Joachim Grzega

Report on Developing and Testing the *Language Workout* Method
The First Research Project at the Europäisches Haus Pappenheim (EHP)

Abstract

The article presents first results from experiments with a new language teaching method for beginners' level, the Language Workout Method (LWO). In a few hours, learners acquire skills for large aspects of the A1 language level (as defined by the EU). This is achieved by (1) a selection of items (words/phrases/structures) based on situational relevance, multi-contextual applicability and frequency, (2) an empathetic teacher guiding learners to the answer and inlcuding body-movement elements, (3) learners in a comfortable semi-circle, watching and listening without taking notes, (4) the presentation of new items in the source language and in the target language (with a literal translation), the indication of morpheme boundaries and a memory hook, (5) translation exercises, (6) conversational exercises with elements of *LdL* (*Lernen durch Lehren* 'Learning by Teaching'), (7) revision sections according to *LdL*.

Sommaire

L'article présente de premiers résultats d'expériments avec une nouvelle méthode d'instruire une langue à des débutants, la méthode *Language Workout (LWO)* ['entraînement linguistique']. Pendant peu d'heures les étudiants aquièrent des compétences pour une grande partie des aspects du niveau linguistique A1 (comme défini par l'UE). Ceci est aquis par (1) une sélection d'éléments (mots/phrases/structures) basés sur pertinence situationelle, applicabilité multi-contextuelle et fréquence, (2) un instructeur empathique guidant les étudiants à la bonne solution, (3) des étudiants qui, dans un demi-cercle confortable, regardent et écoutent sans prendre des notes, (4) une présentation d'éléments nouveaux dans la langue source et dans la langue cible (avec une traduction à la lettre), l'indication de confins morphématiques et un procédé mnémotechnique, (5) des exercices de traduction, (6) des exercices de conversation avec des éléments de *LdL* (*Lernen durch Lehren* 'apprendre par enseigner'), (7) des sections de revision selon *LdL*.

Zusammenfassung

Der Artikel präsentiert erste Ergebnisse von Experimenten mit einer neuen Sprachlehrmethode für Anfänger, die Sprachworkout-Methode. In wenigen Stunden erwerben Lerner Kenntnisse für einen Großteil der Aspekte des A1-Niveau (gemäß EU). Dies wird erreicht durch (1) eine Auswahl an Elementen (Wörtern/Phrasen/Strukturen), die auf situativer Relevanz, vielseitiger Einsetzbarkeit und Häufigkeit beruht, (2) einer empathischen Lehrkraft, die die Lerner zur richtigen Lösung führt, (3) Lerner, die in einem bequemen Halbkreis zusehen und zuhören, ohne sich Notizen zu machen, (4) eine Präsentation neuer Elemente in der Ausgangssprache und in der Zielsprache (mit einer wörtlichen Übersetzung), die Markierung von Morphemgrenzen und eine Eselsbrücke, (5) Übersetzungsübungen, (6) Konversationsübungen mit Elementen von *LdL* (*Lernen durch Lehren*), (7) Wiederholungsabschnitte gemäß *LdL*.

Preliminary Remarks

In 2011, I started creating a new language method, which I call *Language Workout* (LWO) and which I have been further developing at the Europäisches Haus Pappenheim (EHP). The method integrates principles from my concept *Basic Global English (BGE)* (cf. Grzega 2005, Grzega/Stenzenberger 2011, http://www.basicglobalenglish.com), the teaching concept *Lernen durch Lehren (LdL) / Learning by Teaching* (Grzega 2006, Grzega/Klüsener 2012, Grzega/Klüsener 2013), and particularly the *Michel Thomas Method* (Levy 1997, BBC 2003, Solity 2008). This article presents a brief report on the first experiments with the LWO method from the view of a participant observer. Other aspects are analyzed by two of my students, Nora Hanusch and Claudia Sand, and will also be published.

Since the start of my teaching career in the 1990's, I have felt most comfortable with the model *Lernen durch Lehren (LdL)*, which I have gotten to know by the inventor himself, Jean-Pol Martin. The model was meant to be the answer to the clash between behavioristic methods, which focussed on teaching the language system through repetition and imitation without consideration of communicative skills, and the communicative turn, which stressed communicative patterns while neglecting grammatical skills. Martin solved this by having learners, no matter at what level they were, give information **about** the foreign language **in** the foreign language, in other words: he had students teach grammar, vocabulary and culture in the foreign language. By this, he not only gave a platform for developing linguistic skills, but also social, organizational and methodological skills. When I first saw the method as a university student at a secondary school in 1992, I was fascinated by how much the learners were able to say (actually more fluently than we university students). Since the late 1990's, I was lucky to cooperate with Martin in elaborating the technique into an entire meta-method—a method that aims at providing core contents, individually selected contents and "soft skills" (such as moderating, presenting expert knowledge to a lay audience, evaluating sources, generating knowledge, working in a team, showing tolerance and empathy, improving the world). I also integrated LdL when I developed classroom material for teaching my concept of Basic Global English to adult groups and to children at primary school. In my experience, teaching a foreign language according to LdL nearly exclusively in the foreign language is a fully effective method. However, I think that it is good to keep eyes open for things that may still improve the learner's achievements. Realizing that many adults have already acquired a number of "soft skills" through their job and that for adult beginners the mastering of teaching and speaking a foreign language is highly complex and lowers the number of linguistic items that can be trained, I was wondering whether LdL—at least in its pure form—would be the ideal concept in all sorts of courses for adults.

When I was looking for ideas for developing self-teaching material in 2005, I had first stepped over the Michel Thomas Method, but quickly forgot about it since I was looking for ideas to present English solely in the foreign language. Thanks to Wolfgang Butzkamm (cf., e.g. Butzkamm/Caldwell 2009), I learned more about effective and ineffective uses of the mother-tongue in the foreign language classroom. I integrated his ideas in my BGE material for adult groups (Grzega 2009). The role of the native language and the continued interest in improving self-teaching methods brought me back to the Michel Thomas Method (MTM). Michel Thomas claims that after 3 days learners achieve "a solid comprehensive knowledge of the entire structure of the language" (BBC 2003: 1-00:43ff.). From May 2011 on, I delved into MTM in a self-experiment and in a class experiment. I tried out the Spanish course (having some pre-knowledge of Spanish), the Polish course (having no pre-knowledge of Polish) as well as the Japanese course (having no pre-knowledge of Japanese) and afterwards designed lessons in Swedish, Polish and Russian to be taught to one person, two people and several dozen people.

As quoted, the target of MTM is the structure of the language, in other words: grammar. The MTM is based on the following principles: learners build their own sentences, rather than learn set phrases. The responsibility for learning is with the teacher, not the student. In each step, learners are given new words and then a model sentence in their native language, which learners are asked to transfer into the target language. Every learner has to think about the solution first. Then the teacher picks out a learner to try it. If the solution is wrong, the teacher gives hints for autocorrection. When the learner has given the correction equivalent, the teacher repeats as a final step. This way, learners are supposed to assimilate grammar patterns without really realizing it.

My first evaluation was that it is a very interesting approach with which you acquire active and passive grammar skills very quickly. To what degree the skills last is another question. The extensive work with internationalisms, which helps to build up a quite large vocabulary, is also convincing. However, although Michel Thomas also points out the limited amount of 500 to 1,500 items in the active vocabulary of speakers of any language and the only 600 words that a thick New York newspaper uses, there is a nearly complete lack of basic everyday words and phrases in his recordings. Moreover, I had the feeling that the teacher could not really prepare a script that would be respected fully verbatim. It would not be possible to exclude any heterogeneity. People will have different previous linguistic knowledge (some will already have learned a related language, some will not); people will also have difficulties with different items.

I therefore began to revise the approach in this respect. I was searching for the perfect relation of effectiveness and efficiency in teaching a foreign language bringing beginners of the same mother-tongue to level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. A1 includes the following skills:
(1) can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
(2) can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
(3) can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
I tried to incorporate all the knowledge I had gathered with BGE and LdL. This led to a technique in its own right, which I called *Language Workout* method[1].

The First Conceptualization of the Language Workout Method

The starting-point were the advantages and disadvantages of MTM, which I had experienced as a learner of Spanish (with some previous knowledge), Polish (without previous knowledge) and Japanese (without previous knowledge) and as a teacher of some lessons of Russian and Swedish. MTM follows the generative principle in that learners have to translate sentences that become more and more complex from their mother-tongue (or a language they already know) into the new target language. Except for brief pure revision phases, each step combines old and new knowledge (old knowledge may also relate to knowledge in another language). The start of the course is around words that the foreign language shares with the familiar language. Let's call this language the bridge language. If English is the bridge language and learners want to acquire skills in Spanish, it could be pointed out and trained, for instance, that English words ending in *-tion* end in *-ción* in Spanish.

Positive experiences are that each learner is given time to reflect, that each learner practically has to reflect (because everyone has to be prepared to give the answer), that learners are guided toward autocorrections, that learners are given mnemonics and that learners are (or should be) given understandable explanations of the structure, mostly ignoring classical technical terms and always using "literal translations".

Was this a type of intelligent pattern drills? Using a bridge language in the form of a generative principle and in the form of literal translations to facilitate the access to the target language is also corroborated by Butzkamm. Literal translations have also been used by Birkenbihl (1987) (however, her literal translations are not always really literal).

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[1] I thank Bea Klüsener for valuable assistance during these first experimental phases. Two of my students, Nora Hanusch and Claudia Sand, are analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency for their M.A. theses.

From my own observations, the following points seem debatable, however.

- There is no use of written aids. Everything is spoken; the spelling is given only orally and only sometimes. This makes the acquisition of the pronunciation more difficult (especially if the auditive input is not always good to hear for the learner).
- Pronunciation and sound-letter-equivalents are not explained as clearly and as comprehensively as the grammatical structures.
- The method very dominantly aims for the acquisition of grammatical structures. Vocabulary expansion plays only a minor role. The mastering of communicative contexts (or coherent dialogs) plays no role at all. This disregards that learners master elements earlier if they feel an affection for them.
- Not enough or not good enough mnemonics are used for languages that are very far apart from the bridge language (e.g. Polish, Japanese when English is used as a bridge language).
- Some phenomena are given technical terms that are normally used for other phenomena (e.g. the term *inflection* is used to denote 'intonation question').

This led me to set up brief experiments with some deviations from MTM. In Swedish test lessons with one learner I selected words for relevant situations that the learner was going to face in Sweden instead of focusing predominantly on structure and I also included question-answer parts beside translation tasks. In Russian test lessons with large groups of about 60 people and Polish lessons with two learners I included written representations for most words. Based on these experiences I considered the following components to be necessary.

Component 1: The teacher presents new words on slides and gives translation and question-answer tasks. The teacher gives the learners time to think of the answer, then picks one learner. If the answer is not correct, the teacher gives the learner a guided way for self-correction. If the correct answer is said, the teacher echoes it slowly and clearly. During the first two or three sentences, the word remains on the slide, before it is blinded out.

Component 2: Learners should sit in their chairs in a semi-circle and just listen and answer, without taking notes. However, if they insisted on taking notes, they should be allowed to do so. When the word is still on the slide, a learner who is asked to give the solution may still look at it, but when actually producing the sentence, the learner should look away from the visual input.

Component 3: The selection of items should predominantly be based on the relevance for the situation selected, secondly on the flexibility of the item to be embedded in many contexts, thirdly on its frequency.

Component 4: Translation phases should address the following issues.

- At the beginning, word-types that the bridge language and the unknown language share (Europeanisms/internationalisms with the same meaning in bridge and target language, loans), proper names and words from the core vocabulary are used to teach the pronunciation and the sound-letter-equivalents to the learners in a structured way. This includes the use of minimal pairs (embedded into sentences).
- Presentations of grammatical structures include the use of minimal pairs, the use of non-technical terms (which are only supplemented by technical terms if the learner group knows them or if they are common also in everyday language). If there are irregularities, they should be grouped according to similarities.
- Conceptual fields and word-fields are included in a systematic way (using mnemonics).

These need at least equally as many repetitions as grammatical structures. Explicit declarative knowledge is transferred into implicit procedural knowledge the best possible way (e.g. word-formational patterns, recurring semantic relations, phonetic motivations, activating collocations).

• Communicatively relevant sentences and sentence-sequences are included. These require at least equally as many repetitions as grammatical structures. This aspect can be combined with the teaching of grammar and lexical sets, if a short conversational script is prepared, which includes a high number of (paradigmatically) variable bricks. Each step of the script is first presented monologically (with all new elements broken down), then pseudo-dialogically (regardless of the truth value), then truly dialogically (or polylogically) (respecting the truth value of an answer for each context). The first slots taught should cover copy formulae and then complementary formulae or the pattern "declarative sentence > *And you?*" before the pattern "interrogative sentence > declarative sentence". Grammar and vocabulary progression should be oriented towards situation: more learner-relevant situation-types should be trained before less learner-relevant stuation-types. This can refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

• On all levels (phonetic, grammatical, lexical and pragmatic level), explicit knowledge is to be turned into implicit knowledge by repetitions. In other words: Paradigmatic knowledge is to be turned into syntagmatic, collocational knowledge or into frame-elements. Here, as in all other areas of life, repetition is the key.

• On all levels, new elements should be introduced through "plastic contrastive collocationing", i.e. minimal differences are shown in concrete sentences (e.g., to train the difference between simple and long *r*: Sp. *el carro es caro* 'the car is expensive'). New items are presented in oral as well as in written form. The text may just briefly be presented on the board, flipchart or on a presentation slide or the learner may be given a script. However, when sentences are asked for, learners must not read out the elements from any written source.

• On all levels, new items are broken down into known elements. Large/complex items are broken down into small/simple items. Literal translations are given for sentences, words consisting of several meaningful elements (morphemes) and words that represent meaning changes in living polysemies. Morpheme boundaries are indicated by a special symbol; if the change of one morpheme leads to phonetic/graphic changes in another morpheme, this has to be specifically marked.

• As in MTM, the last step is always the teacher's "correct-solution echo".

Component 5: Beside translation phases there should be conversational phases. Conversational phases are largely free from the bridge language and work in a question-answer way (e.g. "How old are you? – I'm …", "What is this? – This is a …", "What is your phone number? – My phone number is …"). Answers should not be invented, but be truthful. If the truthful answer is not among the words already presented, the teacher gives the solution (as part of the learner's individual, private vocabulary). The learner can ask for the item in a known language or paraphrase it or use pantomiming and drawings.

Component 6: There should be a well respected timing pattern: Roughly 10 minutes is used to introduce new items (in connection with old items), then a pure general revision phase is introduced. The revision phase picks out elements from all previous chapters. If the teacher finds out that a structure, word or conceptual field is not mastered yet, more repetitions are spent on the respective items. Thus, the revision chapter takes as long as is needed for more solid memorization. If a certain chapter has already been revised without any problem, it can be omitted.

Component 7: It is also imaginable to exclude a bridge language and use only the target language—especially if the learner group is linguistically heterogeneous. If a bridge language is excluded, the use of pantomining and drawing is essential.

Component 8: In line with the LdL concept, both translation and conversational phases can be prepared and led by learners, who thus become learner experts (or mini-teachers). Unprepared, spontaneous teacher-role rotations can also be inserted, but first experiences have shown that the sentences will stay quite simple.

I have said that at the beginning one should use word-types known from the mother-tongue, proper names and words from the core vocabulary to teach the pronunciation and the sound-letter-equivalents to the learners in a structured way, embedded into sentences. I have had the experience that this last remark is important. According to my observations, it is important that the learners get the experience that they can already say a few useful sentences already after half an hour. This can include sentences for saying thank you, please, hello, good-bye and the presentation of oneself and other people. If need be, the demonstrations of the many internationalisms and the teaching of foreign sounds (if their number is high for a specific learner group) can be spread over several lessons.

The First Full-Day Seminars

With these thoughts in mind, I created, in cooperation with the company ASEcoLi, a one-day seminar for German learners of French, which I termed *SprachFitnessStudio (LanguageGym)* and which was held at the EHP. The seminar started at 08:30 and was supposed to last until 18:00. The plan included 15-minute breaks at 10:30 and 16:00. In addition, during a 90-minute lunch break at 12:30, people were served a typical French meal, where they had to ask for missing equipment at their seat in the foreign language and were given cultural information on France and French Belgium. Afterwards, they could relax, flick through Asterix book originals and translations, watch video clips provided with the original text and a literal translation and solve riddles. The classroom sections were these:

(1) an introductory explanation on the method, a mini-overview of the structural principles of French, mini-sentences with internationalisms, specific contrasts of phonemes with the help of very basic words, minimal pairs and proper names
(2) conceptual field: getting to know each other, first part (name including the spelling, place of living, language skills, greeting, feedback, phone numbers, zip codes)
(3) conceptual field: getting to know each other, second part (job, hobby, family, birthday)
(4) conceptual field: being at the restaurant
(5) conceptual field: being in an emergency, part 1 (accident, crime, doctor)
(6) conceptual field: being in an emergency, part 2 (being lost)

Each section included passages where structures were provided and passages where single words were provided. The words and phrases of each section fit on one page in the source language. Each new word and structure is presented with the idiomatic translation and (if different) the literal translation, the morpheme boundaries and, in most cases, a mnemonic. The single sections were supposed to be interspersed with alternative exercises where learners were to formulate "plus" and "minus" tasks, partner interviews, riddles on handouts, gymnastics, games with a map, emergency role-plays. In Sections 4, 5 and 6, each learner had to instruct three to six words after a phase of preparation (where they had to invent memory hooks and training sentences).

Nevertheless, there were several things to be improved or at least to be questioned:

- The strict timing was impossible. The alarm-clock I used quickly got on everyone's nerves. Keeping an eye on the clock had influence on the flow of the instruction.
- The differences between "true beginners" and "false beginners" must be dealt with more carefully so that the true beginners feel comfortable, either by a slower tempo or more intensive integration during revision phases or by individual training during preparation phases or lunch-break.
- While there was an astonishingly high degree of attention during 14:30 and 16:30, participants showed signs of exhaustion afterwards, including myself. So seminars should end between 16:30 and 17:00.
- Participants who took notes were not better than those who did not take notes. Should the learners then be forbidden to take notes?
- I could by far not cover all I had prepared. Did some sections include too many words? Should the words be taught in a more spiral manner in consecutive courses, i.e. going back to the same fields again and again and including more and more lexemes? Had I planned too many sections with interspersed alternative exercises? Should there be more LdL sections, but with fewer items?
- Should there be more cultural information during lunch break?

Despite these shortcomings which at first disappointed me a little, I could also record the following positive results: At the end of the day (and still a few days later) I could attest most participants that they commanded nevertheless a whole lot of words and structures. With respect to level A1 of the Common European Framework, most of them could:

(1) understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type **(here: the restaurant, some emergency situations)**.

(2) introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where they live, ~~people they know and things they have~~.

(3) can interact in a simple way **(in some situations)** provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

This way not too bad. The participants also wanted to have a sequel, and their propaganda motivated other citizens to participate in the Italian and the Spanish seminar. The experiments with Italian and Spanish also received positive feedback and participants wanted sequels. But since these courses included more true beginners, the necessary adjustments became even more obvious:

- The number of items had to be reduced.
- The selection of lexical fields was debatable. Was it really necessary to include the alphabet, professions and hobbys, which may be useful for meetings between citizens from twinned towns, but maybe not in general courses (which would attract rather the general tourist).
- Mnemonics should be used for nearly every word, especially for the small grammatical words (prepositions, pronouns, determiners), which are frequently confused by "true beginners" who have no experience with a closely related language either.
- The instruction of words according to LdL required a relatively large amount of time for learners to prepare for that. What was the intended effect of this LdL phase? That the presenters come up with more learner-friendly memory hooks, that the item-presenters store their items better in their mind, train empathetic listening skills and that they have another way to revise older items. Was it an efficient way? It became doubtful—learners often did not come up with memory hooks of their own, they came up with quite easy sentences to translate or with sentences that included words not yet learned.
- Instead of a one-day seminar, two half-day seminars seemed a useful alternative.

- The revision phase after the first half needed to be much longer (45 to 60 min.).

Revision of the Original Concept

Component 1: Content Structure and Selection of Items

The revised content structure of the LanguageGym looks like this:
(1) 30 min. Section 1: preliminary remarks—N.B.: Word-types that the bridge language and the unknown language share (loans, Europeanisms/internationalisms with the same meaning in the bridge and the target language), proper names and words from the core vocabulary are used to teach the pronunciation and the sound-letter-equivalents to the learners in a structured way (this includes the use of minimal pairs embedded into sentences).
(2) 90 min. Section 2: getting to know each other (names, origin, language skills, numbers, hotel reception)
(3) 15 min. break
(4) 75 min. Section 3: being at the restaurant (including Europe-wide known food and drinks)
(5) 15 min. revision of Section 3
(6) break (either as a lunch break or as the end of the first half-day)
(7) 45 min. Section 4: general revision
(8) 75 min. Section 5: on the way
(9) 15 min. revision of Section 5
(10) 15 min. break
(11) 75 min. Section 6: emergency; and—depending on how fit learners still are and how fast items are memorized—Section 7: spelling, hobbies, profession
(12) 15 min. revision

This results in about 150 computer slides or 20-25 lines of source words and phrases on one page per Section 2, 3, 5 and 6+7. Depending on the learner group, Sections 3, 5, 6 and 7 may be replaced by other situations. The selection of items should predominantly be based on the relevance for the situation selected, secondly on the flexibility of the item to be embedded in many contexts, thirdly on its frequency, and—negatively—fourthly on its "illustrability" (i.e. words for concepts that one can show in a given situation are less included in early lessons than words for concepts that one cannot show, e.g. things that are stolen can less easily be shown that things that are broken), and fifthly on its situational "lexicographical friendliness" (i.e. words that one can well and quickly look up in a dictionary before or immediately in a situation are less included than words that you may not need actively, but passively, e.g. you can look up the word for a building/place you are looking for, but you cannot so quickly look up answers, which requires that the words for 'go', 'get off', 'left, 'right', 'corner', 'crossroads', 'between', 'next to', 'opposite', the phrase for "a store where you can get ..." and the color terms come before 'baker(y)', 'butcher(y)', 'grocer(y)', 'clothes shop').

Component 2: The Teacher

The teacher's task is to present new items on slides, to form translation exercises and question-answer exercises and to assist learners in creating revision tasks. The teacher gives the learners enough time to think of the answer, then picks one learner. If the answer is not correct, the teacher gives the learner a guided way for self-correction. If the correct answer is said, the teacher echoes it slowly and clearly. During the first two or three sentences, the word remains on the slide, before it is blinded out. The teacher must demonstrate that learners can produce a whole bunch of sentences already after a few items. When a learner is discouraged by not remembering items, the teacher has to calm down and gradually enable the learner to produce sentences by resorting to easier sentences

first or by simply giving the item lacking. If it is recurrently the same item that a learner forgets, the teacher offers a few tasks to train especially this item. However, this must not result in a pure repetition of the sound-chain heard, but in a conscious use of the item not yet mastered.

Component 3: The Learners

The task of the learners, who sit in a semi-circle, is to listen and answer, without taking notes. When the word is still on the slide, a learner who is asked to give the solution may still look at it, but when actually producing the sentence, the learner should look away from the slide.

Component 4: Presentation of New Items

Item progression should be oriented towards situation: more learner-relevant situation-types should be trained before less learner-relevant situation-types. This can refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

New items are broken down into known elements. Large/complex items are broken down into small/simple items. Literal translations are given for sentences, words consisting of several meaningful elements (morphemes) and words that represent meaning changes in living polysemies. Morpheme boundaries are indicated by a special symbol; if the change of one morpheme leads to phonetic/graphic changes in an another morpheme, this has to be specifically marked. In sum, the slide presented includes, in different fonts, the item (word/phrase) in the source language, the item in the target language (potentially accompanied by a literal translation, even for single words), the indication of morpheme boundaries (and potentially morpheme-induced changes in other morphemes) and, potentially, a memory hook. The new item is practiced until the teacher has the impression that the item can be used fluently and is thus mastered. Then the next item is introduced and combined with the just mastered item and older items. In general, explicit declarative knowledge must be transferred into implicit procedural knowledge the best possible way (e.g. word-formational patterns, recurring semantic relations, phonetic motivations, activating collocations). New words and communicative patterns must be repeated as much as grammatical structures.

Grammar items are not presented as lists. For example, you do not learn all persons for present tense at once. You start with the first person and the person used for addressing somebody you do not know. Since many learners have grown up with tables of paradigms, such tables or table-parts are included when all forms have been learned or when two or more cases are directly contrastable through rules, e.g. that the Hungarian suffix for 'into' is *-ba* after stems with a dark vowel (*a, á, o, ó, u, ú*) and *-be* after other vowels. Presentations of grammatical structures can include the use of minimal pairs, unless the two elements in the pair are both new and very similar. If two new items are too similar in form and function, this may cause confusion. If technical terms are not part of the general vocabulary of the learners, the teacher invents more transparent terms, e.g. *I-form* instead of *first person singular* or *dictionary form* instead of *infinitive*. Structures should be presented as regular, e.g. *-o* indicates 'I' in Spanish verbs. Irregularities are presented as separated lexical items, e.g. *soy* 'I am'. When irregularities become more frequent, they are grouped according to similarities.

LWO includes communicatively relevant sentences and sentence-sequences. The first slots taught should cover copy formulae and then complementary formulae or the pattern "declarative sentence > *And you?*" before the pattern "interrogative sentence > declarative sentence".

Component 5: Translation Phases

Translation phases are particularly apt for the first uses of new items. There is interweaved learning in the sense that new items are connected with old items. New words and new communicative patterns need as many repetitions as grammatical structures. Explicit knowledge must be turned into implicit knowledge by repetitions in the form of intelligent pattern drills. This means that the teacher avoids tasks where learners simply repeat the sound-chain they hear, but where they have to invest a minimal cognitive input in the structure to be learned. When sentences are asked for, learners must not read out the elements from the written source. The last step is the teacher's "correct-solution echo".

Component 6: Conversational Phases

Conversational phases are largely free from the bridge language and work in a question-answer way (e.g. "What is Paul's phone number? – Paul's phone number is …"). At first, information that the answers should relate to is given on a slide (e.g. room and phone numbers of persons, a map). Later on, the learners give information on themselves (Section 7). If the truthful answer is not in the vocabulary already presented, the teacher gives the solution (as part of the learner's individual, private vocabulary). The learner can ask for the item in a known language or paraphrase it or use pantomiming and drawings. Such phases are also good for delegating the teacher-role to a learner (as in *LdL*), either for a few sentences or only for one question where the answerer becomes the next interrogator (teacher-role rotation).

Component 7: Revision Sections

In the revision sections, learners are presented the source words and phrases on one slide. Then, according to LdL, each learner should formulate at least two tasks with the words and phrases on that slide. Learners have to think of the solution of their sentence as well, since it is up to them to evaluate the sentence proposed as a solution. This also trains listening comprehension and empathy.

Component 8: Gymnastics

At least during the parts of Sections 2 and 5 a few minutes of gymnastics are included. Here, particularly finger tip exercises (as if playing piano on the body) are used. In some popular science publications, such exercises are said to promote memory capacity. Even though scientific corroborations of this claim are still missing, they can at least not hurt.

Example

Here is an example: a slide from a Spanish lesson could show "I want – quier·o – want-I – CARE-Oh!". The learners see and hear the information from the teacher. The teacher then connects the new item with words/phrases already known. For two examples, the new item remains visible. Learners can look at it as an aid, but if the teacher picks them, they should utter the solution without looking at the slide. After two tasks, the item is blinded out. More tasks are given to train the new item, before another new item is presented. The dialog in the lesson could run like this:

> The slide shows "I want – quier·o – want-I – CARE-Oh!". The words *la información* 'the information' and similar coinages as well as the negation, *hablo* 'I speak' and *hablar* 'speak [infinitive]' and the phrase *por favor* 'please' were already practiced at earlier stages.
> Teacher: "*I want* in Spanish is *quiero*. [spoken more softly, like an aside on stage] Literally

'want-I', the *o* again stands for *I, eg<u>o</u>*. As a memory hook, you could say *I want something* is *I care for something, I [kjeə] for something*."

A brief pause.

Teacher: "What is *I want the information*?"

A brief pause. Then the teacher points at a learner.

Learner1: "Quiero información."

Teacher: "<u>*The*</u> *information*?"

Learner1: "La información."

Teacher: "The whole phrase, please."

Learner1: "Quiero la información."

Teacher: "Right. Quiero la información."

Teacher: "What is *I want the administration, please*?"

A brief pause. Then the teacher points at a learner.

Learner2: "Quero ..."

Teacher: "The pronunciation is /ˈkjero/, not /ˈkero/."

Learner2 (reads from the slide): "Quiero ..."

Teacher: "Look at me when you say it."

Learner2: "Quiero ..."

Teacher: "the administration, please."

Learner2: "Quiero la administración, por favor."

Teacher: "Right. Quiero la administracíon."

The slide is blinded out.

Teacher: "I don't want the information, I want the administration."

A brief pause. Then the teacher points at a learner.

Learner3: "Quiero no la información."

Teacher: "I don't want the information, literally [spoken more softly, like an aside on stage] 'not want-I the information.' [if the error occurred before, a snap of the finger or something similar may suffice as a hint for the learner]

Learner3: "No quiero ... la información ... quiero ... la administración."

Teacher: "No quiero la información, quiero la administración."

Teacher: "I want to speak English."

A brief pause. Then the teacher points at a learner.

Learner4: "Quiero ... hablo ... inglés."

Teacher: "The meaning 'I' is already marked in *quiero*, the second activity word [= used if the technical term *verb* is not known to the learner group] is given in the dictionary form [= used if the technical term *infinitive* is not known to the learner group].

Learner4: "Quiero ... hablar ... inglés."

Teacher: "Quiero hablar inglés."

Teacher: "I don't want to speak English."

A brief pause. Then the teacher selects Learner3 for this negative sentence, because Learner3 did not know how to place the negative marker in the right place a minute ago. So the learner gets a task to train his/her specific problem. If the learner still manages it now, the teacher continues. If the learner still has not mastered the structure, the teacher gives immediately more tasks to train it. This is also part of the notion of intelligent pattern drills.

Learner3: "No quiero hablar inglés."

Teacher: "Very good. No quiero hablar inglés."

And so on.

Semantic and Pragmatic Aspects

Concerning semantics, the Language Workout method offers primarily denotations for concrete objects. However, I have mentioned that frequency plays a less important role than the multicontextual applicability of a word or construction. Thus, words with a large extension may be preferred over frequent words. For example, Sp. *médico*, It. *medico*, Fr. *médecin*, G. *Arzt* are disregarded in favor of Sp. *doctor*, It. *dottore*, Fr. *docteur*, G. *Doktor*, which are all used not only in the medical sense (at least in the colloquial styles of these languages), but also in the more general academic sense and they are internationalisms.

Objects can be subsumed under a hyperonym or mentioned together when the target language does not differentiate here. For instance, in German there is a difference between 'go on foot' (*gehen*) and 'go by a means of transportation' (*fahren*). These two can be presented together on the same slide. Similarly, construction is looked for in the target language that can express both 'I have to X [activity]' and 'I need X [object]', e.g. in English *I need* (*I need to* go and *I need a car*), in French *il me faut* (*il me faut aller* and *il me faut une voiture*), in Spanish *necesito* (*necesito ir* and *necesito un coche*), in Italian *ho bisogno di* (*ho bisogno di andare* and *ho bisogno di una macchina*).

If the target language keeps strictly apart things that are seen together in the bridge language then, in turn, this needs to be highlighted as well, e.g. that an English learner of German is told that *gehen* 'go on foot' and *fahren* 'go by a means of transportation' need to be kept apart.

As far as the internationalisms are concerned, it is suggested—especially during the first sections—to include only those whose meaning is the same in the bridge and the target language. This means, for instance, that an English learner of Spanish does not get *actual* because it does not equal the English *actual*, but *current*. If a learner should use *actual* during one of the revision sections, then, of course, the instructor explains the difference.

With respect to pragmatics, forms of greeting and addressing are briefly explained. A first feeling of cultural differences can be highlighted here, e.g. where do people rather quickly go over to an informal way of addressing (cf., e.g., Grzega 2012: 223ff., 2013: 15ff.). A feeling for different prototypes, for different associations that word may trigger can be illustrated with the equivalents for *coffee*. Would the term rather evoke an espresso (e.g. in Italy and Spain), filtered coffee (e.g. in Germany) or Turkish coffee (e.g. in Poland).

Here too, the situationally most comprehensive forms are highlighted. Furthermore, certain politeness constructions that are traditionally considered advanced knowledge are included early on if they allow the use of verbal "dictionary forms" (in European languages this is mostly the infinitive) or easy forms (in Hungarian the dictionary form is the 3rd person singular, but the infinitive in almost all cases is built by adding *-ni*, sometimes after having to delete *-ik*, if the dictionary forms ends in this suffix). This principle includes, for instance, parallels of the *would*-construction in many European languages. Also of note, the equivalent for 'And you?' in a target language is presented at the beginning as a powerful way to combine giving information about oneself and asking the interlocutor for the same personal information and to avoid having to look for the correct verbal 'you'-form or the correct superordinate question. Instead of "What is your {profession/age/hobby}?" one can stick to the pattern "{I am ... / I like ...}+ And you?". Similarly, the form for 'Excuse me' is introduced as a politeness strategy and the form for 'Can I ...? / May I ...?' as a powerful phrase to ask for permission to do something if the phrase is combined with a clarifying gesture (e.g. Italian *Scusi, posso?* + gesture pointing at a chair = 'May I sit down here?')

Outlook

The system might also work with European languages written in a non-Latin, but Latin-related script (Greek, Cyrillic). Here, the preliminary phase must be longer in order to get used to the new letters. Other languages may be learnable when using IPA, which could also be seen as a Latin-related script. However, the bigger the distance between source and target language, the more adaptions will be necessary.

Due to the use of slides as written aids and the important focus on Europeanisms at the beginning, the system as it now stands will work for teaching European languages in Latin script to learners of a European mother-tongue. Only within a few hours, large parts of the competences of the European language level A1 can be achieved. I would like to underscore once again that this system is meant is a method for the beginner's level, which should later on be replaced by a more communicative setting where not the language, but the content becomes more and more important—but where the learners have enough chances to practice the foreign language with less and less reference to the bridge language (for instance, according to the method LdL).

Joachim Grzega
Europäisches Haus Pappenheim
Marktplatz 1
DE-91788 Pappenheim
grzega@pappenheim.de
and
Sprach- und Literaturwiss. Fakultät
Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt
Universitätsallee 1
DE-85072 Eichstätt
www.grzega.de

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