

## Modes and Strategies of Intercession of the German Language Lexicon as a Foreign Language Some more Efficient Ways of Lexicon Intercession



Linguistics

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### Abstract

The main concern for teachers of German as a foreign language is the intercession of German language with the most efficient modern teaching methods, since by making serious efforts and using the most modern teaching methods the acquisition of all values of German language is made possible, and the studying of that language becomes more essential and qualitative. This paper deals with modes and strategies of lexicon intercession since the full understanding of its main peculiarities helps understand more easily the difficulties the students face during their lexicon acquisition and then the methods, techniques or strategies of avoiding these kinds of obstacles are easily learnt and practiced. Based on the latest and the most efficient teaching and learning methodology, we will describe strategies that help in easier and more efficient intercession of the German language lexicon.

### Introduction

*“Teaching is a planned activity that aims at helping one more people to learn.”<sup>63</sup>*

By planning our teaching, we can very easily reach our goals and achieve positive results in accomplishing the teaching/learning objectives. In order to realize this aim, we should use modern efficient teaching methods. These vary depending on the planned objectives in the curricula.

The teaching methods used in lexicon intercession in foreign language teaching are also very important in acquiring the language itself. The notion of “method” originates from Greek and Latin “methodos” or “methodus” and means approach, mode, that leads to an aimed objective.<sup>64</sup>

The notion of “method” can be interpreted in two ways. In the closest sense, the term “method” refers to concrete teaching/learning procedures in order to achieve the set goal. In the broadest sense, it refers to a didactic and methodic concept which is based on planning and leading the instructional process.<sup>65</sup>

During the process of acquisition of new words, several main intercession and reinforcement principles of the lexicon are pointed out. The principle of netted and contextual learning or word interconnection aims at presenting the new words and lexical units in context with words and other lexical units. This makes it clear that the meaning of words should not be learnt in an isolated setting. According to Mathé, the classification of words in some important grammatical and semantic aspects would ease the lexicon acquisition.

Namely, in order to determine more easily the netting or new-word interconnection criteria, we should focus on some classification principles, such as those of the semantic aspect:

- Collocations: drive a car, play the piano, etc.
- Subordinations: fruits: apples, pears, oranges, etc.
- Synonyms: report, announce, tell, say.
- Antonyms: big – small, cold - hot<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Musai, B. (1999): Psikologji Edukimi, Tiranë, p. 26.

<sup>64</sup> Simone M. (2003): Verschiedene Unterrichtsmethoden, München, GRIN Verlag GmbH.  
Retrieved from: <http://www.hausarbeiten.de/faecher/vorschau/39021.html> (19.03.2012)

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.↑

<sup>66</sup> Mathé, Isabelle, (1997): Wie läßt sich das erklären?, Wien, DA., p. 14.

According to grammatical aspects, we can include pronouns (personal/subject), modal verbs, etc.

According to thematic and situational aspects, new words are learnt as thematic entireties. This is the case with the word *Einkaufe(n)* (in German) meaning shopping and it means *going shopping, buying, bargaining, spending money, etc.* The word *shopping center* has the same meaning.

The principle of learning through many channels is based on the viewpoint that the reception or acquisition of the new material, e.g. lexicon, can be reinforced by receiving the new information through many perception channels. Learning through many different channels, the student uses or activates more perception channels, which means that s/he learns by combining listening, watching, speaking and acting. Learning is a change that comes as a result of the experience. Unlike the behaviorists, cognitive psychologists such as Piaget, Anderson, Bruner, Ausubel and Glazer, claim that learning in itself is an internal process that cannot be observed directly.<sup>67</sup>

The change happens in the ability of the person to react in a certain situation. According to the cognitive approach, the change in the behavior, according to behaviorists, relates to the fact that learning is only a reflection of the internal change. Thus, unlike behaviorist psychologists, the cognitive ones have been interested in non-observable factors such as knowledge, aims, feelings, creations and thought.<sup>68</sup> In order to achieve the objectives during the intercession, one should consider types of learning. In the process of acquisition of a foreign language, new information is accepted and processed through several perception channels.

According to Simone, there are several types of learning based on the ability to receive and process the given information, as follows:

1. Visual type – learning by seeing, i.e. visual representation and perception of things, e.g. photos, texts, videos, etc.
2. Audio type – learning by listening, whereupon the information is acquired through words, discussions, sayings, etc.
3. Haptic type – learning through touching, whereupon things are self-investigated
4. Verbal type – verbal learning, known as abstract, whereupon explanations during the learning process help the learners.
5. Interaction-oriented type – learning through contacts and social discussions.<sup>69</sup>

The instructor should pay attention to all types of learners in class and instantly adapt his/her class, i.e. teaching based on the needs of all of the learning types mentioned above. Every teacher should note the presence of every type of learner in their class; on the other hand, the students themselves should be aware of belonging to one or the other type, so that it will be easier for them to achieve their goals during their studies.

In the lexicon intercession, the word plays a very important role. The words of a language are exactly those on whom the acquisition of new lexical units depends. If we consider that words first need to be understood and then learnt and remembered, then the question would relate to the selection of the best mode or the most appropriate means to achieve this goal. The notion of *word* (vokabel)<sup>70</sup> includes a complex field in whose center the lexical unit is situated. Every such lexical unit comprises of a bunch of information, which come from different linguistic categories such as phonetics, morphology and syntax. Peter Scherfer explains below what it means to learn a word. According to him, words should be:

<sup>67</sup> Musai, B. (1999): Psikologji edukimi, Tiranë, p. 88.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid↑

<sup>69</sup> Simone M. (2003) : “Nach der Fähigkeit neue Informationen aufzunehmen und zu bearbeiten unterscheidet man folgende Lerntypen: 1.den visuellen Typ – durch Sehen lernenden Typ, dem in dem Lernprozess eine visuelle Vorlage (zum Beispiel ein Bild, ein Text etc.) hilft, 2.den auditiven Typ – durch Hören lernenden Typ, der die meisten Informationen aus der gehörten Rede einnimmt, 3.den haptischen Typ – durch den Tastsinn lernenden Typ, der die neuen Sachen selbst untersuchen muss, 4.den verbalen Typ – dem die verbale Erklärung beim Lernen meistens hilft 5.den interaktionsorientierenden Typ – der im sozialen Kontakt und Gespräch lernt.

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<sup>70</sup> Word (from Latin: vocabulum = nomination, noun) is a single term in a foreign language.

- a) Recognized
- b) Understood
- c) Remembered / memorized
- d) Re-found
- e) Appropriately used<sup>71</sup>

As far as the abilities that the students should acquire are concerned, they are divided in the following three groups:

- Recognition and activation of learnt and practiced notions
- Expansion of meaning and remembrance of learnt words based on earlier language learning
- The expansion of word cognition through word-formation rules<sup>72</sup>

Every teacher's duty is to ensure an appropriate learning environment with efficient teaching/learning strategies that would offer students an easier approach in the world of lexicon in a foreign language.

New, unknown words represent a big challenge for every foreign language learner. This is why the instructor should pay attention to those words and make sure the students understand and learn them. The instructor should give additional explanations so that the students understand the meaning of new words; they should understand where these new words are used, apart from the text where they have met them for the first time.

Also, by repeating and practicing enough, these newly learnt words can be easily remembered and thus help students enforce and enrich their lexicon, i.e. vocabulary. The acquisition of new words, their memorization and correct usage produce a rich vocabulary of speakers of a foreign language; this strengthens his/her linguistic values as well as linguistic security and identity.

### Methods of word learning

The memorization of new words can be divided into three groups, e.g. based on the similarity of words in both languages (pre-associations or cognates<sup>73</sup>), then based on the word lists in a language and based on the typical contexts. These forms of word memorization can be given as written assignments in workbooks. Working with dictionaries can also help a lot in this context.<sup>74</sup>

The word lists include assignments that aim at practicing the meaning of a word in the foreign language, i.e. paraphrasing and definitions. This is very important for the aims of communication between those the learners of the L2 and the native speakers of L2. In many cases, the vocabulary enrichment leads to passive understanding, which highly influences the discussions with native L2 speakers. In the lexicon intercession, it is not only the way of presenting the new lexicon that matters, but also techniques that would help students independently decode the unknown words.

The possibility of achieving this while learning a foreign language should be reviewed, having in mind certain relevant factors. Before carrying out the intercession of techniques for independent lexicon acquisition, we should verify whether we are dealing with unusual students when it comes to foreign language learning (i.e. students

<sup>71</sup> Mathé, Isabelle, (1997): "man muss: a) sie erkennen, b). Sie verstehen, c). Sie speichern, d) sie wieder auffinden, e) sie korrekt verwenden können": Wie läßt sich das erklären?, Wien, DA., p. 15

<sup>72</sup> Mathé, Isabelle, (1997): "a) das Wiedererkennen und Aktivieren beriets gelernter und geübter Bedeutungen sowie b) die Erweiterung des Verstehens und Behaltens nichts eigenes gelernter Vokabeln unter Ausnutzung vorhandenen Sprachwissens (...)  
c) die Erweiterung des Vokabelwissens durch Ausnutzung von Wortbildungsregeln": Wie läßt sich das erklären? ,Wien ,DA., p. 16

<sup>73</sup> Mathé, Isabelle, (1997): Wie läßt sich das erklären? ,Wien ,DA., p. 16

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.↑

that had never learnt a foreign language before), since they should be acquainted with these techniques and methods very slowly and carefully and they should practice them more frequently than the others.

### Word learning on their scope

During the word decoding, that seem unknown at first sight, students that are more familiar with foreign language learning, i.e. they have learnt this language earlier, can be warned about the rules of word-formation.

These students can be told that in German there are two main word-formation modes. One of them is the formation of compound nouns (composites) by joining two or more words together (e.g. *Kursteilnehmende*/course participants, *Lernstrategien*/learning strategies, etc.).

The second mode of word formation in German is that new words can be created from one root, by adding prefixes and suffixes to it (e.g. *unwichtig/unimportant*, *erklärbar/ explainable*).<sup>75</sup> In some word roots both prefixes and suffixes can be added at the same time (e.g. *unaufhaltsam/unstoppable*).

In order to explain better this technique and clarify these word-formation rules, appropriate exercises are given to students whereupon they are asked to find or categorize the words with similar prefixes or suffixes. The students can even try to explain the meaning of words and thus independently discover the word-formation rules.

On the other hand, we need to mention that not all words can be easily diffracted; this means that the meaning of prefixes and suffixes in certain words in German is not always that clear and superficial. It is therefore advisable to decode the words that have a broader interrelation and appear in a certain given context at the level of a sentence or a text.

### Word learning at the level of sentences

In the sentence “*Hab acht vorm Zipferlak, mein Kind!*”<sup>76</sup> (Be aware of Zipferlak, my child!) (*Jabberwocky*, Lewis Carroll) we can easily see that we are dealing with an imperative form based on the punctuation mark. Since this sentence contains an imagined word, the message of this sentence is understood based on its signals and structure. We can see from the instruction *Be aware* that *Zipferlak* is something we should be careful from, even afraid of.

A structural signal tells us that we have to deal with a noun in a sentence, since we see the word *vorm* which is an amalgam of the word *vor* (German preposition: from/of) and the definite article of the noun *dem* (inflected in the dative case). Also, the position of the word *Zipferlak* in the sentence and the fact that it has been written with a capital letter (as we know, all nouns in German are spelled with a capital letter) proves that we have to deal with a noun as regards the imagined word in this imperative sentence.

In order for the students to apply word processing in an efficient way, they have to be given exercises for reinforcing their memories as well as learning techniques. The division of the learning process in several short units is a good opportunity. The new words to be learnt will be repeated after a couple of minutes after their first appearance, then after an hour, the next day, the next week, then after a couple of weeks and months, and so on.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Retrieved from: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/51986433/13/Phasen-der-Wortschatzvermittlung> (03.03.2012)

<sup>76</sup> Retrieved from: Fortbildung für Kursleitende Deutsch als Zweitsprache Band 2 - Didaktik – Methodik, Hueber Verlag 2008- Aus: Alice hinter den Spiegel (1871) von Lewis Carroll, übersetzt von Christian Enzensberger und zu finden unter: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jabberwocky> (11.03.2012)

<sup>77</sup> Mathé, Isabelle, (1997): *Wie läßt sich das erklären?*, Wien, DA., p. 17.

If the student does not exactly know a word, then it is put at the beginning of the chain. Other memory enforcement exercises include photographs with words or the key word method. There are other techniques of word enclosure, in which the word can be taken from the context. The training with communication strategies, browsing techniques or underlining techniques of words in cards are also effective in terms of learning new words. Apart from these techniques, we can also lean on different media devices such as recording devices in order to practice pronunciation, electronic dictionaries or other materials attached to books.<sup>78</sup>

In learning new words, an important role can be played by specially designed dictionaries for instructional purposes. The didactic dictionary includes the basic limited lexicon which is worth learning. This type of dictionaries is created by assessing school graded readers as well as the processing of the most important words in a language, or even a professional instructional dictionary. In these kinds of dictionaries, the lexicon is not alphabetically ordered, but rather in accordance with specific word groups; all the words with a similar content are placed in one group so that they can be learnt together, without paying attention to the type or form of the word. All didactic dictionaries function with bilingual word similarities.<sup>79</sup>

In using the simplified dictionaries, it is expected by the user to learn the words from the word list: memorize and verify by covering the right or the left column of the list. The instructional dictionaries which offer the possibility to use your words, and which triply categorize the lexicon are more efficient: the word – the meaning in German or Albanian – short examples in which the word is used, and thus the word is replaced with a title.<sup>80</sup> The student covers the left column of the dictionary and repeats out loudly the examples in which the word has been used by replacing the titles with words. This is how the active usage of words in context is learnt, apart from their isolated appearance.<sup>81</sup>

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## Internet sites

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<sup>78</sup> Mathé, Isabelle, (1997): Wie läßt sich das erklären? ,Wien, DA., p. 16.

<sup>79</sup> Bausch/Christ/Krumm, (1995): Handbuch Fremdsprachenunterricht, 3. Auflage, (Hrsg.) Francke Verlag, Tübingen, Basel, p. 296.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. ↑

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. ↑