

THE STAGES OF ORGANIZING THE GERMAN LANGUAGE CLASS (L2)



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ABSTRACT

Learning German L2 is a challenge for fresh teachers, as the aspects they encounter in teaching are related to psycho-pedagogical factors, often difficult to manage. Most teachers prefer high-school teaching, considering that pupils are calmer and understand the notions taught faster than middle school or primary school pupils. However, we can say that all pupils, regardless of age, need a teacher who knows how to capture their attention in an engaging style. Teachers need to know that regardless of age, pupils are driven by affectivity and the role models they have in front of the class can positively influence their lives. Therefore, the constant training of the teacher is important in order to properly manage the scientific principles in harmony with the psycho-pedagogical ones in teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom. Starting from the method of observation, our article deals with an essential topic of teaching German (L2) in primary school. But to observe the behavioral importance of teachers, we considered a total of 98 pupils from three 5th forms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Being under development, primary school pupils have various feelings, experiences, behaviors that teachers can easily observe from the front of the class.

For example, the first essential findings are that some pupils are too talkative, while others are much too quiet. Also, some pupils often answer during class, while others avoid answering, more precisely to get involved in the act of teaching-learning.

Learning German from the age of 6 causes intense feelings to parents, but also to fresh teachers who tend to translate to pupils every word taught. But pupils need clear teaching materials to pave their way for effective language learning.

Starting from the method of observation, the essential method of our article, we considered the following aspects:

- In order to facilitate the understanding of the behaviors that the pupils have during the class, the teacher will achieve his/her own evaluation criteria of the class of pupils. These will be imagined in the form of a "funnel", noting the general characteristics up to the particular ones. For example, class assessment can start

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from the general characteristics of the class (calm, agitated, attentive), the formation and cognitive development of pupils according to age, learning and assessment styles and from activities that suit the group of pupils;

- The collectivities of pupils are formed by the personality of the primary school teacher and it is important that the subsequent teachers follow him/her from the “shadow” as well. For example, if the primary school teacher forms pupils by constantly raising his/her voice in class, it will be difficult for the subsequent teacher to manage the class with agitated pupils using a gentle tone.
- In comparison with the primary school teacher who becomes flexible within 5 years from one generation to the next, the German language teacher, in addition to adapting from one generation to another within 5 years, he/she has to adapt in one year in several classes.

Even if in a group of pupils, there are several types of personalities and intellectual abilities, the teacher can see in each class a general atmosphere that can be described by the help of criteria and keywords that we identified during the teaching classes:

- in terms of mood: calm, agitated, stressed, fearful, anxious, etc;
- in terms of involvement in teaching-learning act: comfortable, indifferent, closed, adaptable to new ideas, captivating, etc;
- in terms of involvement of personality: monopolized by the desire to compete with each other for learning or negative behaviors etc;
- in terms of level of learning: very good, good, mediocre etc;
- in terms of pupil's pace: slow or fast.

Starting from the criteria above, the group of pupils means also the involuntary takeover of some attitudes and positive or negative behaviours from the pupils of the class.

That is why, the teacher must think of each “signal” of the pupil (speaking during the class, rare involvement in the teaching-learning act, ironic laughter etc), without labelling it, with the purpose of behavioural solving with the frontal side of the brain. Led by amygdala, the organ responsible for emotions, teachers have the tendency to judge and reproach pupils for mistakes in a moment of “losing control”.

For example, the alternative method Waldorf proposes a calm attitude of the teacher in the class, but a moment of coming back to the image of the pupil (who disturbs the class) in the teachers' council with the aim of finding solutions together with the teachers who teach in that class but also to transmit to the pupil, indirectly, positive thoughts to help him/her in his/her training and development.

That is why, through this study we wish to remark the importance of organizing the teaching and learning of German considering the affectivity and natural attitude of the teacher towards pupils. Therefore:

- 1) What criteria do we rely on as teachers when we want to organize our German language class?
- 2) Do we describe in the mind the groups of pupils from a psycho-pedagogical point of view before organizing the class?
- 3) Do the activities proposed in advance by the teacher suit the groups of pupils to whom the lesson is taught? Activity x fits the Y class, but probably not the Z class for various reasons.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Below we present briefly some characteristics of the ages according to J. Piaget taken over by Schaffer (2010, p. 168) that the teacher will permanently practice since the primary- school classes for a harmonious development of the pupils for secondary-school classes.

Pupils in the preparatory class, 1st form respectively (from 2 to 6-7 years of age) need symbols, words, mental images, imaginative games. Their thinking relate to the personal pronoun “I”. Starting the 1st form until the 4th form (7-11 years of age), pupils have logic thinking, capable of doing mental operations, can memorize information (conservation process), can form strings (series), can make classifications (say the order of the seasons, count, list the months of the year, days of the week, etc.), can return to previous information or states (reversibility); can manipulate symbols at mental level being dependent on concrete things. In the 4th form (> 11 years of age), mental operations are based also on abstractization, managing also purely hypothetical situations.

The objectives that the pupils of the preparatory class have to fulfill in the acts of teaching, learning and evaluation will be based on skills and abilities such as speaking, understanding and identification. From the 1st form to the 4th form, the pupil's mind needs skills development activities and skills to help him/her abstract ideas and become Independent. During the 1st - 4th forms, the teacher will prepare pupils for training and development of verbal and written expression.

In order for learning to take place fully in primary school, but even in secondary school, the teacher can combine in activities / exercises two or more age characteristics: symbol - word, mental image - symbol - word, imaginative game - word, imaginative game - symbol, mental image - imaginative game - word / symbol, logical thinking - symbols - words or riddles, logical thinking - mental operations, concrete object - words / symbols etc.

But to facilitate the performance of activities necessary for cognitive development, the teacher will use in the objectives and requirements of the exercises keywords taken from Bloom's Taxonomy.

This implies that the transition of ideas from the external environment to the cognitive (internal) environment occurs through activities of knowledge, understanding, application, and evaluation. In short, for the knowledge stage the teacher will prepare activities that include requirements such as: enumerate, find, identify, label, locate, match, memorize, name, recite, recognize, repeat, describe, retell. For the comprehension stage, the pupil must confirm, exemplify, illustrate, choose, repeat, express, arrange, reproduce, locate. Within the application, the pupil will arrange, assign, categorize, classify, compare, detect, group, imagine, decide, examine, organize, order, present, ask, choose, will separate, will summarize. The synthesis of ideas involves: assembling, mixing, creating, realizing, inventing, rearranging, replacing, composing, developing, formulating. Pupils can evaluate, appreciate, check their knowledge if the teacher will do it in a way that they perceive easily, for example through play.

In order to combine age-specific cognitive characteristics with actions specific to knowledge, understanding, application, synthesis and assessment, so that teaching, learning and assessment do not become a burden for both teacher and pupils, the teacher will organize activities involving play, drawing, colors, movement, songs, poems, role play and, where appropriate, the concept of interdisciplinarity (for example: if the teacher wants to teach numbers and numbers he/she will use mathematics - addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, geography - height of the hills, mountains, history - years of revolutions, kings' years of rule etc.)

Within these techniques, the teacher will contribute to the development of the four skills respecting the objectives of the school curriculum: listening (by reacting to commands, executing instructions, etc.); speaking (through verbal expression, individual presentation, making descriptions or requests, providing information, expressing possession, opinions, stories, initiating dialogues, holding conversations, etc.); reading (by identifying in words some words, sentences or expressions, to locate objects in space and their written name); writing (by expressing in writing, making descriptions or stories, etc.).

The teacher is not obliged to teach according to the textbook, he/she can choose themes, contexts and activities from the children's universe. Therefore, we propose the following teaching, learning and assessment activities.

Taking the theme "My house" I organized the presentation of the theme applying during the classes techniques such as: play and movement, movement and music, drawing and color, poetry and narration, role play.

- primary school pupils can sing a song based on the elements of the house; during the song there will be concrete movements to describe: the construction of the house and the actions we do in the rooms.
- in addition to songs, the teacher can make a poem to be recited by the pupils and a short story, both presented with the help of movement, gestures, mimicry, soft and fluctuating tone or theatrical interpretation;
- while drawing on the board, the pupils were described the house aloud; children will draw and repeat at the same time as the teacher (the pupils eager to learn become imitators of the teacher); later, children can be asked about the colors, the size of the house; questions can also be accompanied by gestures.
- in order for pupils to retain the information, games will be applied through which they can identify the objects in the rooms, the colors, the dimensions, etc. Example of games: the rooms will be numbered and later the pupils will be asked: "What's the name of room one?", "What about room two?", "What's the name of rooms one and two?", "Is this room room one or room two?", thus exercising connecting words such as: and, or, but. To involve the "Mathematics" subject, games such as: one plus two equals three (children call the room) can be applied.
- For the "Music" subject - we beat the rhythm with the palms and / or feet: we beat twice with the palms, twice with the feet, four beats means room four.

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- For the "Plastic Education" subject - we show the children the colors that predominate in the rooms drawn on the board and they respond.
- For the "Geography" subject - we make a story with comic sentences: 'Cristian is in America and he wants to come to his mother in Russia to eat in the kitchen.' ,Mihai lives in Russia and wants to come to his father in China to read in the living room." "Stefan is in Germany and wants to come to his brother in Italy to sleep in the bedroom." In these contexts the exaggerations mark the pupils and in some classes you will notice positive and realistic reactions. For example, pupils will tell you, "There is no such thing." or start laughing.

Following the experience lived in the classroom, the pupils need a concrete organization in terms of role play. After learning the vocabulary, a role play was made. The phases of the role play that we propose are listed as follows: the text will be read in the classroom, until it is said correctly and fluently, and pupils will grasp the meaning of the ideas in their minds without the text being translated; pupils will memorize the characters' lines; so that the pupils do not feel humiliated, the teacher will organize comic warm-up games (before the dramatization starts), so that the pupils are not afraid to show up in front of their classmates; the character traits of the characters can be presented briefly through concrete images indicating the state: ☹, 😊, 😬; in primary school classes, pupils need concrete guiding, that is why the teacher will intervene and will show the pupil how to act the state of the character.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this subchapter we invite you to observe three classes: 5th A form - 34 pupils, 5th B form - 33 pupils, 5th C form - 31 pupils who participated in the study. By constantly observing them in class, I realized that certain attitudes and behaviors were created during primary education. This was found by us recently regarding the attitude of the children of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th forms whom we taught, but also their positive response regarding the techniques presented above.

It is known that teachers have their experience in the classroom and the personalized way of training the group of pupils. In primary education, parents also contribute personal opinions about their child. For example: "My child is not only at 5-mark level, he/she does additional classes at home."

But, most of the time, the pupil's behavior at home, under the parents' care, does not match his/her attitude in class. That is why we mention the importance of an objective and constant communication between the teacher and the parent.

Let's look at Table 1 made after some findings due to our constant entry into these classes, either during breaks, or during classes with the teacher, or during German language class, or during a celebration, etc

Table 1: Comparison of three 5th form classes (my own experience)

Pupils of 5th A form (34 pupils)	Pupils of 5th B form (33 pupils)	Pupils of 5th form (31 pupils)
slightly agitated	slightly agitated	calm
intellectually advanced	intellectually mediocre	intellectually advanced
formed under the influence of the motto "you are the best class" and a gentle voice.	formed under the influence "I explained to you so many times and you still failed the test."	formed under the influence of "respect for the teacher" and "in the class we are attentive, we do not speak", a slightly high tone, but emotional.
they learnt through play, movement, music, theater, universal literature	they learnt through simple activities, recommended by the textbooks in force and the curriculum	they learnt through original activities, proposed by the teacher, but which complied with the school curriculum in force.
evaluated during primary education through classroom activities	assessed during primary education by written tests. the evaluations were observed: predictive, formative and summative	evaluated according to standard criteria, with written tests, the evaluations were observed: predictive, formative and summative
they read the faces of teachers who appreciate them, are open, flexible, trust	fearful, anxious, closed, inflexible, distrustful	brave, respectful, relaxed, communicative, flexible, emotional, self-confident,

them		they have natural attitudes.
they can't concentrate in the class, they don't appreciate teaching, but they want the class to be short, their attitude constantly requires activities and exercises, they are not superficial	can focus in the class, but not much, do not like to learn, superficially solved activities and exercises	they can focus in the class, the teacher teaches as much as he/she wants without forcing or tiring the pupils.
when they receive a test, no one asks questions, there is total silence in the classroom (very focused), they trust the teacher's correctness.	when they receive a test, they ask questions about the requirement, about solving the requirements, there is distrust in them, they consider that the teacher was not correct with them, when their tests were corrected.	when they receive a test, they ask questions related to the requirement, but they are not insistent, afraid, they trust the results given by the teacher and his/her correctness.

Starting from the table above, we capitalized on some ideas about the three classes observed from our own experience.

As we observe, the criticized pupils (see 5th form B) can become anxious, inflexible, distrustful, bored, and often criticism does not help children's cognitive development.

Another characteristic that can be seen is that the pupils of the 5th form A learnt in a personal style. But this original style led not only to their openness to the world, but also to a permanent agitation, which probably requires that the teacher's style be further applied by the teacher; agitation being an "adverse effect" of what has been offered and is no longer offered. In the case of the 5th form C where the teacher got involved with affectivity and firmness, respecting the theory acquired during the Pedagogical High School, the children learnt to respect the teachers.

Following the last idea in the table regarding concentration, we can realize that this characteristic is not only related to the personality of the group of pupils, but also to its age or the activities of the teacher in the classroom. Therefore, it is essential to correlate previous ideas with the principles of age developed by specialists over the years of primary school.

Starting from the table above, which briefly describes the general attitude of the children, the techniques presented above were applied to the three 5th forms. We found the importance of alternative methods, but they also brought some controversy.

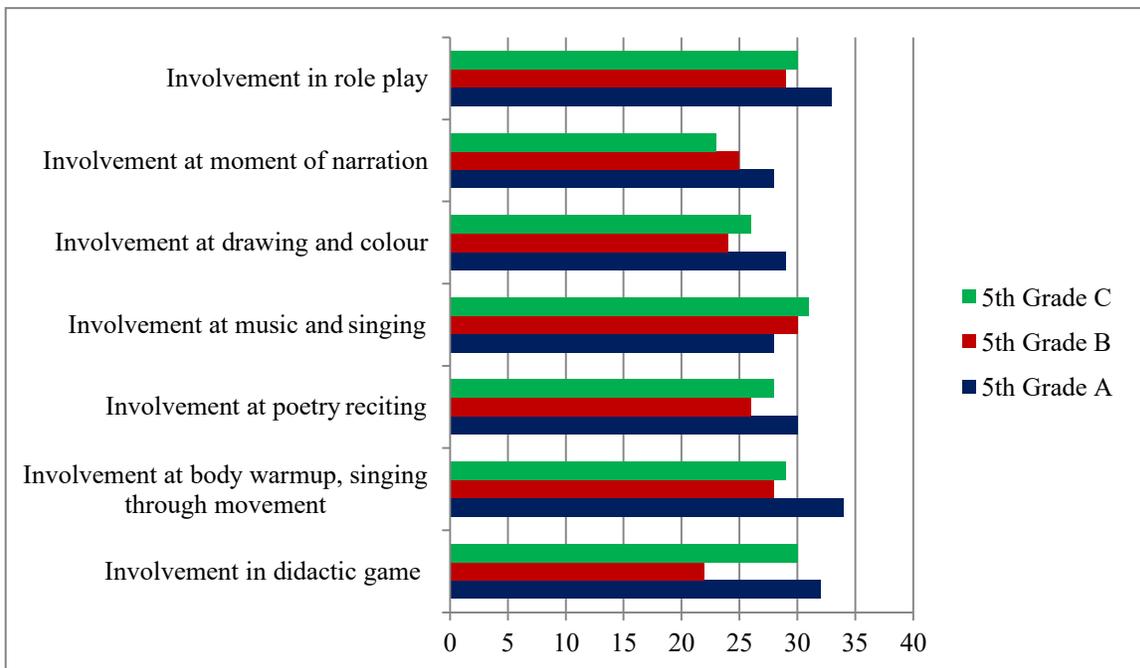


Figure 1: Frequency of involvement of 5th form pupils in teaching and learning as a result of alternative techniques applied

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Involvement in didactic play or storytelling was an impediment for poorly prepared pupils due to the constant non-practice of storytelling in the classroom and their habituation to vocabulary, while movement, recitation of a poem, singing or role play were techniques that helped the pupils to open up.

Singing or reciting a poem in chorus did not bother the emotional pupils, while the movement gave them flexibility and the pleasure of getting up from the chair. Even though some of the pupils have a hard time reading, they have shown a willingness to participate in the role play, wanting to be assigned a role. To our surprise, even in the 5th form, pupils like to draw for the teacher, this technique was not an advantage. The pupils either were perfectionists (they drew carefully, slowly, in detail), or they did not trust them stating that they are not able / do not know how to draw.

As we can see, the participants liked the exercises that involved automatic (passive) activities and less activities that involved thinking (active). The agitation of the 5th A form brought many comments during the class, disappointments because some teams did not get the long-awaited score, while in the 5th B form we faced fears and the fact that they could not concentrate on the theme of the narrative (it was difficult for them to answer the questions), liking to imitate the movement made by the teacher. The 5th form C participated intensely in all activities, but here too there were pupils who moved slowly. Following the research, we also found out how important was their general way of development, starting from the primary classes.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the teacher will choose the activities according to the rhythm of the class. For example, in the first class pupils sing and draw. In the second class the pupils sing and learn a poem. In the third class, the pupils sing, repeat the poetry, recap the vocabulary with the help of pictures. In the fourth class, the pupils sing, say poetry, recap the vocabulary with the help of images, watch a movie/animation/cartoon. If the vocabulary allows, the teacher will introduce the next topic with the help of the class activities. The teacher will decide to what extent the pupil masters what he has learned so far. Depending on his/her finding, the teacher will introduce the next topic through a final activity that will link the previous topic to the next topic. For example, if the cartoon contains the vocabulary of the current topic, but also of the topic that will follow, the teacher can move within that class to the next topic. To understand this idea, we need to think about the circuit of a resort. What is important in teaching, learning and assessing knowledge is to find a balance between activities that contributes to the harmonization of the three concepts. If the teacher teaches and evaluates constantly, without breaks necessary for the brain (music, poetry, drawing, songs, etc.), he/she risks that the pupil gets bored. If the teacher teaches superficially (even if it is 5-10 minutes of teaching, the teaching must be clear, concise and easy to remember), the pupil loses the relationship with learning and cannot participate in creativity or role-playing games due to the fact that he/she does not have the necessary vocabulary and grammatical elements. The teacher will also find a balance between the ideas learned and the oral or written assessment. The activities must be appreciated objectively, as this way of evaluation offers them the security of mastering the information, the subjectivity of the evaluations being necessary only in motivating the pupils. It is essential to know that the teacher must give free rein to the imagination, as primary school pupils learning German, a language built on strict rules, need correct grammatical structures, vocabulary and last but not least creativity. The activities can also have comic ideas in order to vary the contexts and arouse humor (well-being).

The foreign language teacher: will respect the psycho-pedagogical principles regarding the characteristics of the age stage, the development of the pupils' personality, the class management, etc; will respect the methodical and didactic principles of the taught discipline (class organization, types of evaluation - predictive, formative, summative); will be emotional, but direct and firm with pupils; he/she will pay attention to how he/she trains pupils and in no case to criticize them.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author have declared that no competing interests exist.

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WEBOGRAFIE

[1] <http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oie/documents/assessments/Blooms%20Level.pdf>

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