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6. TEACHING INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC GERMAN

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Abstract: This article focuses on teaching industry-specific German. Referring to the Common European Framework of References for Languages it augments the various levels of German proficiency and its guidelines and provides examples for each level. The following section differentiates between German as a foreign language and German as a second language in the context of integration classes. Whereas integration courses for the acquisition of German as a second language are subsidized and controlled through the German government, courses for the acquisition of German as a foreign language are not and therefore, they strongly differ from each other in terms of subject matter. However, recently a new trend has emerged: industry-specific German. The necessity of industry specific languages lies in the continuous development and increasing differentiation within the working environment and the division of labor. Various teaching models such as Content and Language Integrated Learning combine traditional learning of a foreign language and subject specific learning creating a symbiosis.

Keywords: *industry-specific Learning, DaF, DaZ, CLIL*

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that a variety of course models exist. These different forms vary in their intensity, aim and language level. Most of the time they address standardized German (Hernig, Marcus (2005), p.31).

It is undeniable that there is a vast amount of existing course models in terms of their intensity, choice of topics, different focus groups and degrees of language competence. Normally (nine times out of ten) such courses place emphasis on the transmission of standardized German. In addition, they often orientate themselves on written language. Consequently, any teacher from Bern, Vienna or even Berlin is able to communicate in a generally comprehensible manner.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) determines the different levels/degrees of competence that a language learner needs to achieve in order to show proficiency in a particular language. This guidelines or framework of reference describes the required knowledge and skills a language learner needs in order to effectively communicate in the target language. In light of this, it characterizes and defines the various levels/degrees of competence that also allows for an empirical and quantifiable approach of comparison among different foreign languages. (Sources needed)

In principle, one distinguishes among/differentiates between three degrees of proficiency levels (A, B, and C).

- A categorizes basic language use.
- B categorizes independent language use.
- C categorizes proficient language use.

In terms of the A level, any learner of foreign language “can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.”¹

In terms of the B level, language learners can have regular interactions with native speakers without strain for either party. Such learners “can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various opinions.”²

In terms of the highest proficiency level, learners can address complex subject matters and “can use language flexibly and efficiently for social, academic and professional purposes.”³

¹ <http://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de/> (26.6.2018)

² <http://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de/> (26.6.2018)

³ <http://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de/> (26.6.2018)

The teaching of foreign languages at almost all education/academic institutions and educational materials follow these guidelines. Therefore, the teaching of foreign languages has become homogenized and more transparent within the last few years/or since 2000.

2. GERMAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

2.1 Differentiation between DaF/DaZ

German as a subject is often distinguished/divided in learning groups and learning situations/settings/environment (Hernig, Marcus (2005). For example, the discipline German as a Foreign Language (DaF) speaks to learning groups that are acquiring the language in non-German speaking environments. Naturally, such learning environments have an impact on how the entire course is prepared and taught. For instance, this may influence the conception and realization of both upper-level high school classes in France and a private language schools in Spain. Those type of learners live in a lingual environment that does not focus on German. Therefore, teachers at these schools are not permanently exposed to the vast amount of variety and nuances of the German language such as vernacular language, slang and dialects etc. In comparison, language learners exposed to the target language differ from the former. While they do not necessarily have to live within a German speaking country, they may attend a German school, e.g. in China.

In addition, learners within both groups DaF and DaZ (German as a Second Language) are not homogeneous. In fact, such differentiation between them often seems arbitrary and impractical especially considering globalization and high level of mobility nowadays. For instance, someone not only can live within a German speaking environment but also simultaneously can live and work within a predominantly English-speaking environment. On the one hand, this is a common phenomenon especially within urban metropolitan areas in which one may exclusively communicate in English among colleagues and friends. On the other hand, it is also quite possible, for example, a Portuguese native speaker may learn German in Brazil while he/she may also use German in his/her working environment. Therefore, different variations of German shape the learner's everyday life.

2.2. Content matter of DaZ courses/ Integration classes

Integration courses for the acquisition of German as a second language are subsidized and controlled through the German government. These courses aim to impart information on German language, German legal system, culture, and history to individuals who do not possess German citizenship but have a permanent residence permit. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) focuses on potential participants and describes its aim as follows:

“If you would like to live in Germany, you should learn German. This is important if you are looking for work, if you need to fill in application forms, if you would like to support your children in school or if you would like to meet new people. Also, you should know certain things about Germany, for example, about its history, culture and its legal system.”⁴

In general, an Integration course consists of two parts: a language course and an orientation course. All participants are supposed to achieve B1 level of proficiency at the end of all courses which is equivalent to 700 hours total. In addition, learners in Integration courses are required to successfully pass a language test to prove their proficiency.

Integration courses concentrate on topics related to everyday life such as⁵:

- work and profession
- Occupational training and professional development
- Care and support and guidance of children
- Shopping, Trade, and consumerism
- Leisure time and social contacts
- Health and hygiene and the human body
- Media and media use
- Living in Germany
- Media and mobility

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<http://www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/Integrationskurse/integrationskurse-node.html> (26.06.2018)

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<http://www.bamf.de/DE/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/Integrationskurse/InhaltAblauf/inhalt-ablauf-node.html> (26.06.2018)

In addition, in these courses participants learn how to compose emails in German, how to fill in application forms, and how to apply for a job position, in general.

In comparison to this, other DaZ courses that are not governmentally subsidized are much more heterogeneous. However, most of the prevalent course materials and course books call attention to similar topics focusing their content on everyday life and daily routines in Germany.

2.3 DaF courses and their content

Courses in which German is taught as a foreign language are not governmentally regulated or controlled. Therefore, they strongly differ from each other in terms of topics, intensity, and focus. However, in terms of the prevalent course materials one can recognize that they center less on finding one's bearing and daily routines in Germany. Instead they, moreover, augment cultural phenomenon and individuals in Germany. For example, in terms of discussing the topic "Work" it is less relevant to talk about how one works in Germany and what one needs to work. Instead materials center on a more general approach dealing, for instance, with sharing of work experience in foreign countries (not necessarily only within Germany) (Habersack, Charlotte; Pude, Angelika; Specht, Franz (2013), p.65).

Depending of the level of proficiency course materials focus on familiar and routine matters in everyday life situations (A-Level), one's own immediate environment (B-Level) and even abstract and complex topics such as educational system or politics.

3. INDUSTRY SPECIFIC GERMAN OR GERMAN USED IN PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

German as a foreign language often is taught within an international context in mind at schools (accommodating children and adolescents). In comparison to teaching German as a foreign language (DaF) at schools, the number of adult learners is smaller (Hernig, Marcus, 2005, p. 29). These types of learners are often intrinsically motivated or desire to further their own education in general.

In terms of an international context, German is not one of the important trade or common language. But German is nevertheless an important regional language in Europe. In fact, for the last few years the number of German learners, especially at schools with general education values, are declining. Nevertheless, there is a steady increase in the number of German learners in South- and Southeast Europe (Kühn, Günter; Mielke, Tomas M. (Ed.), 2012, p.32). This may certainly be attributed to the countries' economic causes that coerce individuals belonging to

a younger generation to be highly mobile in order to avoid unemployment. However, in comparison some sectors or industries are desperately seeking skilled workers. Therefore, opportunities to find work or begin professional training are much higher in Germany. Globalization, increasing mobility, economic situation and unemployment rate can be identified as causes for the increasing number of German learners in these regions of Europe.

Within the last few years there has been an increase in the demand of German courses relating to professional and industry specific contexts. Professional or industry specific German is often taught on based needs. That means learners often do not have any concrete working or job perspective and any secured professional training.

The appeal of the market in terms of professional and occupational training does not only determine the significant increase in professional or industry specific German teaching (Roche, Jörg; Drumm, Sandra, 2018, p. 167). In fact, a changing German society and economy also influenced how German teaching has been conducted and how it moved towards industry specific German. Thus, in the last several decades the economy progressed from a sheer industrial economy to a service-oriented economy (Kühn, Günter; Mielke, Tomas M. (Ed.), 2012, p.21). Therefore, the amount of available working position that do not require any or few German knowledge has decreased. For instance, employment options have vehemently been eliminated in areas such as the mining industry. In addition, places of employment in areas such as production have also increasingly been moved overseas. Other branches previously did not require any knowledge of foreign languages. However, nowadays employees working in gastronomy, trading business and caring business are now often required to have good or even excellent language skills in their particle profession (Kühn, Günter; Mielke, Tomas M. (ed.), p.21).

3.1 Differentiation between common speech, professional oriented and industry specific language

There is no commonly excepted definition for the term “industry specific language.” Most of time this term functions as a contrast to the term “common or general speech.” Although there is not really a definition of “common or general speech” as well, this concept does address the elements ingrained in a particular language, that all members of that particular language community use. In general, one can assume that industry specific language emphasizes distinct and precise terminology that support and enhance a fixed exchange of expressions within that field. The necessity of those industry specific languages lies in the continuous development and increasing differentiation within the working environment and the division of labor. Industry specific language describes and denominates complex issues and situations, procedures and objects in detail. However, as long this necessity is not relevant for the majority of a particular group, it remains limited

to the context of a particular group of speakers. Therefore, this type of language may be understood as a subcategory of common or general speech.

In terms of teachers of German language, who desires to communicate in industry specific areas, it is useful to acquire such a language in order to be able to participate in and comprehend subject or discipline-oriented discussions.

As distinguished from technical terminology and common language there is another term in this context: industry specific language or professional oriented German (berufsbezogenes Deutsch). Industry specific language, in general, focuses on communication within different areas of a discipline and common situations within that field of work.

The specialist department on work-related German as a second language (Fachstelle für berufsbezogenes Deutsch) defines the terms as followed: “Work-related German as a second language is any form of communication in the working environment in all areas and situations relating to professional orientation, within the process of certifications and within companies themselves including interviews and professional development, transfer procedures and entertainment during breaks. These linguistic requirements, including verbal and written communication, are becoming more complicated and are especially challenging for migrants whose native tongue is not German.”⁶

In contrast to various disciplines’ technical terminology, rhetorical devices of work-related German may used in many different professions. The statement “I would like to reduce my accrued overtime next month” (Ich möchte im nächsten Monat meine Überstunden abbauen) is probably expressed less in a private setting but it often refers to the working environment.

On the other hand, the following statement “Auf das Anbringen der Kennzeichnung auf Bildschirmspielgeräten findet §12 Abs. 2 Satz 1 bis 3 entsprechende Anwendung” is a good example of technical terminology or phrases that can only be easily understood by speakers or members of a certain discipline or field.

In conclusion, I propose that both common or general speech as well as professional oriented speech often use the same linguistic devices. However, particular situations and contexts such as interview settings or conversations during breaks characterize them. Technical terminology here defines a larger scope and builds upon common linguistic devices.

⁶ <http://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/fachdiskussion/b/berufsbezogenes-deutsch.html>
(11.7.2018)

3.2 The necessity of technical terminology/language and its transmission

The usage of technical terminology can cause a distancing among various speakers. For instance, if one considers a conversation between a doctor and his patient. If the doctor uses technical terminology originated in Latin such as “Zystitis” or “Chinolon-Antibiotic,” he may vehemently disrupt or even break up any communication between him and his patient. All participants of a conversation, therefore, need to understand the codes and need to be able to decode them. That is the only way technical terminology may fulfill its purpose in the fullest and most effectively. A complete and correct use of technical terminology shows the speaker’s belonging to a particular group of individuals. Simultaneously, the usage of technical terminology may also exclude certain individuals; especially, it distinguishes between non-experts and experts and even ostracizes the former from any participation in expert’s discussions. The higher the degree of technical terminology the more ostracizing communication will be and the further it will move away from common or general language.

In many work places, therefore, it is quite necessary to acquire and correctly use particular technical terminology in order to be able to participate in any discussions with experts in the field. DaF learners with field specific knowledge need linguistic devices of a foreign language in order to be able to communicate within their field using the correct terminology. That includes abilities on how to formulate a mathematical formula and how to describe a scientific experiment. Those capabilities are often not a focus within the DaF teaching of general or common language. Therefore, it is especially helpful for non-native speakers if they have access to a variety of materials including course materials, books, different course formats or learning platforms in order to familiarize themselves with technical terminology within different disciplines. A relatively expansive variety of course choices and materials are available in the fields of medicine, care and tourism. These disciplines or professional fields already have a substantial number of non-native speakers entering the German occupational training sites and their workforce. In comparison, other professional areas lack such materials, for instance within the field logistics.

3.3 Teaching methods of foreign languages relating to technical terminology courses

Non-native speakers often acquire technical terminology and its correct usage in the context of foreign language courses. However, it is not an innovation to combine learning a second or foreign language and the knowledge and competences required in a certain discipline. In the 14th and 15th century students attending first founding university were asked and expected to familiarize themselves with Latin in order to study theology, law, philosophy and medicine (Kniffka, Gabriele; Roelcke, Thorsten 2016, p.104). Consequently, there is a long tradition in integrating learning of a language and learning of a particular subject matter and its technical terminology. A numerous amount of available educational materials is also available in terms of acquiring German as a foreign or second language. These materials also combine general aspect of language and discipline specific contents. However, the discipline of teaching foreign languages varies within itself. Including subjects, languages, focus groups, and required pre-knowledge are merely a few characteristics that have to be taken into consideration in terms of teaching foreign languages related to transmission of technical terminology. Nevertheless, I will discuss two adequate models.

3.3.1 The Three-Stage Model (Drei-Phasen Modell)

This model as its name suggests divides the acquisition of technical terminology in foreign language courses in three parts.

During the first stage, teaching focuses on the acquisition of basic knowledge and language competence. During the second stage, technical terminology-based content in relation to conceptual realizations and expansions characterize the teaching of German as a foreign language and its orientation towards terminology-based teaching. This approach aims to expand learners' pre-knowledge of a technical subject or its terminology. During the third stage learners acquire vocabulary, technical terminology, and subject based knowledge within the target language, e.g. German. While teachers of German as a second language and teachers of German in relation to technical terminology often allow learners to transition between the first two stages, specific studies or professional development support learners' transition into the third stage.

Learners usually acquire the basic knowledge of common or general language through regular German as second language courses. However, during the second stage they require additional supporting materials such as particular educational books that convey the characteristic connections within a subject. Learners deduce specific technical terminology through context analysis. Existing exercises and texts often center on linguistic characteristics and show subject oriented behavior.

However, other educational non-technical specific materials also use this concept focusing on interaction and typical behavior. Hereby, texts connect visual and written information in order to convey typical patterns or behavior of speech. For instance, the educational book “German in the Hospital” (Deutsch im Krankenhaus) shows typical settings and jargon that are common in everyday situations of doctors and nurses. Such scenes include for example the initial in-take conversation between doctor and patient, the correct prescription and dosage of medication and technical conversations among colleagues. Learners also need to review specific grammatical points in order to successfully complete all exercises (Firnhaber-Sensen, Ulrike; Rodi, Margarete, 2013).

3.3.2. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and language Integrated Learning combines learning a foreign language and technical terminology of a specific subject. In the case of this model, content and language Integrated Learning integrates content material, that the teaching of German as a foreign language often relies on including knowledge of grammar, in the acquisition of knowledge that is subject specific such as logistic, math or medicine. That means, learners using CLIL not only learn standardized German but also simultaneously learn the specific technical terminology and knowledge of a particular subject matter.

This approach of learning is especially popular in Europe.⁷ For more than twenty years content and language integrated language has been established within the teaching of foreign languages. Many studies on its effectiveness have been conducted. The term “CLIL” (for short) is often used as an umbrella term including all types of teaching and learning contexts that at least partially deal with the acquisition of technical language (Kniffka, Gabriele; Roelcke, 2016, p.105). It often refers to the teaching of foreign languages that happens in educational institutions, for example, studies conducted in English at German universities or grammar school focusing on subject courses conducted in a foreign language. Of course, there are also learning platforms that use content and language integrated learning. For instance, the learning platform “LLOT” uses this model and provides German language learners (in addition to English, Polish and Italian language learners) tools and strategies to acquire special knowledge in the subject logistics and to further develop themselves in terms of useful technical terminology. Considering the lack of German material in this field, the platform provides enormous benefits for this internationally active discipline.

⁷ <https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/mag/20879807.html> (11.07.2018)

Future Perspectives and Development

I argue that the demand for German as a foreign language in adult education will increase in the upcoming years. There is a steady demand of skilled labors in many areas of the workplace in Germany, e.g in the context of taking care of individuals. In addition, foreign and European originated laborers, especially, are highly motivated because their immigration to Germany is not too complicated. Flights within Europe are also reasonably priced, and many laborers already have working experience abroad. However, in order to work in Germany, these laborers are often required to show and prove specific language skills in relation to their chosen fields. This often seems challenging for some and prevents many to immediately find work. In terms of internationally active branches it is also necessary to employ individuals who are able to converse with their colleagues on an international growing market. Learning platforms such as LLOT, therefore, serve as an ideal place to train specialized workers and students in the discipline of logistic in order to expand its network within Europe.

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