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Редакционная коллегия:

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A SUGGESTION FOR INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF TEACHING ENGLISH AT TARTU UNIVERSITY

Laine Hone

Tartu University

At school it is customary for a foreign language teacher to start his very first lesson in the language by giving the beginners an introductory talk on the aims of teaching the subject and the strategies recommended for acquiring it. This helps to create in the learners the necessary motivation to study the language and to make conscious efforts to achieve their aims.

Strange as it may seem, such an introductory talk is also necessary at the university level, even for those students who have chosen a foreign language as their speciality. If that need is overlooked, there are students who will not discover until their third or fourth year at the university how they should actually have worked from the very start and on what they should have concentrated their attention in order to acquire their chosen language consciously and effectively.

The aim of this article is to point out those language aspects and ways of learning that according to the author's years-long experience have needed to be brought to the attention of the students specialising in English philology at Tartu University.

The first thing the students have to be made aware of is that the aim of the university is not only confined to giving them just a general speaking and reading knowledge of English for personal practical purposes but also to develop in them, as nearly perfectly as possible, all the four language skills necessary in their future work as professional philologists. Consequently, only those who intend to acquire the qualification of a philologist will really need to study all the theoretical subjects and undergo all the practical language training that they will be offered at the university. Those who discover that they are not genuinely interested in becoming philologists had better leave the Department as soon as possible and, without losing time, find another occupation that is more to their liking. Everyone is able to do something well, one only has to find out what that is.

The professions that are open to graduates of the English Lan-

guage Department are as follows: 1) teacher (at all levels from elementary school to higher educational establishments), 2) translator from English into Estonian (fiction, popular-scientific, political or scientific texts), 3) translator from Estonian into English (mostly political, popular-scientific or scientific texts, but those who have an excellent command of English and the necessary literary talent can also translate fiction), 4) editor of translations at publishing houses, 5) librarian, 6) linguist (at some research institute or establishment of higher learning), 7) interpreter (at meetings, conferences and other events, including work at government and international levels). So far a number of our graduates have also become tourist guides or secretaries in various institutions which have relations with foreign countries. Actually the two last-mentioned jobs do not require a university education, but as long as there is no other establishment providing the learners with the necessary foreign language skills, the university will also have to cater for such needs.

Although the students who get admitted to the university after a stiff competition seemingly have a good command of English, they have to be made aware of the need to make conscious efforts for the further improvement of their language skills and knowledge. This requires regular preparation for classes by independent reading, constant use of reference books and dictionaries, essay writing and laboratory practice. Very important is students' active and brisk participation in language classes, making quick responses without time-wasting long pauses. At the same time, the teachers should still have enough patience to elicit the answers from the students rather than provide them themselves to save time. All philologists need a good grounding in language theory; therefore, every student should make the most of the courses on the history of the English language, lexicology, stylistics, theoretical grammar, theoretical phonetics and the various courses on English and American literature.

As regards the different language aspects, the level of competence required of the learners varies from job to job. All those who need the language for oral communication (teachers, interpreters, guides) have to acquire a pronunciation that is as nearly perfect as possible. This is particularly important for teachers, whose language should serve as a model for the learners. In addition to that, in order to be able to help the learners to acquire good pronunciation, every teacher must know the comparative description of the articulation of each English and Estonian sound, as well as the differences in the intonation patterns of the two languages. Unfortunately, experience has shown that often students do not seem to realise the importance for teaching of these things and remain rather vague about them.

Another essential aspect is the vocabulary, which the students can enrich by extensive reading and the use of dictionaries. When

reading, they should pay attention to the stylistic level of the text, whether the register is formal, colloquial or slang. Learning new words from a text, they should notice whether these occur in the author's narrative or in direct speech and, in the latter case, what sort of character uses it. It is also important to pay attention to whether the author is British or American. The students should be told that the vocabulary for oral use should be accumulated from modern authors and tapes that represent normal everyday speech. Good spoken English is simple and straightforward, rare words and complicated constructions are mostly out of place. If not warned about such a pitfall, some diligent students tend to show off the richness of their vocabulary by using all sorts of rare words and artificial constructions, which renders their language extremely unnatural, if not downright ridiculous. To acquire the correct use of the vocabulary, a careful study should be made of the different shades of meanings of synonyms (a heavy box, a difficult exercise, a hard life, the bank of a river, the shore of a lake, the coast/shore of the sea). The English language is very rich in synonyms, but very few of them are exact equivalents. Usually one of them has a neutral meaning, while the others express various shades of meaning which should not be confused.

Besides vocabulary, a very important role is played by grammar. The most common sources of mistakes for the Estonian learner are: 1) the tenses (especially the difference between the use of the Present Indefinite and the Present Continuous, the Past Indefinite and the Past Continuous, the Past Indefinite and the Present Perfect, the Present Indefinite instead of the Future Indefinite in subordinate clauses of time and condition, and the sequence of tenses), 2) distinction between the different modal verbs (especially those expressing obligation), 3) the word order (particularly in indirect questions), 4) the article (notably the basic rule for the use of the definite and the indefinite article, while all the exceptional cases are usually easily remembered), 5) some prepositions.

The best way to learn the correct usage is to spend about half an hour a day on reading slowly some text and analysing it from the point of view of those difficult points. If a student cannot explain to himself why the particular tense, modal verb, article etc. is used in the text, he should ask some of his teachers for clarification.

In general, the students should be made to understand that it is not so important to know a lot of isolated words, which can always be looked up in a dictionary (although a rich vocabulary is essential, too), or just the grammar rules, but to acquire the structure of the language, including the collocability of certain words, idiomatic expressions, and the constructions that differ from those used in Estonian; these include:

- 1) Prepositions required by certain words (be interested in sth., wait for sb., characteristic of sb., peculiar to sb., a study of sth., an investigation into/of sth.).
- 2) Verbs collocated with certain nouns (to take an exam, to make a speech, to pay attention to sth.).
- 3) Adjectives collocated with certain nouns (a bad mistake, a bad headache, a heavy snowfall, a lame excuse).
- 4) Verbs that require a certain grammatical construction (He avoided meeting us; We were happy to help him; He wanted us to wait for him; He suggested that we go for a swim/that we should go for a swim/going for a swim/a swim). In the latter example we have four correct options. However, an infinitive would be wrong after the verb 'suggest', which is exactly what Estonians tend to use.
- 5) The difference between the meaning of an infinitive and a gerund after certain verbs: He stopped talking to his friend when he entered (Ta jättis sõbraga vestlemise); He stopped to talk to his friend (Ta peatus, et sõbraga vestelda).
- 6) Idiomatic expressions (He couldn't help laughing; He pulled our legs; We paid him through the nose).
- 7) Words, expressions or constructions that are rendered by one and the same word or expression in Estonian and consequently seem to be synonymous from the Estonian point of view, but which have totally different meanings in English and cannot be regarded as being synonymous from the English point of view.

For example:

1. He wants to become a teacher (Ta tahab õpetajaks saada).
The door would not open (Uks ei tahtnud lahti minna).
We were on the point of leaving when the guests arrived (Me tahtsime just minema hakata...).
I should like to talk to you (Ma tahaksin teiega rääkida).
I didn't mean to offend him (Ma ei tahtnud teda solvata).
I wish they here (Ma tahaksin, et nad siin oleksid).
2. H promised to come back soon (Ta lubas varsti tagasi tulla).
Who allowed you to let the dog in? (Kes lubas sul koera sisse lasta?)
The girls threatened to tell the teacher (Tüdrukud lubasid õpetajale ära kaevata).

Most of the difficulties learners experience in acquiring the correct structures of the English language are caused by the interference of the corresponding structures in their native language whenever these differ. Those structures that happen to coincide in both languages offer no difficulty and cause no mistakes. Therefore, it is essential that part of the time the learners should read slowly, paying attention to the constructions that differ from those in their

native language and making a mental note of them. Such work can be done by each student independently and it plays an essential role in developing in them a Sprachgefühl, i.e. a feeling for the foreign language.

As regards work in class, the most effective way for developing the learners' Sprachgefühl and their competence in the structure of the language is practising translation of texts from the native into the target language. The translation should not be a free rendering but exact and adequate in the sense that it should express in correct and idiomatic foreign language all the shades of meaning and the sentence emphasis of the original. This is the surest way of achieving a really good command of English. In the case of a free rendering it is possible for the learners to avoid saying the things they are not sure of, in the case of adequate translation, on the other hand, they have to apply all their knowledge of the language. When a student has to do an exercise on a certain grammatical or lexical problem, his attention is concentrated on the point of difficulty, and as a rule, the results are quite good. In translating a context, however, he has to be ready to render exactly any grammatical or lexical point that the text happens to contain. In the course of time such practice will develop in him a firm command of the language, especially if he is called on to explain his choice of one or another option whenever problems arise. Even if he cannot always find the best solution, but still feels that the variants he can think of are not good, this is evidence that he has already developed a certain degree of Sprachgefühl, which prevents him from using unacceptable constructions or words. Another sure sign of a developed sense of the language is the ability to immediately notice a slip one has made and to correct it at once. On the other hand, a person who lacks a feeling for the language is apt to express himself in entirely unnatural and unidiomatic ways without the slightest suspicion that anything might be wrong. However, English is a highly idiomatic language, therefore, more often than not even a learner who does not make any bad grammatical mistakes can still produce sentences that sound absolutely un-English.

In addition to the grammatical, lexical and idiomatic correctness of the language one needs a good background knowledge (geography, history, literature, culture, customs and traditions, political system, etc.) of the English speaking countries. The students have to be made aware of the fact that besides the language patterns there are also cultural patterns, which play an important role in communication. It is not only essential to know what sort of expressions are used on certain occasions, what one says and how one is expected to answer, but also what intonation and what gestures (if any at all) are appropriate, how to behave and interact with people under

various circumstances. One has to know what topics are desirable and which ones should be avoided. One also has to remember that nursery rhymes and "Alice in Wonderland" constitute so much part and parcel of the English culture that they are even referred to or quoted by statesmen in their speeches. Therefore, every student of English should be well acquainted with them.

We can distinguish between different levels of mastery of a foreign language. The lowest one is the so-called 'survival level', which allows the speaker to express his wishes somehow, however imperfectly and faultily (e.g. "Please give lemonade", addressing a waitress). Of course, such a level is out of the question in the case of students specialising in English. But of those, too, who acquire a good command of English different levels of competence can be demanded, depending on the requirements of their future profession.

As pointed out above, a teacher must have good pronunciation (being competent in theory and practice). In addition to a fluent, idiomatic, grammatically and lexically correct command of English he needs a lot of background knowledge, for he cannot teach to his classes what he does not know himself. The required degree of his English proficiency depends on the level at which he is expected to teach. At the same time, if he does not teach at the advanced level, he need not possess all the skills of a translator.

Guides and interpreters, too, must have a passably good, understandable pronunciation. They must easily understand oral communication and be fluent themselves, have a ready command of fairly correct grammar and a wide vocabulary. Those interpreters who are employed in responsible posts must have a very high level of language competence.

Translators and editors need a perfect command of the language, a rich vocabulary, a large stock of synonyms and extensive background knowledge. At the same time, their pronunciation and oral fluency are of secondary importance.

Librarians need a good knowledge of the literatures and the cultural background of English-speaking countries. Since their main activity consists in reading books and writing annotations, their oral skills are of secondary importance.

If the students know what field of activity they are going to choose for their future profession and have been made aware of the level of competence needed for it, they can consciously concentrate on acquiring first and foremost those skills that will be of primary importance to them. At the same time, their teachers at the university should also keep in mind all the essential aspects in which the students need training and accordingly assign to them such tasks as will help them to develop all the necessary abilities. Let us hope that in future all undergraduates or graduates of Tartu University will

have opportunities to perfect their English in an English-speaking country, but practice among native speakers, too, is more effective for such people who know what the problems of an Estonian learner are and consciously direct their attention to solving them.

**ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЕ ДЛЯ ПОВЫШЕНИЯ
ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТИ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ
АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА
В ТАРТУСКОМ УНИВЕРСИТЕТЕ**

Л. Хоун

Резюме

В статье указывается на то, что не все студенты отделения английской филологии имеют ясное представление о том, как они должны заниматься и на что обращать внимание с самого начала для того, чтобы добиться максимального успеха в правильном, всестороннем овладении английским языком. В статье рассматриваются те аспекты английского языка, которые представляют трудности для эстонского учащегося. А также объясняются те умения и навыки, которые отдельные студенты должны иметь ввиду, в зависимости от уровня компетентности, необходимой для разных профессий.

A GUIDED TASK-BASED APPROACH IN TEACHING ORAL PERFORMANCE

Malle Laar
Tartu University

The teaching of the skills and speech proficiency needed in making public reports, is, doubtless, of importance in training young specialists. Keeping in mind the restricted number of hours provided by the study plan for the foreign languages course, big and heterogeneous groups of students and trying to make the study process student-centered, individualized and natural, a set of exercises was worked out and tried out in practice in 1976 with groups of medical students of Tartu University.

The whole task of report-making was broken down into subtasks and steps. The first step was a negotiating step. The students were told about the system, its aims, its constituent parts and its criteria for assessment. After the students had expressed their readiness to try it out, topics for the semester were negotiated and the students drew up schedules for report-making. In deciding upon the date of report-making, students, as a rule, were guided by two factors: their individual time schedule for the semester and the preference for a certain topic on the list of topics chosen to be discussed during the semester.

The second step was a preparatory step during which certain material necessary for the planned activity was discussed and drilled. The material included some general rules and strategies of report-making, cliches and phrases of public speaking, discussion techniques and some more common phrases used in discussion.

The third step was making preparations for a report. The material for the report was chosen by the teacher in keeping with the topic negotiated upon earlier. In choosing the material the teacher was guided by the individual level of speech proficiency of the student and the immediate tasks following from the aims set for improving the level. It was also the teacher's task to prepare the group for report comprehension. For that purpose the key vocabulary of the report was presented and practised in preparatory group exercises. The student to make a report could have short individual discussions with the teacher on problems he or she thought necessary in the preparation for a successful performance.

The basic task was the delivering of the report, followed by discussion. The session was invariably chaired by the teacher. The report was considered a success when the group actively participated in the discussion. Here, the students introduced a modification. It was first suggested and negotiated that the group discussion phase was to be open-ended and spontaneous. In practice, some students of poorer language proficiency had pre-arranged some discussion questions or comments to be sure of the group's active participation in the discussion.

Finally, the material of individual reports was included in the regular proficiency tests conducted by the teacher.

The semester ended with a discussion of the new system of exercises and the students answered anonymously questionnaires on the exercise system and the material they had been asked to work on.

The groups that answered the questionnaires included: 1. a group of beginners, 2. a group of students who had learnt English within the scope of the programme for ordinary secondary schools in Estonia, 3. a group of students of sports medicine including students of five different nationalities. In this group the language of instruction was other than their mother tongues for many students. Some of the students had difficulty in speaking Russian or Estonian, 4. a group whose English level was advanced, graduates of English-biased secondary schools.

The characteristics assessed were adequacy in the fulfillment of the aim, grade of interest and grade of difficulty of the approach; grade of interest, grade of difficulty of the material and time spent on preparing for the performance. The assessments were graded on a five-point scale. The average assessments given by different groups are presented in Figures 1 and 2. The approach was found to meet the aim adequately, it was of average interest and in accordance with the level of the command of English. The material chosen was assessed as interesting, of adequate difficulty (the beginners found it difficult). The time spent in preparation ranged from less than 45 minutes (the advanced students and the intermediate level group with instruction in the students' mother tongue) to more than one hour (the beginners).

In 1980-1990 the same approach was successfully used in classes in newspaper reading and grammar for students majoring in English.

The approach can be recommended. It is time-saving, goal-oriented and learner-centered. It provides for highly individual tasks and maintains interest in the learning. Its details can easily be modified to suit changing circumstances but its basic build-up remains the same. It is open-ended as to the outcome. It stimulates creative search in natural problem-solving. It is communicative as the

Figure 1

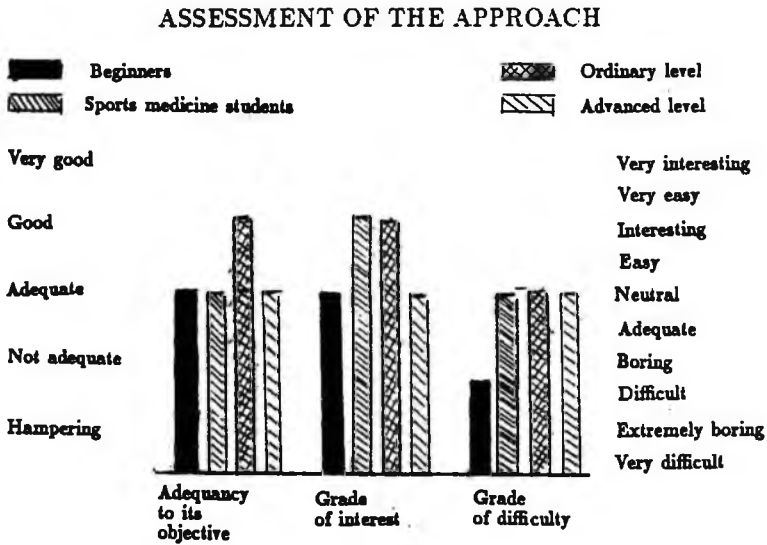
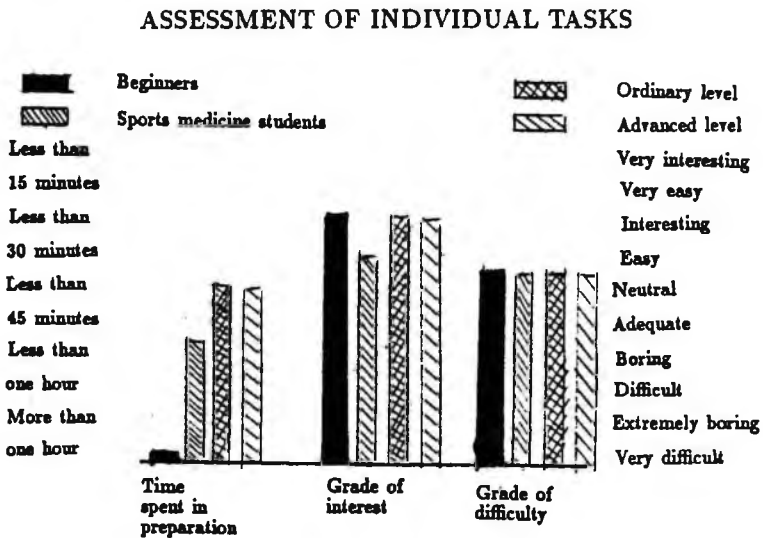


Figure 2



learner's attention is focused on solving a task of speech and not on linguistic manipulations.

СИСТЕМА УПРАЖНЕНИЙ, НАПРАВЛЕННАЯ НА ОБУЧЕНИЕ МОНОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО ВЫСТУПЛЕНИЯ

М. Лаар

Резюме

В статье описывается система упражнений, целью которой является подготовка студента к выступлению монологического плана.

THE ROLE OF CONTEXT IN GRAMMAR DRILLS

Malle Laar
Tartu University

Grammar drills are widely used in teaching and practising grammar forms, phrases and sentence patterns with the aim of making the use of certain blocks of language automatic. They can be viewed as non-communicative preparatory exercises for practising constant language features by repeating or manipulating language structures.

Textbooks on teaching methods arbitrarily classify exercises into linguistic exercises (drills) and into speech exercises. Feeling the inseparable unity of form and meaning in all utterances some researchers have grouped exercises into more detailed subgroups in which it is admitted that exercises in linguistic form cannot easily be rendered free of their meaning (Ламмус Б.А., 1970, p. 24). It is also stressed that drills are not an end in themselves but rather a means to achieve natural communication. Language can not only be dissected into drill patterns, but it must also be rebuilt in the context of complex, natural conversation. The students must understand the purpose of drills in general, and they should be able to see the point of each particular drill they are involved in.

Drills with their maximised response control help in reducing the possibility of error and guarantee success, but on the other hand, they emphasize the artfulness of the procedure, and, as such, appear boring. Moreover, in many cases they train transformational skills, which are not needed in the use of the language for communicative purpose in which case the difficulty lies rather in selecting a certain grammatical form to express the relevant idea than in translating one possible syntactic form into another. In transformation exercises the attention of the learner is focused on theoretical considerations of an abstract context-free phrase-structure grammar, which, though essential for linguists, is of very little importance for students who are going to use the language in communication. It is but natural that teachers of English have found drills to be of little effectiveness in overall language acquisition. The wastefulness of grammar drills can, among other things, be explained by the reversed sequence of skills, i.e. the process proceeds from form to content and context in contrast to the normal communicative act where it is the message

that determines the linguistic form of choice.

Exercises in grammatical transformation, although opening up structural relationships in the grammatical system, cannot be recommended in classes where the aim is mastering the language rather than language study, as it blurs the functional differences of grammatical synonyms and robs them of context. Grammatical forms are abstract units of the linguistic system. In functioning, only one of them will meet the requirements of the multilayered context of a speech act, and will be selected to express a concrete idea.

E.I. Passov in his exercise theory points out four vital characteristics that should be present in exercises as study activities. They are 1) the exercise must have an object of activity, 2) the exercise must be structurally organized, 3) the exercise must be aimed at training a skill, and 4) the exercise must be adequate, i.e. it must have its place in a system of exercises and it must be adapted to grade level (Пассов Е.И., 1977 p. 57).

In the light of this theory we can see that grammar drills are exercises aimed at demonstrating and consolidating certain conditioned word arrangements. They train the skill of sentence generation and manipulation with grammatical forms of linguistic expression. Although they are generally considered more common at the elementary stage of foreign language study, they can be resorted to any time the form of utterance stands out as of primary importance.

Grammar drills emphasizing the linguistic structure of utterances use the sentence as their basic unit. However, since the function of a sentence is inextricable from its context, it becomes inevitable to include some information about the use of the sentence in communication in a speech act.

A.V. Bondarko differentiates two approaches in studies of grammatical forms. One proceeds from the context, from the semantic set of a speech act. Then the grammatical form is just one expression of the semantic set. The other proceeds from a linguistic form and all the possible major and minor meanings of that form are analysed (Бондарко А.В., 1971, p. 75) It is quite obvious that the first approach should serve as the basis for drawing up grammar drills.

To make grammar drill exercises more communicative and consequently more effective, it is important to fill the drill with meaning and provide the learner with some background information. So for instance interrogative sentences of the Present Indefinite Tense can be drilled by asking the students to assume the role of an inquisitive three-year-old pestering his parents with questions.

Educationists have put forward a requirement to grammar drills, stating that the items should be taken from original texts. They should allow only one possible variant of completion, be free of interfering difficulties and be contextually complete (Методика, 1984.

p. 114). It is common that collections of grammar exercises (e.g. Каушанская В.Л. и др., 1968; I.P. Krylova 1978) contain sentences picked out from books of fiction. These sentences, which used to function in longer text passages, are governed by the macrocontext of the whole passage. They are stylistically coloured and structured for specific purposes. G.G. Politchuk divides texts as units of communication into three subgroups: a) isolated texts with implicit text characteristics, b) supraphrasal units containing lexical, lexico-grammatical and syntactic markers of textual integrity and c) passages of spontaneous speech acts devoid of markers of textual integrity (Полищук Г.Г., 1985, p. 56). It can be deduced that the first two groups represent prepared texts or text segments whereas the third type is represented by minialogues in the process of free text generation. The first two subgroups are characterized by linguistic context, the third type mainly by extralinguistic context. M.Ya. Bloch points out that "suprasegmental ties are realized with the help of linguistic means in the sentence, i.e. it is expressed by the build-up of the sentence" (Блох М.Я., 1969, p. 18). The use of sentences taken from texts, and thus severing text integrity, is unacceptable in grammar drills. The students trying to restore the integrity are short of contextual information, and as a rule, several complementary interpretations are possible. The sentences used in grammar drills must be structurally self-contained and complete. The vocabulary used must be simple and selected to meet the students' needs and level of competence. As the drill is built up to train some linguistic phenomenon, it is advisable to depersonify the subjects of the items by using some widely-spread names, such as 'Tom' or 'Mary' or 'Mr. Smith'. The names of personages from popular books usually work as strong distractors, directing all search to looking for contextual clues instead of trying to find structural markers in the sentence. Drills requiring the formation of logically contradicting statements should be avoided as in that case the message has been too explicitly made irrelevant and all communicative value of the drill is lost. Additional information both linguistic (words, sentence patterns) and extralinguistic (situations) should be amply provided, for example in the form of substitution tables, pictures, gestures, intonation of the stimulus, etc. Finally, oral drills can be turned into a carefully controlled activity by guiding stimuli and provision of situational clues.

To sum up, grammar drills are exercises made up of items of similar linguistic structure aimed at consolidating certain linguistic patterns. As the activity is meant to focus the attention of the learner on structural relationships and their markers, the basic unit used is the sentence. A sentence is usually meant to convey some message and function in a speech act, so the form of the sentence is

inextricable from its context. The sentences used in grammar drills must be carefully selected and adapted to meet the requirements of this classroom activity. They must be contextually complete and self-contained. The lexical material should be thematically arranged, making for possibly natural meaningful sentence formation. In this connection, distinction should be made between pattern presentation, calling for vivid illustrative examples, and drill items, whose purpose is the production of sentences in common use in a multitude of standard everyday situations. The use of isolated sentences excerpted from longer texts in grammar drills cannot be considered effective because of the distracting richness of implied context.

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РОЛЬ КОНТЕКСТА В ТРЕНИРОВОЧНЫХ ГРАММАТИЧЕСКИХ УПРАЖНЕНИЯХ

М. Лаар

Резюме

В статье рассматриваются вопросы подбора материала для тренировочных грамматических упражнений с точки зрения содержания материала, обусловленного целью и ситуацией речевого акта.

BARRIERS TO TEFL INNOVATION: A CHINESE EXPERIENCE

Anna Lynch
Tartu University

Between 1987–1990 I worked in the People's Republic of China, teaching English as a foreign language in two Shanghai Universities. From 1987–88 I was based in Shanghai International Studies University, working on a pre-departure course for students (mostly scientists) who had been selected for doctoral and post-doctoral studies in the U. K. For the remaining two years I trained teachers at Shanghai Teachers' University, on a British Council project which offered a three-year M. A. program in TEFL to practising third-level teachers.

The years since Liberation (1949) have been traumatic ones for Chinese education — the worst period was the ten-year “Cultural Revolution” from 1966–76 when intellectuals were called “the stinking ninth category” and most universities were closed down. At best, teachers were denounced and beaten by their students and then packed off to the countryside for several years, or else forced to do menial jobs such as cleaning toilets; at worst they were killed by over-zealous Red Guards, or they committed suicide because they could not bear the shame and ignominy of their situation any longer. It is not known how many thousands perished in this way. What is certain is that it left an indelible mark on the survivors—both persecuted and persecutors — for the students also suffered by being deprived of education for ten years and by being forced to work in remote parts of the country. However, the dark age came to an end with the “Open Door” policies and economic reforms of the late 1970's and 80's. It was realised that English was one of the keys to successful economic growth. So the 1980's saw the influx into China of thousands of foreign experts who were employed to teach English in Chinese universities and institutions. The economy grew rapidly and the future began to look bright. However the expansion was too rapid, and the economy over-heated in the late 1980's, with predictable results such as inflation and the closure of tens of thousands of small businesses which had flourished in the early days of reform.

Also, the government continued to neglect education. One commentator wrote in “China Daily” (the government-sponsored

English-language newspaper) on the 16/3/89, that education was in crisis; he cited the low salaries of university teachers, the "miserable image of teachers", the "waste of talent in universities" and the lack of motivation of students. He blamed the government for its neglect in funding and administering higher education. This was the background to the student protest movement of 1989 — here was a generation who had few memories of the "Cultural Revolution", who had grown up in the atmosphere of optimism of the 1980's and who had been exposed to such "spiritual pollution" as "bourgeois liberalisation", which the "Open Door" had allowed in. Living as they did in miserable and overcrowded conditions, in an educational system where only the slogans had changed but otherwise was in a process of rapid decay, it is not surprising that they took to the streets in their hundreds of thousands with (in hindsight) the naive optimism that they could force change. The rest, as they say, is history.

That is the background to my experiences in the Chinese educational system. I found that there was a lot of lip-service given to new approaches in language teaching. For example, in my first post, I was told repeatedly by the Head of Department that the Communicative Approach was the teaching "method" that had been adopted in the department, yet the curriculum and syllabus remained traditional and rigid, with the separation of skills and without a study-skills component-essential surely for students who were about to embark on advanced and lengthy courses of study in British Universities. Any attempts to change the syllabus were rejected. Many of our Chinese colleagues had completed MAs in the UK- yet when they returned to their jobs their increased expertise and knowledge was not exploited and they continued to do whatever they had been doing prior to their departure. It is not surprising that their enthusiasm evaporated rapidly. In fact the majority of teachers are not interested in increased responsibility and its consequence, an increased work-load. Most have to supplement their meagre incomes by "moonlighting", not necessarily in the field of education, but in such diverse activities as selling eggs or driving taxis. Teaching has become an increasingly unattractive option — in a survey conducted by a Shanghai newspaper in 1989, when parents were asked about future desirable careers for their children, teaching came bottom of the list.

Shanghai Teachers University, where I worked from 1988-90, has an undergraduate population of about 8,000 and (in theory) supplies secondary teachers to the Shanghai Municipality which numbers about 15 million inhabitants. In practice, very few of the students wish to become teachers, and since the government has partially abolished the system of job-assignment, many of them will

not. English is one of the most popular areas of study because it represents a stepping-stone to most young people's dream — to go abroad to “study” in the United States, Canada or Australia. The majority who go abroad never return, and thus the brain drain is considerable. My students in STU were post-graduates and practising third-level English teachers in Shanghai universities. Their ages ranged from 25–40. My job was to set up and run a three-year M. A. program in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), the idea being to produce home-grown English language experts which would be more cost-effective than sending them to Britain to study. The course was very intensive, covering Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Methodology, Language Improvement, Literature and Cultural Background studies. However, as time went on, I discovered that most of my students were not really interested in becoming more professionally competent but saw the course as a means of improving their level of English, and as a result achieving a higher mark in the TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language) examination.

One of the problems associated with teaching English in China is that much of the terminology that we foreign experts use means something else to the Chinese. For example “Teacher training”. In Chinese culture it is assumed that if somebody knows his/her subject thoroughly, then there is no need for training — thus when somebody reaches the required level of proficiency in English that is enough-s/he is a trained teacher. Another problem is that it is often assumed that at graduate-level Literature=Language. The study of Literature is much more prestigious than studying Linguistics or Applied Linguistics. However, students rarely read the prescribed works of literature in full, or in the original language. The courses are generally of a review-type with the teacher telling them that such-and-such an author is famous and the reasons why, without any requirement to read the works in question.

Another area where there is confusion in terminology is the area of ESP (English for Specific Purposes). The Chinese realise that English for Science, Technology and Commerce is one of the keys to the country's economic development. However, ESP courses often consist of vocabulary lists where students are expected to memorize hundreds of words associated with, say, the Western Banking system, with scant attention paid to where the fit in the language system or their use. The concepts of skills and strategies in ESP have largely been neglected. This is very obvious in the teaching of reading. In a reading class in a Chinese university, most of the work consists of the teacher explaining obscure grammatical points, telling the meaning of difficult words and their equivalents (?) in the mother tongue plus translation from English into Chinese. Students do not develop the basic reading skills such as skimming, scanning,

prediction, information transfer, etc. Indeed the textbooks that the teachers use do not lend themselves to such an approach. Chinese teachers are generally loath to attempt innovation as this means that they may be noticed as being different, and thus may invite criticism from their leaders. One of my Chinese colleagues was repeatedly criticised by the departmental heads for being too enthusiastic. It would be easy to find fault with such attitudes, but in a society where the political pendulum has swung backwards and forwards repeatedly, who can blame the majority of teachers for adopting a low-profile to avoid being singled-out for criticism if policies change again? And for those few brave souls who try to change things—they find that they are caught in another bind — that of the examination system.

Examinations in China are extremely rigid and it would be true to say that almost all teaching is conducted with a view to passing the end-of-term exam. In theory, the teacher can give any grade s/he wishes but in practice is limited to awarding only A or B grades as anything lower will affect the student's future career. In any case, low grades are seen to reflect on the poor quality of the teaching rather than the level of attainment of the student. I had an interesting experience in my first semester in Shanghai. I was teaching a class of scientists — I suppose you could call them the *creme-de-la-creme* of the Chinese educational system. I was not pleased with the standard of writing in the mid-semester examination and therefore I marked them accordingly — giving grades of C, D, and even (unheard of!) E and F. The reaction of the class was not what I had expected — I had thought that this would serve as a warning to them and that they would work very hard for the rest of the year to achieve a high grade in the writing part of the ELTS (English Language Testing Service). That was not how things turned out—somehow or other it was perceived as being my fault that they had done so badly and it took a long time to regain their trust and confidence. Inadvertently, I had also damaged their future prospects and their chances of going abroad — in China the students study record remains with him all his life and one small slip-up could mean the ruination of future plans and job prospects.

The learning styles of Chinese students also militate against change. The road to literacy in the Chinese language involves the memorisation of thousands of different written characters: it has been estimated that it takes twelve years to become fully proficient in the reading and writing system. Consequently, from an early age Chinese students become accustomed to this style of learning and it continues right through into third-level education. Basically students rote-learn large chunks of text and regurgitate it in exams. Students are used to listening passively in class, then memorising

their mimeographed notes for exams. When students do well on tests which require memory work it gives the impression that they understand and know the material well. However they find it difficult to apply what they have learnt in one subject to another subject as they are used to seeing courses as discrete elements. Little time is spent in the library on their own research, in fact students rarely read books other than the set texts, and they are often not able to locate useful books in the reference rooms. To remedy that situation, we introduced a two-week intensive study skills course at the beginning of the three-year MA program. Among the topics covered were, reference skills, how to take notes at lectures, how to read effectively, the organisation and presentation of written work, seminar skills and so on. In fact it was found necessary to continue the study skills right through the first year as it was obvious that when students were asked to write academic essays using source material, they experienced great difficulty and needed a lot of encouragement and guidance.

Most Chinese classrooms are teacher-centered. Students do not speak unless addressed by the teacher to supply the correct answer. It is assumed that teachers and textbooks have all the knowledge and it is the duty of the teacher to pour this knowledge into the students' heads. In the case of English, the most highly respected and popular teachers are those who have the widest vocabulary, give lots of notes and award high grades in exams. Since learning consists mainly of studying grammar and learning long vocabulary lists, the average Chinese student with his/her highly developed memorising skills can accomplish this fairly easily. I observed many prodigious memory feats during my time in China. If asked to answer a reading comprehension question most students could repeat large chunks of text verbatim without reference to the book. In contrast, students find it difficult, especially at the beginning, to activate their powers of critical and analytical thought. These are very important, especially in the area of methodology when students are often asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of various methods. So, in class, when asked for a personal response to some idea or theory, there was usually a long silence until some brave soul ventured an opinion; then the other students generally fell into line with whatever opinion had just been expressed and rarely did the others disagree. This phenomenon puzzled me for some time, coming as I do from a culture where divergence and dissent are the norm. However, I soon realised that in oriental cultures, consensus not conflict, is more usual in group behaviour. Eastern cultures have also been defined as "low risk" cultures -- in other words disagreeing with the opinions of the majority represents high-risk which is usually considered imprudent. Attempts to introduce a

more democratic structure into the running of the program were only partially successful. Again, in cases where the students were asked to vote on various options, they tended to support whatever choice the student monitors (class leaders) favoured. The extent to which the students expressed their own individuality depended on a variety of factors; because I was a foreigner they tended to be more open with me as my relationship with them developed. During the period of the student demonstrations in 1989 they became even more vocal and at times normal classwork had to be abandoned such was the effect of their discovery of freedom of speech!

In the preceding paragraphs I have emphasised the problems and constraints associated with TEFL innovation in China. I think it is appropriate to state here that there are many positive aspects associated with teaching English there. The Chinese are genuinely interested in, and committed to, modernisation and change. The main problem lies in how government policy towards the teaching of English is carried out in the individual educational institutions and ultimately in the classrooms. The broad but vague objective of introducing modern methodology in ELT has not been accompanied by a plan of how exactly that will be achieved from the point of view of teacher training, the provision of appropriate textbooks, materials and the format of examinations. New policies can actually become barriers to pedagogical change. Take the example of the credit/grade system introduced around 1983. Individual universities frequently misuse this system in a rigid and often an irrational way. The department in which I worked required examinations to make up 95 % of each course grade with only 5 % remaining for motivation, classroom performance and the fulfillment of assignments. The students have to cope with frequent tests which are invariably some form of discrete-point, multiple-choice or translation tests. Many teachers as a result tend to conduct their classes with only the test in mind.

Despite such problems, I found teaching English in China a rewarding experience. The difficulties encountered because of (maybe) unrealistic expectations on my part, were more than compensated by the rich and varied experience of living among a people whose culture had survived virtually unchanged for 4-5,000 years. For me, as for most of my fellow foreigners, the most rewarding aspect was the contact with the people and specifically with our students. The students are, in many ways, ideal-hard-working, courteous, loyal, co-operative and infinitely patient with the strange ways of the foreigners. Above all they are resilient — a quality which should stand them in good stead as they wait for the present repression to be replaced by a more enlightened and reformist era.

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ОПЫТ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК ИНОСТРАННОГО

А. Линч

Резюме

В статье описывается методика преподавания английского языка как иностранного в Китае в свете личного опыта преподавания в 1987–1990 гг.

ZIELE IM KOMMUNIKATIV ORIENTIERTEN KONVERSATIONSUNTERRICHT

Susanne Müller
Universität Tartu

1. Zum Begriff Konversation

Das Wort "Konversation" ist im 16. Jahrhundert als lateinisches Lehnwort in die deutsche Sprache gekommen, und zwar mit der Grundbedeutung "Gespräch/Unterhaltung". Konversation wurde als Ergänzung zum Hauptinhalt des Fremdsprachenunterrichts, (der sich in dieser Zeit auf das Lateinische beschränkte), der Grammatik, gepflegt. Dieser Terminus hat sich bis heute in den Komposita "Konversationskurs", "Konversationsunterricht" erhalten. Sie stehen jeweils für Anwendung der Fremdsprache im Gegensatz zu Kursen/Stunden, in denen die Fremdsprache erlernt wird (Kleines ethym. WB., 1975, S. 128).

Seit dem 17./18. Jahrhundert wird das Wort "Konversation" auch bedeutungseinengend für "gepflegte Unterhaltung" gebraucht. Der gesellschaftliche Hintergrund dafür ist die für jene Zeit typische Nachahmung der Gepflogenheiten des feudalabsolutistischen Frankreichs. Es war Mode, in den Salons des Feudaladels geistreiche Gespräche zu führen. Es ist die Zeit der französischen Klassik und Aufklärung, in der auch viele bedeutende naturwissenschaftliche Entdeckungen gemacht wurden und die erste französische Enzyklopädie entsteht. Im Deutschen haben sich diese Zusammenhänge in den Begriffen "Konversationslexikon" und "Konversationsstück" (leichtes Theaterstück zur Unterhaltung) niedergeschlagen und bis heute erhalten. In der Umgangssprache wird "Konversation" heute jedoch nicht mehr in der Bedeutung "gepflegte Unterhaltung" benutzt, sondern vorwiegend abwertend für formale oder oberflächliche Unterhaltung (WB. der d. Gegenwartssprache, 1984, S. 675).

Eine weitere Bedeutungsvariante beinhaltet der Terminus "Konversationsanalyse", der gegenwärtig in der kommunikationsorientierten Linguistik gebräuchlich ist. Er steht synonym für "Gesprächs-" oder "Diskursanalyse" bzw. für Dialogforschung. Diese Forschungsrichtung beschäftigt sich mit der Analyse des verbalen und nonverbalen Verhaltens der Sprecher einer Kommunikationsgemeinschaft in bestimmten Typen von Kommunikationssituationen,

z.B. Alltagsgespräch, Beratungsgespräch, Interview, Arzt-Patient-Gespräch, Unterrichtsgespräch u.a. Der Terminus "Konversationsanalyse" geht dabei auf den von der amerikanischen Soziolinguistik geprägten Terminus "conversational analysis" zurück. In dieser Wortverbindung bedeutet "conversation" ganz allgemein "Gespräch/Dialog/Wechselrede". Im Deutschen kann "Konversation" — wie oben bewiesen — nicht in jedem Falle einfach mit "Gespräch" gleich gesetzt werden.

In der deutschsprachigen Linguistik wird anstelle von "Konversationsanalyse" vorwiegend der Terminus "Gesprächsanalyse" benutzt. "Gespräch" gilt als Oberbegriff für alle Kommunikationsereignisse, in denen (Sprecher-) Rollenwechsel stattfindet. Er wird von Techtmeier — nach Auseinandersetzung mit anderen Definitionsversuchen — folgendermaßen definiert: "Das Gespräch ist das grundlegende Kommunikationsereignis der direkten Kommunikation, durch das die Partner verbal, mit Hilfe des Sprecherrollenwechsels, unter konkreten sozial-historischen Bedingungen, bestimmte Tätigkeitsziele realisieren" (Techtmeier B., 1984, S. 50).

Auch in der deutschsprachigen Methodik und Didaktik des Fremdsprachenunterrichts ist der Begriff "Konversation" nicht üblich. In diesem Bereich stehen "Gespräch" und "Dialog" als Überbegriffe neben "Monolog", wenn von der Entwicklung des Sprechens die Rede ist (vgl. Desselmann, G., Hellnich, H. u.a. 1981, S. 218 ff.)

Der Terminus "Konversationsunterricht" wird im Deutschen ausschließlich im Bereich der Praxis des Fremdsprachenunterrichts benutzt, und zwar beschränkt auf Stunden zur Entwicklung des Sprechens im Fremdsprachenunterricht an Universitäten und Hochschulen bzw. in Abendkursen. In der Volksbildung ist die Bezeichnung "Konversation" für Stunden zur Entwicklung des Sprechens nicht üblich.

2. Ziele des Konversationsunterrichts bei Germanisten

Aus den vorangegangenen Ausführungen ergibt sich als Lehr- und Lernziel im kommunikativ orientierten Konversationsunterricht die Entwicklung des freien Sprechens in verschiedenen sozial determinierten Typen von Kommunikationssituationen. Dafür ist im Rahmen der Didaktik und Methodik des Fremdsprachenunterrichts auch der Terminus *situations- und partneradäquates Sprechen* gebräuchlich. Es setzt die ständige Analyse der Sprechsituation durch die Sprechenden voraus und Wissen über die situativ bedingten sprachlich-kommunikativen Normen im Zielsprachland.

Bei der Auswahl der Lehr- und Lerngegenstände orientieren wir uns — wie grundsätzlich im kommunikativ-orientierten Fremdsprachenunterricht charakteristisch —

- a) an den Grunddeterminanten sprachlicher Kommunikation im allgemeinen und
- b) an den Anforderungen der Berufspraxis (künftiger Germanisten) und den Anforderungen des Alltags im Zielsprachland.

Da sprachliche Kommunikation als soziales Phänomen im weitesten Sinne immer dialogisch, d.h. an einen/mehrere Partner gerichtet ist, können wir die Parameter für unsere Lehr- und Lerngegenstände bei der Entwicklung des dialogischen wie des monologischen Sprechens aus dem folgenden Grundmodell eines dialogischen Kommunikationsereignisses ableiten (vgl. S. 29). Es sind dies neben dem Kommunikationsgegenstand (Thema) die Tätigkeitssituation, sozial charakterisierte Sprecher und ihr Verhältnis zueinander, Sprachhandlungstypen und normative Textstruktur in Relation zum Situationstyp.

Im Rahmen des kommunikativ orientierten Fremdsprachenunterrichts kann das Ziel der Könnensentwicklung im Sprechen bei Germanisten nicht traditionell in "Unterhaltung über bestimmte Themen" bestehen.

Wesenszüge des kommunikativ orientierten Fremdsprachenunterrichts sind

- a) Orientierung an den Grunddeterminanten sprachlicher Kommunikation im allgemeinen (vgl. Modell),
- b) Orientierung an den sprachlich-kommunikativen Anforderungen des Alltags im Zielsprachland,
- c) Orientierung an den sprachlich-kommunikativen Anforderungen der künftigen Berufspraxis der Lernenden.

Als Lehr- und Lernziel ergibt sich daraus situations- und partneradäquates Sprechen im Rahmen der ausgewählten Kommunikationsbereiche.

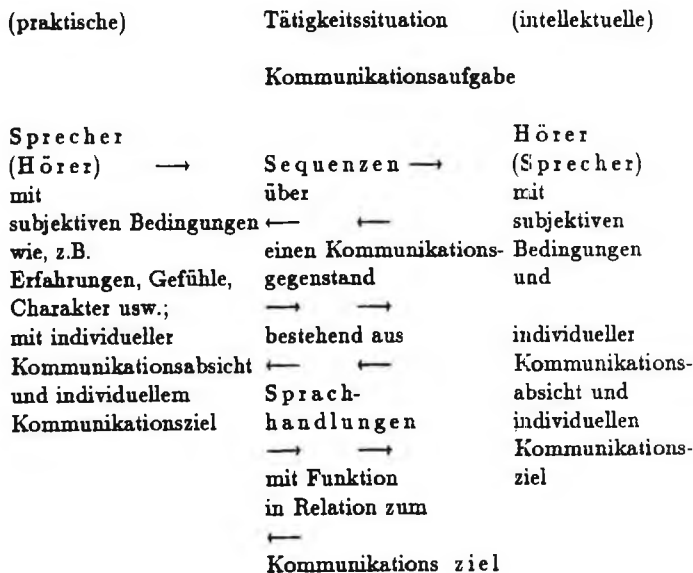
Mit anderen Worten gesagt heißt das, das Lernziel im Konversationsunterricht bei Germanistikstudenten muß im Rahmen des kommunikativ orientierten Fremdsprachenunterrichts in der Entwicklung besonders des freien Sprechens in verschiedenen sozial determinierten Typen von Kommunikationssituationen und mit verschiedenen sozial charakterisierten Kommunikationspartnern bestehen. Daß dabei jedes Gespräch — bzw. jede sprachliche Tätigkeit — immer einen Kommunikationsgegenstand (ein Thema) hat, versteht sich von selbst. Wir gehen dabei davon aus, daß die Konversationsstunden Teil des mehrstündigen sprachpraktischen Unterrichts sind, in dem durch Vermittlung, Automatisierung und Festigung von Systemwissen wesentliche Voraussetzungen für das Sprechen geschaffen werden. Im sprachpraktischen Unterricht werden Voraussetzungen für alle vier Sprachgrundtätigkeiten — Hören, Lesen, Sprechen, Schreiben — geschaffen, und sie werden im Rahmen des zur Verfügung stehenden Zeitfonds auch trainiert. Infolge der großen Bedeu-

tung der mündlichen Kommunikation in der gesellschaftlichen Praxis und aufgrund des spezifischen Lehrauftrags, der mit der Bezeichnung "Konversationsunterricht" verbunden ist, betrachten wir als notwendiges Lehr- und Lernziel — auf den sprachpraktischen Unterricht aufbauend und ihn ergänzend — Verwendungsnormen der deutschen Sprache als Wissensgrundlage für die Entwicklung des freien Sprechens. Unter freiem Sprechen verstehen wir

- a) dialogisch: Sprechen in konkreten Situationen ohne schriftliche/gedruckte Hilfen;
spontanes Sprechen auf der Grundlage von Wissen
- b) monologisch: Sprechen ohne ausgearbeitetes Manuskript, mit Stichwortzettel/Gliederung
- c) freier — publikumswirksam gestalteter Vortrag literarischer Texte.

Da sprachliche Kommunikation als soziales Phänomen immer dialogisch, d.h. an einen/mehere Partner gerichtet ist (Helbig, G., 1975, S. 75–80) können wir die notwendigen Lehr- und Lernkomponenten für das Sprechen aus folgendem Modell ableiten:

Modell dialogischer Kommunikation in einem Kommunikationseignis (Kl. Enzyklopädie, 1983, S. 356–371)



Resultat: Text entsprechend
situativer kommunikativer
Norm

**Rangordnung determinierender Faktoren im Gespräch
nach Dotath, J., 1986**

1. Verbindlichkeitsgrad der Situation	öffentlich	nicht öffentlich
2. Art des Kommunikationsgegenstandes	beruflich (komplex)	privat (einfach)
3. Funktion der Kommunikationspartner im Arbeitsprozeß;	Übergeordnet (asymmetrisch)	gleichgeordnet (symmetrisch)
4. Vertrautheitsgrad der Partner	0 – niedrig (fremd)	hoch (bekannt)
5. Emotionale Anreicherung der Thematik; Emotionale Verfassung des Sprechers	0 – niedrig	hoch
Bevorzugte sprachliche Variante	Literatursprache	Umgangssprache

**Der Lehr- und Lerngegenstand
im Konversationsunterricht**

Das zu vermittelnde Normwissen, das sich als Voraussetzung für die Entwicklung von Können im freien, partner- und situationsadäquaten Sprechen in der Fremdsprache als notwendig erweist, konkretisiert sich in den Grenzen der ausgewählten Kommunikationsbereiche Alltag und Berufsleben — in folgendem Lehr- und Lernstoff:

- a) Typen von Kommunikationssituationen:
öffentlich — nichtöffentlich;
Grad der Gebundenheit der sprachlichen Tätigkeit an die Umgebungssituation bzw. an praktische außersprachliche Tätigkeit;
- b) Typen von Partnerkonstellationen im Gespräch
übergeordnet/untergeordnet — gleichgestellt
asymmetrisch — symmetrisch
fremd/Autorität — bekannt, vertraut
formell — informell
- c) Normen/Merkmale der gesprochenen Sprache allgemein
- d) Spezifische sprachliche Mittel der dialogischen Kommunikation und der monologischen Kommunikation
- e) Literatur- und umgangssprachlich markierter Wortschatz
- f) Themagebundener Wortschatz
- g) Sprachhandlungsspezifischer Wortschatz
- h) Realisierung von Sprachhandlungsnormen in Textstrukturen (Textkomposition)

i) Paralinguistische Mittel

Die Lernprogression vollzieht sich durch schrittweises Vorgehen im 2. bis 5. Studienjahr

- von der persönlichen zur öffentlichen Sphäre der Alltags, von privaten Unterhaltungsgesprächen zu berufsspezifischen Kommunikationsaufgaben,
- von einfachen Sprachhandlungstypen, wie Erzählen, Berichten, Schildern, Beschreiben zu komplexen Sprachhandlungstypen, wie Argumentieren und Erörtern sowie diskussionstypischen Sprachhandlungstypen und
- verschiedenen Themen im Rahmen der ausgewählten Kommunikationsbereiche und Kommunikationssituationen.

Die Art der Aufgaben und Übungen erklärt sich aus dem lernpsychologischen stufenweisen Prozeß der Informationsverarbeitung und Erkenntnisgewinnung sowie Persönlichkeitsbildung: Analysieren — Differenzieren — Kategorisieren und Generalisieren-Integrieren — Anwenden.

4. Allgemeine Anforderungen an jedes freie Sprechen

- a) Der Redner/Sprecher sollte sich über die Funktion seiner sprachlichen Äußerungen im Klaren sein:
 - Informieren
 - Aktivieren
 - Klären und/oder
 - Kontakt herstellen/pflegen
- b) Es muß ständiger Hör- und Hörerkontakt bestehen, d.h. die Kommunikationsteilnehmer müssen sich räumlich so nahe sein, daß sie sich akustisch gegenseitig vernehmen können. Der Sprecher muß durch sein sprachliches Verhalten ständigen Kontakt zwischen Hörer und Sprecher herstellen und halten. Dazu dienen
 - in der dialogischen Rede z.B. Kontaktwörter, Kontaktparenthesen, Rückkopplungssignale u.dgl.
 - in der monologischen Rede: Anreden, rhetorische Fragen, Ausrufe u.a.
- c) Die sprachlichen Äußerungen müssen für die Adressaten faßlich sein.
Das erfordert folgende Merkmale der Rede:
 - Folgerichtigkeit/Logik/Klarheit/Parteilichkeit
 - Bildhaftigkeit/Anschaulichkeit
 - angemessene Redundanz
- d) Jede sprachliche Tätigkeit gewinnt an Lebendigkeit und wird zum Teil erst verständlich durch
 - prosodische Mittel (Intonation, Artikulation, Rhythmik)
 - paralinguistische Mittel (Mimik und Gestik)

- Können im fremdsprachigen freien Sprechen
- ist angesichts zunehmender und intensiver werdender internationaler Kontakte eine gesellschaftliche Notwendigkeit,
- stellt eine wesentliche Komponente der allseitig gebildeten Persönlichkeit dar und
- sollte zur Berufsehre jedes Germanisten gehören.

Res severa verum gaudium.

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ЦЕЛИ ПРИ КОММУНИКАТИВНО ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОМ ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ

С. Мюллер

Резюме

В статье впервые даются различные понятия термина "Konversation". Далее рассматриваются наиболее конкретные цели обучения конвeрсацции для германистов. Определяется предмет обучения и изучения конвeрсацции.

Статья заканчивается общими требованиями для каждого вида свободной речи.

ON SOME PROBLEMS OF TEACHING INTERPRETATION

Mall Tamm
Tartu University

Introduction

Until recently the students of the Department of English Philology at Tartu University did not have a specialized course for interpreters. In the academic years 1979–1980 and 1981–1982 the author of the present paper made attempts to prepare student interpreters for work at the Yachting Regatta of the 1980 Olympic Games and the 350th anniversary celebrations of Tartu University.

At other times the students have acquainted themselves with some elementary knowledge of consecutive and simultaneous interpretation, some basic principles and rules of the profession of an interpreter during practical language classes. This kind of instruction has been fragmentary and unsystematic. The official programme of the department has reserved time only for the theory and practice of written translation. As written and oral translation are two distinct forms of activity differing in respect of their aims, channels (visual and aural respectively) the amount of time available to the translator, etc., the students should try themselves in both. With the restructuring of the programme of the department there will be opportunities to introduce a special course for interpreters in September 1991.

A knowledge of languages, however perfect, is not sufficient to make a translator or interpreter, but only a prerequisite, an instrument which one must learn how to use in a particular way. Interpreting skills can be acquired only by constant practice. Not everybody will make a good interpreter. Such personal qualities as nervous resistance, readiness of speech, as well as intellectual gifts — power of concentration, quickness of mind, a very good memory — are indispensable. The interpreter's selfcommand and a sense of responsibility are most important. It is no exaggeration to say that the value of an interpreter depends to a great extent on his general educational and cultural background. In connection with a course of interpretation, the following questions arise: How should the course be designed? What should be taught? What kind of practice should the students have? Before tackling these problems, certain general issues connected with interpretation should be discussed.

Translation and interpreting

Translation in the wide sense of the word has been defined by L.S. Barkhudarov as the translation of a text in one language into a text in another language. This is one of the shortest, most convenient definitions, but at the same time we should bear in mind that translation theory has developed into an integrated branch. Having outgrown the limits of linguistics, it now involves psychology, semiotics, sociology. As a result there are currently several definitions of the term 'translation'.

The text, the material to be translated, can appear in two forms — a written text and a text of a speech delivered orally. Proceeding from the medium, i.e. the visual or the audio channel, respectively — we can distinguish two types of translation:

- 1) written translation and
- 2) oral translation (interpretation).

In the case of written translation the original is perceived visually and the product is presented in the form of a written text in another language. The process of translation is not limited in time, it is possible to use dictionaries and other reference literature. The translator works in a relatively calm atmosphere, his task is to assess and select the proper equivalents, to preserve the style of the original, the author's peculiarities. Translation of fiction, scientific-technical literature, socio-political texts, etc., are all different genres which have their specific features.

The process of oral translation is part of oral communication that takes place in the conditions of two different languages. The aim of the communication is to exchange information. The speaker — the true source of information — produces an utterance directed to the addressee. The speaker and the addressee use different languages. The entrance of the interpreter into the normal link "source — addressee" creates a qualitatively new form of communication, with double components, where the speaker, the primary source of information, is accompanied by the interpreter, the secondary source, who conveys the ideas to the addressee.

What is the interpreter doing? He memorizes the oral delivery, carries out semantic and logical analyses of the material, in other words, processes the given information, segmenting it with the purpose of selecting key information, on which he builds his translation, using the most adequate language units.

Correctness and full transference of information are the main requirements to the interpreter's work. He has to memorize the whole picture and details equally well.

At the same time the interpreter is closely connected with both the speaker and the addressee. The best result is achieved when the

primary and the secondary source have similar motives and aims and the interpreter can also assess the information from the point of view of the addressee. The interpreter's work is greatly facilitated if he receives immediate feedback from the addressee.

On the other hand, the interpreter must have a capacity for receiving and transferring information without any personal reaction to the facts that are conveyed in the process of communication. Emotionally he must be neutral.

The functioning of these mental mechanisms takes place under great stress. The interpreter is given hardly any time to think and he has nothing to consult but his memory. He is expected to put the information across almost immediately and as accurately as possible.

It is on these factors that the differentiation of written translation and oral interpreting is based.

Interpretation can be further divided into two types:

- 1) consecutive
- 2) simultaneous.

Consecutive interpreting takes place when the speaker makes pauses and gives the interpreter time to supply his translation. In simultaneous interpreting the interpreter speaks simultaneously with the speaker, starts and finishes at the same time with him. Simultaneous (or conference) interpretation is possible only when there are corresponding technical facilities. Consecutive interpreting lays a great burden on the interpreter's memory, but, on the other hand, can be supported by note-taking. Simultaneous interpreters need to have the ability to listen and speak at the same time. In both types it is necessary to process a great amount of incoming information and make rapid decisions. The complicated conditions of work demand from the interpreter almost perfect skills of switching over from one language to another, automatic knowledge of equivalents and a great speed of functioning. A good knowledge of two languages alone does not guarantee the function of switching over from one to the other, it is only a precondition for working out the interpreter's skills which distinguish him from an ordinary bilingual person.

The need for the skill of switch-over grows with the increase in limitations in time. The formation of the skill is one of the most important tasks in training interpreters. Almost automatic switch-over is only possible within a definite thematic framework. This means that positive results can be achieved on condition that the subject principle is followed. In other words, interpreters must have subject specialization. It very seldom happens that a person, who, for example, interprets well in the field of medicine, can be equally successful in interpreting technical reports without further special preparation and experience.

The skill of switch-over is more permanent in the direction from

one's mother tongue to the foreign language. This fact accounts for the seeming paradox that it is much easier to translate from one's mother tongue into a foreign language. This is especially true of simultaneous interpreting. Oral perception in the mother tongue is effortless, the interpreter applies well-fixed equivalents and in formulating the translation is free to make his own choice of words in the foreign language. Since it makes more sense to practise a skill that is more permanent, there should be plenty of exercises of interpreting into the foreign language during a course of interpretation. To sum up, the following aspects of the process of translation should be taken into consideration when designing a course for students:

- 1) oral perception of the original material and understanding it from the point of view of its topical contents and linguistic form;
- 2) information processing, distinguishing unique key information;
- 3) memorizing;
- 4) switching over from one language to another;
- 5) formulation of the translation.

Consecutive interpreting

Nowadays consecutive interpreting is used in smaller gatherings (where the number of participants is not large and where only two languages are involved) such as meetings of delegations, trade and commercial talks and debates on topical issues. Work with consecutive interpretation is time-consuming, since to every five minutes of original talk three minutes of the interpretation time need to be added. Depending upon the wishes of the speaker, the interpreter can translate phrase by phrase, every sentence, every paragraph or even the full text (the latter is possible only from notes). The interpreter has no right to stop the speaker, to intervene in his flow of speech. Interruptions may hamper the speaker and make him lose the logical build-up of his presentation. The interpreter can ask clarifying questions or request the repetition of some figures or facts only when the speaker has stopped. The interpreter's task is to give either a full or a summarizing translation (by cutting redundancy, shortening phrases and leaving out repetitions).

The hard-and-fast rule of interpretation that INTERPRETERS MUST ALWAYS SPEAK IN THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR and identify themselves with the speaker should never be violated!

Limited time and excessive burden on memory were already mentioned above. The consecutive interpreter cannot fully trust his memory. Key figures, names and facts should be taken down. R.K. Minyar-Beloruchev gives several systems for note-taking, but each interpreter can work out his own individual system. Also, while taking notes he can solve some translation problems. The general

recommendation is that the notes should be in the language in which the interpretation will be given.

The interpreter must have a remarkably good hearing. Non-native speakers of English, all kinds of localisms and regional variants of English need special attention.

It is also very important how interpreters speak themselves. Their voices should carry and be pleasant. The interpretation should be without hesitation, intelligible and free from excessive emotions. At the same time the interpreter can do a lot to establish mutual understanding and create a friendly atmosphere. The interpreter should be neutral, respectful and should never try to draw attention to himself.

Simultaneous interpreting

In the post-war years, conference interpretation has become a profession of its own, with specific rules and ethics. Simultaneous interpretation was first used in Nuremberg Trials. The Nuremberg interpreters were not yet professionals in the real sense of the word. They were highly educated people with multilingual journalistic, legal, intelligence backgrounds.

From that time onwards simultaneous interpreters began to be taught in specialized schools and at courses. If a consecutive interpreter could be compared to a live-stage actor, the simultaneous interpreter is a radio actor. Technical facilities are indispensable for this type of interpretation. Conferences have usually more than two working languages. The speaker's report, delivered in one of the working languages, is parallelly interpreted into all the other working languages and transmitted to the multilingual audience. If there are five working languages, the organizers must have a conference hall with four booths. Each booth is serviced by a team of at least two, ideally three, interpreters. Interpreter number one is doing the translation, number two is following the work done by number one, ready to take over at any moment. Number three is fully relaxing. When number one has finished, after working for not more than 15-20 minutes, number two begins to translate and number three to follow his work. Number one is now entitled to total relaxation.

Simultaneous interpreting takes place in conditions of extreme shortage of time. The division of attention between truly simultaneous listening and speaking needs an utmost degree of concentration which cannot last long. This accounts for the teamwork character of this type of interpreting.

The principles of organization of simultaneous interpretation are different in the Western countries and in the Soviet Union. In the West the common practice is to interpret into one's mother

tongue. The conference organizers recruit a full team of interpreters, members of the International Association of Conference Interpreters, with all the necessary language combinations. In the Soviet Union the so-called interpretation with a "pilot" is used. For example, a Spanish-speaking orator is translated into Russian, while the English, French and German interpreters tune into the channel of the Russian interpreter and give secondary translation from his version. In this case the Spanish-Russian interpreter is the pilot. The situation changes when the speaker uses German, for example, but Russian remains the "pilot language". Each interpreter carries a very great degree of responsibility. If the pilot fails, the whole chain will break down. In the Soviet Union interpreters work in two directions — from their mother tongue into the foreign language and vice versa.

Simultaneousness is achieved thanks to the phenomenon of redundancy of information which makes it possible to compress the original text. Also, the interpreter can use a higher speed of utterance than the orator. The interpreter's knowledge of the structure of the language and his competence in the given field allow him to predict elements in the flow of speech. This is another very important factor which makes simultaneous interpretation possible.

The more experience the interpreter has, the higher is the speed he can develop. The interpreter has to prepare for himself a list of the most frequently used cliché expressions. When compiling the list, the interpreter should take into consideration the brevity of equivalents to allow himself to gain time. The conference language and the general language of scientific presentations are very rich in the constantly repeated word combinations, full language units which are all translated automatically. If the interpreter has specialized in one field or two closely related fields, he has a command of terminology and clichés of the subject almost as good as that of specialists in the fields.

Again it must be stressed that successful work is possible only in the case of specialization, though, experienced simultaneous interpreters who have mastered the technique of their work can enrich their vocabulary and enter a neighbouring area, for example, history — art history — medieval architecture — restoration of medieval architecture. Each interpreter must build up his own system of thorough preparation for each conference, working together with the organizers and the field consultants, and making sure that he gets all the necessary materials in time.

In the case of simultaneous interpretation the main task of the interpreter is to guarantee transference of information as accurately as possible. Quickness of reaction is the first requirement. The interpreter has no time to search for the best synonym, stylistic errors are pardonable, but the sentences must always be finished and

grammatically logical. Certain grammatical transformations like the replacement of the Active by the Passive Voice, are allowed.

The interpreter should understand all speakers, including non-natives who in addition to phonetic errors have their mother-tongue interference in the grammatical structure of the sentence. The interpreter should also know regional varieties of English.

Personal names, place names, as well as all figures should be written down and translated simultaneously with the movement of the hand. The interpreter should speak intelligibly, keep to some logical rhythm, be neutral, refrain from expressing his own attitudes. The interpreter should not add anything to the speech, in particular, he **MUST NOT ADD ANY NEW KEY INFORMATION**. To do so would be the gravest possible error.

The work of a conference interpreter is hard. It takes time to achieve mastery. One of the golden rules of the conference interpreter is — practise wherever you are, at meetings, lectures, gatherings, *translate in your mind whenever you can!*

A student course for interpreters

At present the need for all kinds of interpreters is rapidly growing in Estonia. Many students have been called on to act as interpreters by various firms, organizations, societies. After returning from their assignments they have many questions to ask. The trial and error method has not been of much help to them.

The first attempts to conduct courses for student interpreters were made in connection with the Olympic Yachting Regatta and the university jubilee. These courses had a concrete character, they were fully based on definite subjects. The courses were initiated by real organizations which later employed the best students. The participants were highly motivated and there was a considerable element of competition. Under these conditions positive results could be obtained.

A more general course, designed to give the students some elementary knowledge about the skills in the profession of an interpreter, can be arranged in senior years when the students' competence in the foreign language has reached a sufficient level, i.e., the main prerequisite for the activity of interpreting is already there.

As everyday teaching practice shows, even the senior students' listening comprehension is not adequate for interpreting purposes. The author of the paper is at present teaching practical English to second-year students. A regular weekly period of two hours of listening comprehension has substantially improved the students' ability of oral perception.

So the first introductory part of the course should be fully de-

voted to the development of oral perception, as well as memorization without support from written texts. Both audio and video recordings could be used.

The next problem is information processing. The students should learn how to analyse the material and record the basic facts. Memory scope can be enlarged through special exercises. At first the students are unable to remember longer portions and can reproduce only the last items.

The preparatory period of practical exercises should be accompanied by lectures giving an overview of the nature of consecutive and simultaneous interpreting together with the basic rules and the ethics of the profession.

The next stage should be set apart for consecutive interpreting.

Here the problem of the choice of practice material arises. As the students would spend considerable time on active memorizing of a large number of facts, figures and problems, these should be of informational and communicative value. The choice of the subject area depends very much on the preference of the student group. Texts dealing with problems of Estonian history, Tartu University, political and cultural life of Estonia, sights and museums of Tartu could be recommended, especially as the students have a very real prospect of actually using the acquired knowledge: the university is currently receiving numerous foreign guests and very often students from the English department are hosting them.

Creation of teaching materials is not only the teacher's task. Students can make their own contribution.

The atmosphere of the interpretation classes should not be too formal, rigid teacher-student relationships should not prevail. The teacher who is simply an elder colleague, sharing his or her experience, bringing examples from the meetings, talks and conferences he/she has participated in in the capacity of an interpreter, is more likely to encourage the students to overcome difficulties.

The next stage should be devoted to simultaneous translation. The first exercise is to learn to speak together with listening to the tape. The aim is not to try to translate everything, but only to experience the situation of listening and speaking at the same time.

The first lessons are sure to be extremely frustrating for the students. As a rule, out of twenty students only two or three have such personal qualities as quick reaction, perfect hearing, ability to divide attention and speak at a high speed in their mother tongue, etc. With the best students, picked out from many groups, it would be possible to continue at a more advanced stage of instruction.

As the envisaged course is not yet included in the official programme and the number of hours dedicated to interpreting has not been fixed, it is difficult at this stage to give a more detailed descrip-

tion of the planned instruction. It is, however, hoped that the general approach adumbrated here may be of use to all those interested in teaching and learning oral interpretation.

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О НЕКОТОРЫХ ПРОБЛЕМАХ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ УСТНОГО ПЕРЕВОДА

М. Тамм

Резюме

В данной статье рассматриваются проблемы преподавания устного перевода в рамках официальной программы отделения английской филологии. Отдельно выделены последовательный и синхронный переводы. При описании этих видов переводческой деятельности подчеркиваются и некоторые особенности и трудности для переводчика, которые в процессе обучения должны учитываться преподавателем.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO OLDER ADULT STUDENTS

Nora Toots
Tartu University

The older you are the more difficult it seems to take up studying a foreign language. But at the same time the more foreign languages you know the easier it is to start learning a new one. On the one hand, a young person learns directly and gets on with his studies with the help of his youth, freshness and unburdened memory. On the other hand, an older language learner succeeds by relying on his previous experience and knowledge of other languages. Thus, on the face of it, these two groups of learners — the young and the middle-aged — seem to be balanced somehow. In reality it is not so simple.

We must always consider the fact that not all older people who need to learn a foreign language have mastered any other foreign languages on the knowledge of which they can rely. Yet it is quite obvious that an older person has gained greater experience through his own mother tongue compared with a young person and can rely on that to a certain extent.

Doubtless, a teenager is the best foreign languages learner, i.e. not taking a bilingual teenager into account. Bilingual people are somewhat different and they ought to be approached differently.

It very often happens that an adult has to learn a foreign language at a late age. In such cases it is dire necessity that motivates the person. To learn a foreign language is no easy task, especially if one is middle-aged or older.

In foreign language teaching not enough attention has been paid to middle-aged (40–50 year-old) learners. Quite a lot of problems that adult learners encounter have been previously discussed, but for those who have tackled the problems all people over 20 are the same — just adults. It is quite obvious that a 20-year-old cannot be compared with a 40–50-year-old. The scope of their experience is different, their attitude towards life and even learning a foreign language is different, too. They are actually two different generations of different psychological make-up with the older persons having more set and fixed habits.

This article deals with a few problems concerning the older group of adult learners. There are many factors that one should pay attention to, if one wants to be successful in his/her teaching

job. I think the two most important factors are (A) aims/goals and (B) the student's personality. Point (B) could be comprised of (1) psychological traits, (2) knowledge of other foreign languages, (3) general proficiency, (4) general acquisition of linguistic material, (5) type of memory. There may be several other aspects, but the abovementioned may be considered most important.

(A) Aims/Goals

There are usually two main goals: purely communicative or specific combined with communicative. It rarely occurs that the goal is solely specific (i.e. reading and understanding one's special texts). It must be admitted that this has been the chief goal of the Soviet foreign language teaching for the last 50 years. In the abovementioned case the learners often try to cope with the learning the foreign language on their own and they more or less succeed in doing this. It is easy for a teacher to help them and there are usually no problems. But it becomes more difficult if one has a communicative goal in view. It is probably very difficult to form an ideal group but the teacher should try to do his/her best. This is especially important with the learners of older age groups because the conditions for teaching them must be the best. The groups should not be formed at random, without due consideration. In order to get a near ideal group the teacher should do some very careful selecting and reshuffling, finding out about the characteristic features in the case of each person.

(B) The student's Personality

(1) **Psychological traits.** Every human being is a personality. The older one gets the clearer become some individual features/traits. These traits form a kind psychological background to the person's studies, and they play a very important role in his/her foreign language activities.

People can be roughly divided into extroverts and introverts, though pure cases of either group are very rare. People are usually of mixed type — with the features of either extrovert or introvert dominant. It is generally known that working with a group of primarily extroverts is pleasant and easy, while dealing with a group of introverts is extremely difficult and consumes very much energy on the teacher's part. However it must be admitted that there are some cases where it is very difficult to work with extroverts only (in cases where everybody is extremely keen on his/her own ideas and wants to be dominant in the group), but in general, the success in foreign language learning/teaching is noticeable from the very beginning with a group of extroverts. Such success is much harder to achieve with a group of introverts. Introverts are usually shy and

slow in their way of thinking, speaking and action, and they manage to cope with much less than extroverts during the same span of time, and speed is a very valuable element in a foreign language lesson. Thus, in a group of introverts it appears to be a positive phenomenon if it includes a couple of quick and active extroverts. But it is not always fair for the extroverts. Methodologists have not yet firmly decided whether we should sacrifice extroverts in favour of introverts. Introverts undoubtedly gain a lot if there are some extroverts in their group. Extroverts usually help introverts become livelier and make them participate in conversations so that the situation in the group will not seem so helpless and dull. Also, there are extroverts who like to be among introverts as they can have more speaking time, they can take the initiative in the group and can generally show off.

Besides being an extrovert or an introvert a person may be vulnerable to criticism (the older the person the more vulnerable he seems to be). The teacher has to find this out very quickly when starting work with a group. Some people cannot stand being corrected, some are indifferent and others are grateful to the teacher for correcting them. Those people who are vulnerable may suffer greatly during a foreign language lesson and finally foreign language lessons become an ordeal for them, and if the learner is an elderly person, his/her success will be almost nil. In such cases the teacher should apply an individual approach to the learners.

Some people are over-self-conscious, some are practically obsessed with self-consciousness and this feature is doubtless an unpleasant obstacle in foreign language learning: the person never dares to speak up, or participate in a debate out of sheer fright that he/she might say something improper or absolutely wrong. The teacher has to be especially tactful with such people.

Some people are over-reserved or have no idea what to speak about; things and events may seem to be too trivial to talk about. Others (the talkative, chatty ones) can speak about any subject and because of their way with words can make any trivial topic sound like a glamorous one. Such people are always ready for a chat. For them learning a foreign language is much easier than for the taciturn ones. So, there are some people who can never find a topic to talk about, others have never any problems in finding a topic for conversation.

People with limited imagination often feel inferior. The same can be observed in many people who are slow in their speech or actions. Thus, there is a task for the teacher: to try to curb the talkative ones and to encourage more reserved ones, but all this must be done very discretely in order not to insult anybody.

(2) Knowledge of other foreign languages. It is of extreme importance for the teacher to know whether his/her student knows any other

foreign language which makes the process of learning a new foreign language easier for a mature student. The teacher can always point to the similarities between the two respective foreign languages and also the adult student has acquired some foreign language learning experience which helps him/her learn a new foreign language. If your student does not know any foreign languages, you have to rely on his/her native tongue, that is if the foreign language and his mother tongue have something in common. It helps in learning the structure of a foreign language. In case of related languages, there are many more points in common.

(3) General proficiency. Proficiency greatly depends on the level of the person's general education. The higher the level, the greater the proficiency. Naturally, this is not a rule without exceptions. There are people with a low level of education having high proficiency and vice versa. People should be divided into groups by taking into account their general proficiency; this can be determined by various testing methods, foreign language tests excluded.

(4) General acquisition of linguistic material. There are people whom we may call 'linguistically-minded' and others who are not. Usually linguistically-minded people are linguists by profession, but one may also find among non-linguists people who are quite capable of learning languages. This kind of trait is extremely important for a middle-aged learner. At 40-50 years of age, a person's memory is not what it was when the person was 18-20. One cannot memorize things as easily as in one's young days. In such cases this quality (linguistically-mindedness) has a very great role to play. If you are linguistically-minded, you understand language structures easily and you can operate with your limited vocabulary amazingly well. There are quite a lot of people whose vocabulary comprises of about 1000 words, who can express themselves freely and can be understood easily. And there are people who may know 10,000 words and yet they cannot speak, they do not know how to make up sentences with these words. Those elderly people who are not linguistically-minded at all should avoid starting to learn a new foreign language, it would be a torture both for them and their teacher.

(5) Type of memory. While studying a foreign language at an advanced age, a lot also depends on your type of memory. There are usually three types of memory: visual, auditory and mechanical. A person never has just one type of memory, one of the types is usually dominant. People, who write much, usually have a visual memory. In case of visual memory it often happens that the learner must not just see the written word but he/she must also remember where the word was written, at the beginning of the page or somewhere else.

Such people usually cannot memorize words written on separate slips of paper, they must see them on a page, in definite order. Very often visual memory is closely connected with mechanical memory. The learner's eyes have to follow the process of writing.

There are fewer people with auditory memory. In the majority of cases such people have or have had some kind of eye trouble.

It is always more rational for people with the same type of memory to study together. With learners of older age groups there is no use in thinking that by forcing them to use different types of memorizing one can develop their memories. It would be a waste of time and energy. The teacher has to give in and teach his/her students the way that suits the learners best, if he/she wants to achieve some results.

There may be some more other factors promoting or acting as a break upon the learning process. Very much depends on the teacher, on his/her skills, on his/her tact and willingness to steadily encourage his/her students by constantly evoking positive emotions in them.

To sum up, it is important to bear in mind all those above-mentioned factors if we want to achieve good results in teaching foreign languages to middle-aged adult learners. We always have to remember that an older person starts learning a foreign language only when he/she has an urgent need for this. The teacher's task is to help such a learner by using all the means and resources at his/her disposal.

О НЕКОТОРЫХ НАБЛЮДЕНИЯХ ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ ВЗРОСЛЫХ СТАРШЕГО ВОЗРАСТА ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

Н. Тоотс

Резюме

Чем старше человек, тем труднее изучать иностранные языки. Каждый учитель должен учесть целый ряд специфических проблем при обучении взрослых старшего возраста: (А) цель изучения иностранного языка и (Б) личности учащегося. При учетывании личность учащегося следует обратить особое внимание на: (1) психологические черты человека, (2) знание других иностранных языков, (3) общие навыки и опыт, (4) общая способность и (5) тип памяти учащегося.

Правильное использование этих черт учащегося может превратить столь трудный процесс усваивания иностранного языка в более приятную деятельность.

THE COUNSELING-LEARNING APPROACH TO COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING

Mae Veskis
Tartu University

In recent years, due to increasing contacts with other countries, learning foreign languages has become immensely popular in Estonia. The majority of adult learners need a particular foreign language for practical purposes and it is crucial for them to master it as quickly as possible. Success in language learning greatly depends on the methods used. The approach presented here represents the principles and practices developed from the writings of Charles A. Curran and other experienced practitioners who have carried on his work. The methodology became known as the Counseling-Learning approach to Community Language Learning. The article focuses on the philosophical framework on which the Community Language Learning (CLL) model is based and gives selected illustrations of its implementation in the classroom.

I. Principles of Community Language Learning

The particular method and techniques of CLL center on the dynamics operating in whole-person learning. The matrix of personal relationships involved in the classroom is seen as the actual medium of learning. This "matrix of personal relationships" involves: the relationship of the teacher with herself, the relationship between the teacher and the student, and the relationship of the student with the other students in the class. It is the quality of the interaction of these personal relationships which dictates the kind of learning that takes place.

There are five awarenesses of whole-person education, namely,

1) the paramount importance of the relationship between the teacher and learners.

Knowledge exists among us. Learning has to happen in community and it is the quality of the relationships that are attained in the group which will dictate the investment in the learning.

2) the notion that content is not just an abstract body of information but rather a personalized synthesis of ideas and facts.

Knowledge comes to us only in and through the subjectivity of another person. The teacher teaches a personalized synthesis of what she knows.

3) the notion of values, emotions and personal identity as being intrinsic to the learning process.

Values are those complexes of personal meanings about life in which one is invested as a whole person. The teacher is not only unfolding objectively impersonal content, but something of what she deems important in her life.

4) the necessity of a mature self-discipline on the part of both teacher and learners.

The need for the teacher to discipline herself is quite obvious where the disparity in knowledge is evident. But it is also important for a student to exercise self-discipline. The teacher cannot teach unless the student is prepared to learn.

5) the need for understanding skills to be exercised by both teacher and learners.

Understanding includes not only a comprehension of what is being said but also the quality of relationship towards the one saying it. It is an understanding of the person who is communicating and not just of the content of the communication.

2. Stages of Learning a Foreign Language

2.1. Overview

In the CLL methodology, foreign language learning has been divided into five stages. These five stages are not considered as discrete categories in and of themselves with clear dividing lines between them. The stage scheme is simply intended to give clues to the teacher regarding where learners may be in their own internalization process. With these awarenesses a teacher can respond more appropriately to learner needs.

One way to describe the five-stage learning process is to say that stages one, two and three represent an "entry" into learning, a time when learners gain a sense of security with the teacher, the self, the other learners, and the material. In stages one and two learners are quite dependent on the teacher as the source of their knowledge and security. This dependence lessens gradually as they move into stage three. One of the reasons for the "ambiguity" of this stage seems to be that the learner is a knower at one moment and a non-knower the next. As this ambiguity binds is gradually resolved, the learners are able to process corrections more readily and receive information less defensively. But then renewed dependence develops as learners move into a stage four-five relationship with the teacher. However, this is

no longer a resistant dependence that makes the learner desirous of masking her ignorance, instead it is a mature acceptance of what still needs to be learned and an even more cooperative relationship with the teacher and other learners that existed in the first three stages.

In the entry stages, the teacher's central concern is to create a secure environment for the learners so that they can enter the target language with confidence. During the ambiguity period, the teacher must maintain a delicate balance between learner security, new content, and correction. In stages four and five, the focus shifts to accuracy and precision in the structure of the target language as well as an appreciation for the culture it communicates.

2.2. Description of Stages

2.2.1. Stage One-Total Dependence

In stage one the learner is thought of as being totally dependent on the teacher as the source of the knowledge for which she has come. Dependence in the language setting can come about through the lack of knowledge in the target language as well as simply not knowing if the little bit of English one already has, will be adequate to meet the class demands.

2.2.2. Stage Two — Kicking Out of Dependence

Stage two is that point where the learner is still aware of her dependence but also begins to feel that there are some things she can say independently of the knower. Stage two is characterized by an urge to use what one knows without the help of the teacher.

2.2.3. Stage Three — Functional Independence

Learners at this stage are still making mistakes but they can function communicatively. There is no doubt that the learning is not completed, but if, in fact, no more learning were to take place, the learner could still get by. If learners clearly choose to stop learning at this point, that is their option; if, however, they stop because they think they are finished when, in fact, they are not, then they need to be made aware of this

2.2.4. Stage Four — Opting for Dependence

As learning and competence increase, the need and the desire for dependence decreases. As a learner moves into a "stage four" relationship, she is now able to look at what she does not yet know and to do so with the security of what is already known. At this point the learner has come to some genuine acceptance of her new language self and has chosen to go further.

2.2.5. Stage Five — Total Independence

In stage five what the learner needs in terms of new information is

not great, but there is still the need for finishing touches. A student may wish to get rid of an accent; or, in the area of writing, the learner may know grammar, but is still in need of more idiomatic usage. By the end of stage five, the learner has learned all that is necessary in order to be totally independent of the teacher for a particular task. This is not to say that she has learned all there is to know about everything.

3.3. Correction and the Five-Stage Process

There is an appropriate time for offering correction based on a learner's security and readiness. In the first two stages learners are given the opportunity to enter into the target language. In the stage one conversational experience, for instance, learners are given a great deal of freedom to play with the sounds and structures through various activities. In these first two stages, precision of production is not the main concern. While a learner may be slightly off target in pronunciation or grammatical usage, having the opportunity to self-invest with all the support of the teacher is what is most important.

As the learner becomes more fluent in stage three, there can emerge an intense frustration and anger at the self for its remaining mistakes. As she becomes aware of and sensitive to her own mistakes, to have anyone pointing out these mistakes may be resented. One way of facilitating these difficulties is through reverse role-playing. By simulating the role of another person's emotional state one can gain a profound understanding of that other person's world. A teacher can willingly take the confused, frustrated position of the learner making mistakes. In doing so, he is putting the learner in a position of superiority and control at the same time getting a much better feel for the learner's particular frustration. The learner, on the other hand, taking over the teacher's confident and secure role, seems to function linguistically better not only in the role-playing but in successive learning experiences outside the role-playing exchange.

3. Techniques of CLL

It is a common practice for language learners to memorize lists of words, model sentences, or dialogues for a particular and immediate purpose. Although a lot of time and energy may go into memorizing the material, once the temporary need is fulfilled, the list of words, phrases and sentences can vanish from memory quite quickly. If learning is to be internalized by learners, it needs to have personal relevance in the first stages of learning. They need to experience the material of learning in a personally engaged situation.

The techniques of CLL are intended to provide an opportunity for learners to become personally engaged with the teacher, the other students and the material.

One of the most widely practiced techniques is "chunking". It was one of the most effective ways of carrying out the initial conversations in a Community Language Learning experience. In a first conversation in a foreign language, the learners are seated in a circle, usually with a tape recorder in the center easily accessible to all. The teacher, seen now as a "language counselor", stands outside the circle and only participates in the conversation through the learners and what they wish to say to one another. Whoever among the learners wishes to speak first raises a hand. The teacher goes behind that learner and listens carefully to what she wants to say. The teacher gives back clearly and slowly in the target language what has been said, a word at a time, or phrase by phrase. The learner restates the communication word by word or phrase by phrase to whomever is being addressed in the group.

This "chunking" technique is necessary to give learners security in the language they are learning. Findings have shown when learners, who had little or no familiarity with the target language, heard it spoken rapidly and fluently by the teacher, an instinctive panic reaction was caused. This reaction tightened learners and seemed to cause either forgetting, stammering or mispronunciation. This led Curran to theorize that as learners were more secure by knowing that the entire language was not going to be hurled at them so rapidly that they were pre-determined to fail, their whole selves could relax and remain open to the sounds, rhythms, and structure of the language. Therefore the "language counselors" began giving phrases and sentences slowly, in "bite sizes". Anxiety decreased and learners were able to reproduce the words and phrases more accurately and fluently.

3.1. Conversations

Conversations will be implemented in different ways depending upon the learners stage of learning, size of class, purpose of the course, and time constraints.

In the initial conversations, the focus is not on "correcting" the learner, but rather on helping him to feel secure in communicating.

3.2. Playbacks

The purpose of playbacks is to let learners hear themselves speaking the target language. Even though the conversation is recorded in bite sizes, when it is played back, it sounds like a fluent conversation. During this playbacks the teacher should encourage students to relax and just listen to themselves.

3.3. The Human Computer

The teacher chooses to be, like a computer, at the disposal of the learner. The learners have an opportunity to take control of the source of knowledge and draw from it for their own learning process. The teacher is at the service of the learners, who often have an unconscious fear to ask questions otherwise. But if the teacher acts as a human computer, this fear will vanish and the learners become more confident in acquiring the material.

3.4. Card Games

A wide variety of card games can be effective in giving learners control over their own learning in an enjoyable way. Rather than seeing themselves as passive receptors of "content" passed on from the teacher, they can feel themselves far more in charge of their own learning.

In a foreign language classroom, the learners choose the words, phrases or sentences they wish to remember. Their native language is written on one colour card and the foreign language on the other card. Most adult learners quickly remember having played some form of a concentration game in their childhood, or easily form pick up the rules of the game as they are explained by the teacher.

3.5. Songs

Popular and folk songs are often used in a typical CLL cycle. If such songs are used in the early stages, it is important to keep in mind the learners' security. Criteria that have been helpful in selecting appropriate popular songs for beginning students are: speed of the song, clarity of the singer, simplicity of vocabulary, absence of idiomatic expressions, repetition of verses, meaning of song, and easy singing range for learners to sing along with.

The Community Language Learning methodology diverts from the methods used in traditional pedagogy. Its success depends greatly on whether the learners and the teacher have faith in it or not. Since the CLL methodology gives security to learners and creates a sense of community that facilitate the mastery of a foreign language, it could be most effectively used in groups consisting of adult learners with different professions and interests who do not know each other at first. The techniques introduced by CLL approach are only one way of teaching a foreign language. Perhaps it is more reasonable to use them selectively in our conditions. But the psychological principles the CLL methodology is based on, especially the importance of personal relationships in learning, seem to be true of foreign language learning in general and thus can be applied to several different techniques.



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ПОДХОД К КОЛЛЕКТИВНОМУ МЕТОДУ ОБУЧЕНИЯ

М. Вескис

Резюме

В статье знакомят с коллективным методом обучения взрослых, выработанный Ч.А. Карраном и его сторонниками. В обучении иностранного языка подчеркивается значение хороших личностных отношений между учителем и учениками. В статье описываются принципы коллективного метода, этапы обучения с психологической точки зрения, правильные способы исправления ошибок на данных этапах и техника этой методологии.

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