**	**23,1**	**55,1**	**16,7**



The first question was concerned with how teachers view the concept of learner autonomy, which in modern language teaching has become very important. Although this concept is relatively new, 55,1% of the teachers who were asked think that it is important, and if those who said that it is very important are added, the percentage is extremely high, at about 72%. By contrast, only 1,3% believe that it is not important at all.

2.2 Do you allow students to be involved in choosing materials, topics, activities and forms of teaching?

not at all	hardly	sometimes	quite a lot	very often
0,0	**5,3**	**32,9**	**50,0**	**11,8**

Evaluating this question, I was very surprised that so many teachers let their students choose their own materials. Language teachers today no longer seem to be like the authoritarian figures of old who decided themselves what to do with the students in their language lessons. In my view, this high percentage of teachers - quite a lot = 50% - who allow their students to choose the activities, topics etc. shows that the concept of learner autonomy seems to be of importance in modern language teaching. The smallest number concerning this question is 5,3%. These are the teachers who involve their students hardly at all when it comes to

deciding on different forms of teaching. Although we did not ask the teachers explicitly, it seems that younger students are allowed to choose less than older ones. In Austrian schools, so-called "Wahlpflichtfächer" (optional subjects) are available for older students, and in these they can choose most of the topics.

2.3 According to your experience, do you think there is a relation between the students' responsibility for their own learning and their marks at school?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
0,0	**0,0**	**21,3**	**53,3**	**25,3**

More than half of the teachers we interviewed (53,3%) thought that there is a (positive) relation between the students' responsibility for their own learning and their marks, whereas nobody believes that there is no or hardly any relation between these two. So this result shows clearly that students are considered to be more successful in school if they have more responsibility for their learning.

2.4 How often do you use "Offenes Lernen" in your language lessons?

never	hardly ever	sometimes	often	almost always
5,1	**21,8**	**43,6**	**29,5**	**0,0**

43,6% of the teachers we asked use "Offenes Lernen" (self-directed learning) sometimes in their language lessons. I think this number is quite high, because the use of this approach needs a lot of preparation beforehand. There is a clear trend towards this approach because altogether it is used by 95% of the teachers and only 5% said that they have never used it.

2.5 Do you discuss "Learning to learn" with your students?

never	hardly ever	sometimes	often	almost always
0,0	**9,0**	**51,3**	**35,9**	**3,8**

In the opinion of most teachers who were asked (51,3%), "Learning to learn" is important and they inform their students at least sometimes about it. Although it is good that this percentage is relatively high, students could and should be informed even more about this topic, because it is really important for their success in school.

2.6 To what extent do you encourage your students to evaluate their own progress in learning (in addition to your evaluation)?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
2,6	**10,3**	**19,2**	**57,7**	**10,3**

According to this survey, 98% of the teachers encourage their students to evaluate their progress in learning, and only 2,6% do not do it at all. We did not ask them how they do it although this would also be of interest. Do they just ask their students what they think will be their mark for a semester, or do they encourage them to keep their own learning portfolios? This question shows a wide gap: the percentage of those teachers who encourage their

students very much is the same as the number of teachers who hardly encourage their students at all: 10,3%.

2.7 Do you make use of learning portfolios with your students?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
20,3	**22,8**	**35,4**	**20,3**	**1,3**

A very small number of teachers (1,3%) make very much use of portfolios in their language lessons, but 20,3% use it quite a lot. 35,4% work with portfolios at least a little, but a relatively high percentage (20,3%) do not make use of them.

In my opinion the gap between teachers who use learning portfolios very much and those who do not use portfolios at all is so large because in Austria there is still a problem of definition concerning what a learning portfolio actually is. This will only change when the first official portfolio is presented.

Appendix A: Questionnaire on Foreign Language Teaching

Personal details	
Working as a teacher (in years)	
What subject(s) do you teach?	

1. Language Awareness/ Cultural Awareness

1.1 How important are the following aims of teaching "Landeskunde"?

	not at all	hardly	fairly	important	very important
Learning facts about Great Britain, US, etc					
Understanding one's own culture					
Understanding the value systems of other cultures					
Developing a critical attitude towards society					
Being tolerant towards otherness					
Learning how to behave in situations when abroad					

1.2 How much do you focus on the following aspects of culture in your lessons?

	not at all	hardly	sometimes	quite a lot	very often
History					
Geography					
Politics					
Racial Minorities					
Youth culture					
Customs					
Stereotypes					
Social expectations					
Arts (literature, film)					

1.3 How often do you use the following material for teaching about other cultures?

	not at all	hardly	sometimes	quite a lot	very often
Textbook					
Internet					
Magazines and newspapers					
Radio and TV					
Videos					
Literature (novels,...)					

2. Learner Autonomy

2.1 How important is the concept of 'learner autonomy' for you in your own teaching situation?

not at all	hardly	fairly	important	very important

2.2 Do you allow students to be involved in choosing materials, topics, activities and forms of teaching?

not at all	hardly	sometimes	quite a lot	very often

2.3 According to your experience, do you think there is a relation between the students' responsibility for their own learning and their marks at school?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much

2.4 How often do you use "Offenes Lernen" in your language lessons?

never	hardly ever	sometimes	often	almost always

2.5 Do you discuss "learning to learn" with your students?

never	hardly ever	sometimes	often	almost always

2.6 To what extent do you encourage your students to evaluate their own progress in learning (in addition to your evaluation)?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much

2.7 Do you make use of learning portfolios with your students?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much

3. Theories of Learning and Teaching

3.1 In your opinion, how important is that a teacher has a good knowledge of theories of learning and language acquisition?

not at all	hardly	fairly	important	very important

3.2 How well are you informed about the following theories of learning and teaching?

	not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
Communicative Approach					
'Traditional' Methods					
Naturalistic Approach					
Cognitive Approach					
Learning by doing					
Student-centred Approaches					
Learner autonomy					

3.3 How much do the following theories influence your teaching?

	not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much
Communicative Approach					
'Traditional' Methods					
Naturalistic Approach					
Cognitive Approach					
Learning by doing					
Student-centred Approaches					
Learner autonomy					

3.4 How often do you read/consult literature on learning and teaching theories?

never	hardly ever	sometimes	often	very often

3.5 To what extent do you keep yourself informed about and/or take part in workshops on current learning and teaching theories?

Not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much

3.6 At what age do you think people are best at learning a foreign language (in language courses, not in a natural acquisition situation)?

kindergarten	primary school	10-14 years	15-18 years	adults

4. Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) / Englisch als Arbeitssprache

4.1 Is LAC/EAA used in your school?

yes	no

If **yes**, please, go on with the following questions!

4.2 How is LAC/EAA used in your school?

	in English	in another language
Several classes of the Unterstufe have certain subjects...		

	in English	in another language
Several classes of the Oberstufe have certain subjects		

	in English	in another language
LAC/EAA is used in projects with teachers of other subjects (fächerübergreifend)		

4.3 Do you sometimes teach your second subject in English (e.g. Geography - topic Australia)?

never	hardly ever	sometimes	often	almost always

4.4 How familiar are you with the publications and activities of the Österreichisches Sprachenkompetenz Zentrum (früher Zentrum für Schulentwicklung) and the ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages)?

not at all	hardly	fairly	well informed	very well informed

4.5 To what extent does LAC/EAA increase the language competence of your pupils?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much

4.6 To what extent does LAC/EAA influence the contents you teach to your pupils?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much

4.7 Do you think that your pupils learn as much when a subject is taught in a foreign language as they would if it was taught in their mother tongue?

not at all	hardly	a little	quite a lot	very much

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