

Section 1: “Early foreign language instruction“

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Early foreign language learning has now been an integral part of the German primary school curriculum for about half a decade. In some respects, it thus seems to have established itself as just another 'normal' part of life at the primary school. However, quite a few of its finer details are still very much under review and/or subject to ongoing change, e.g.:

- **Early foreign language instruction seems to start ever earlier.** After it has been brought forward to year 3, some states are now considering an early start in year 1, and some even have already changed their regulations in this respect. In addition, there is an ever increasing number of institutions which offer pre-school foreign language education.
- The development of **language awareness** receives more and more attention. The same is true for phonological awareness in order to exploit the learners' sensitivity for language-specific sound patterns and improve their pronunciation. And grammatical awareness likewise increasingly takes the limelight, not least in order to provide a sensible addition to the use of prefabricated chunks.
- More and more experts agree on the need to include **written forms** of the foreign language into early foreign language teaching right from the start, as extensive introductory phases that solely rely on the oral use of the new language seem to pave the way for negative orthographic transfer and a loss of motivation on the learners' part.

These developments create enormous new challenges both for foreign language research and for universities and providers of teacher training. How can new languages be taught to very young learners? Which competences can - and should - have been attained at the end of primary school? What should the transition from primary school to secondary school look like?

The aim of this section is to provide a platform for the presentation and discussion of topical empirical research in the areas listed above. However, abstracts dealing with other issues in the field are also very welcome.

Please send your abstracts until 15 March 2009 to - at least - one of the e-mail addresses cited at the top of this page.

Section 2: “Teacher Education”

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This section mainly focuses on three points:

(1) *Teacher education in European contexts*: ‘Crossing borders’ here means focusing on different organizational models of teacher education throughout Europe. Possible issues include mobility of students and trainee teachers, equality of national graduation certificates or the effects of different learning/teaching cultures on the education of foreign language teachers.

(2) *Borderlines and transitions between different phases of teacher education*: We ask for contributions that focus on the BA/MA implementation process at German universities and teacher training colleges in the various Bundeslaender. In terms of theory, participants might investigate how different study courses integrate diverse forms of knowledge at the university/college level, but also how knowledge and experience are mediated between university, teacher training (Referendariat) and career entry.

(3) *Links between domain-specific beliefs of instructors and students and approaches/designs/procedures of the courses*: Which notion of language and culture learning provides the basis for study courses? Which beliefs of Romance, English or Slavonic studies are school and/or college instruction based upon and how are they communicated? Both course content and competency-based/task-based working methods might be specified in detail by presenting course concepts and curricula.

Please send your abstracts until 15 March 2009 to - at least - one of the e-mail addresses cited above.

Section 3: “Beyond the limits of research methodologies”

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Research methodology is intrinsically concerned with issues such as how to attain scientific insight as well as with the quality of the results thus obtained. Taking into consideration the extreme complexity of a research subject such as “foreign language acquisition”, the respective research methodology faces considerable problems. It therefore seems useful to combine several qualitative and quantitative research methods and to consider the methods applied in related scientific fields, thus deliberately fostering an interdisciplinary approach encompassing, among others, linguistics, language teaching, sociology, social psychology, computer linguistics or corpus linguistics. On the basis of these assumptions, this section will focus on the following questions:

- Which new and innovative methods can be used to study foreign language acquisition?
- To what extent do new research topics or approaches demand a change in research methodology?

- Which research methods meet the demands imposed by the complexity of foreign language acquisition processes?
- Which research methods used in related scientific fields might be applied to foreign language acquisition?

Please send your abstracts until 30 April 2009 to - at least - one of the e-mail addresses cited above.

Section 4: “Intersections of sociocultural and psycholinguistic research in second language acquisition”

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In second language acquisition research, especially when considering learners from a migration background, increasing emphasis is being placed on learners and their individual stories. A sociocultural paradigm has evolved that focuses on learner biographies and the specific social and cultural contexts in which L2 learning is embedded. We would like to draw on this growing interest in sociocultural contexts and discuss productive links between psycholinguistic and sociocultural research orientation. This discussion we consider promising because of the accessibility of sociocultural approaches. Psycholinguistic and cognitive concepts, as well as sociolinguistic and social dimensions of second language acquisition, can be easily integrated and accommodated in a sociocultural framework.

We therefore are inviting contributions to our international workshop. In particular, we are looking for contributions which address the interface between sociocultural and psycholinguistic approaches. The following aspects would be of interest here:

- theoretical reflections which show the productivity of the link between sociocultural and psycholinguistic approaches as well as pertinent research desiderata
- metastudies which correlate results of research work from both research areas and thus reveal new perspectives of recognition or which contribute to theory building
- empirical research projects – including projects which are currently being planned – which establish a link between the two paradigms
- educational-methodological concepts, teaching material and teaching media which have been developed on the basis of a productive link between both paradigms

Please send your abstracts until 15 March 2009 to - at least - one of the e-mail addresses cited above.

Section 5: "Crossing boundaries between languages. Forms of multilingualisms"

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The languages present in a multilingual learner's mind do not exist separately. Therefore it is reasonable to consider and treat them as interdependent throughout the language learning/teaching process and in curricula. Inter-connections between the languages can be developed in the learner in various ways, including adopting comprehensive language- and content-based tasks/activities, using multilingually-oriented pedagogical approaches, or employing a broad language-based curriculum. Such a language-based curriculum would include not only foreign language(s), but also German as a mother tongue, German as a foreign language, and heritage language(s). Our goal in this section is to introduce specific activities and tasks, analyze them from a language acquisition point of view, consider their feasibility and characterize their benefits and drawbacks. Finally, presentations which focus on the maintenance and loss of 'natural' multilingualism (i.e. heritage languages) are also welcome.

Please send your abstracts until 30 April 2009 to - at least - one of the e-mail addresses cited above.

Section 8: "Digital media and foreign language learning"

The role of digital media in foreign-language acquisition is a fixed topic of interest at foreign language conferences that are concerned with current research, and rightly so. The development of digital media is not only an expression of the rapid pace of social change, but also drives this change in important ways. Information, communications and entertainment in their quotidian contexts have become so tightly bound with digital technologies that no educational process now seems conceivable without the use of diverse forms of media.

The goal of this section is to present and discuss ongoing and completed *empirical* research that specifically explores the use of digital media in foreign language teaching and learning. The course aims to include the widest possible spectrum of digital media – film, video, television, 'classical' Internet and Web 2.0 applications, study/practice programs, learning/ communications platforms, et cetera – in order to fully explore phenomena of media-based knowledge transfer and knowledge formation. The articles and research findings presented in the section will help to clarify the potentials and risks of embedding digital technologies in various teaching and learning contexts (e.g., foreign language education in schools and universities, adult education, non-institutional self-directed learning, and basic and continuing education for language teachers).

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To register for this section, please indicate your interest before 15 March 2009 at one of the E-mail addresses noted above.

Section 9: “Crossing Borders in the Teaching of Literature”

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Although many teachers consider literary texts to be an integral part of syllabuses and frameworks for the teaching of foreign languages, their importance in the classroom seems to be diminishing since teaching literature cannot be brought in line easily with models of competence like the one used in the *Nationale Bildungsstandards* (National Educational Standards, KMK 2004, 2005). Apart from this, researchers and teacher trainers are confronted with the problem of having to sift through a vast amount of classical, modern or postcolonial texts and movies to propose a reasonable selection of material for all levels of school education and for university that can be integrated into communicative and intercultural language teaching.

This section aims at exploring the traditional limits of teaching literature in the foreign language classroom and at crossing borders. The following questions may serve as suggestions for contributions:

- Should one return to a canon of texts for the use in schools, which might make it easier for teachers to select classical or modern fictional texts to be used in the classroom? What might be the limits of such a canon, and how might teacher trainers at university react to it?
- What is the influence of visual culture on the teaching of literature? Which new opportunities are opened to the didactics of literature through publications dealing with visual culture?
- Which competences can be developed and fostered in the teaching of literature at different levels of the school system? Is the concept of competence as used in the *National Educational Standards* also applicable to the teaching of literature?

Please send your abstracts until 30 April 2009 to - at least - one of the e-mail addresses cited above.

Section 10: “Development and encouragement of intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom”

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In foreign language learning and teaching the overall goal of acquiring ‘communicative competence’ has been extended to ‘intercultural communicative competence’ since the mid 1990s. In the German National Educational Standards, established in 2003 for English (and French) as possible first foreign languages at school, the development of intercultural competence is explicitly mentioned as one of the important goals.

The question, however, is how to implement this goal in practice in the foreign language classroom. How can pupils concretely be enabled to develop intercultural competence? The discussion of recent years has shown that there are certainly manifold concepts of intercultural learning, but that it is difficult to transpose them into a construct which is suitable for empirical research in the context of foreign language learning and teaching at school. Thus, one of the tasks for the future will be to operationalise the concept of intercultural communicative competence in this context and to investigate how pupils at different ages develop this competence by taking into account the cognitive, emotional and conative dimension. On the basis of this research concepts for the fostering of this competence in the foreign language class can be developed.

But which contents and methods are suitable to encourage intercultural competence in the classroom? Which kind of teacher behaviour promotes intercultural learning processes and how can intercultural learning be represented among the learners? Furthermore, the question remains of how to plan and attend school exchange programs so that they have a positive effect on the students’ and teachers’ intercultural competence. These are the research questions that should be focused on, because evidence-based knowledge about intercultural teaching and learning processes is important to develop a well-founded concept for intercultural foreign language teaching of different age groups concerning contents and methods.

In this section we want to deal with the questions which have been mentioned before on an interdisciplinary level. Contributions which are based on personal empirical studies are preferred. Please send your abstracts until 15 March 2009 to - at least - one of the e-mail addresses cited above.

Section 11: “A Task is a Task is a Task? – Integrated Research on Task-based Language Learning and Teaching”

Johannes Eckerth, London (johannes.eckerth@kcl.ac.uk)

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In an attempt to better understand foreign language learning two perspectives on *task* have been taken: first, academic research informed by L2 acquisition theory, and second, pedagogically oriented action and practitioner research. Hence *tasks* are used for two purposes:

- (1) to identify features that are likely to support language acquisition;
- (2) to offer learners opportunities for the contextualized and interactive use of the L2.

While these two approaches to research on task-based language learning and teaching have followed separate agendas in the past, they have recently started to develop common interests. Recent research has increasingly been situated in actual classrooms and conducted under pedagogically authentic conditions, and has suggested approaches to task-based research that are not only of theoretical interest, but also of pedagogical relevance. Along this line of thinking, our main interest in this strand is to discuss research that is oriented towards L2 acquisition theory or L2 pedagogy and adheres to the following principles:

- the research is located in primary, secondary or tertiary language classrooms
- the research includes a focus on pedagogical implications

Based on these principles, we are especially interested in the following research questions

- Which research designs are most suitable for producing outcomes that can inform both L2 acquisition theory and L2 pedagogy?
- What are the areas of focus, procedures and potential outcomes of such integrative approaches to task-based research?
- What can teachers learn from task-based research and how can they participate in it?
- How does task-based research conceptualize the role of the individual learner in the learning/teaching relationship, and to which extent can learners' accounts of task-based learning be integrated into task-based research and pedagogy?
- Which criteria can be formulated to guide the design of task-based curricula?
- What are the pedagogical implications of task-based performance assessment?

Contributions relevant to these questions and any other issues that can be located in the framework outlined above will be welcome. Please direct all expressions of interest until 30 April 2009 to one of the strand organizers listed above.

Section 12: “Measurement of Competences, Evaluation, Educational quality monitoring”

The Standing Conference of the Cultural Ministers (KMK) released a “Comprehensive Strategy for Educational Quality Monitoring” in 2006. This strategy proclaims a paradigm shift within the educational policy in Germany towards the concepts of output orientation, reporting and system monitoring. In order to monitor the development of quality within the educational system, educational processes and outcomes are to be evaluated by external means, which complement the existing internal evaluation processes within the school system. The educational outcomes to be reached at the end of schooling were formulated in the National Educational Standards (NES). We are now at a point where these Standards have to be evaluated, among other things by means of standardised proficiency tests. For that purpose, the KMK proposed four pivotal procedures:

- international large-scale assessment studies
- centralised evaluation of the accomplishments regarding the NES in a nationwide comparative study (Ländervergleich)
- comparative tests within the federal states linked to the NES to evaluate school performances within or across the federal states
- concerted reporting with regards to educational achievement (Bildungsberichterstattung von Bund und Ländern).

The section will focus on the following issues within the field of foreign languages

- measuring of competences
- modelling of communicative competences
- instruments of external evaluation
- external evaluation systems (e.g. VERA6/VERA8): implications, potential, limitations

In this context, we would like to discuss questions like the usability of external test instruments within in the foreign language classroom, or the practicability and actual usage of outcome reports and feedback from external tests to optimise teaching processes.

The section is open to practitioners and researchers in this field and invites them to share and discuss their experiences, concepts and research.

We would welcome a short abstract until the **15th of March 2009**:

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Section 13: Poster section

This section wants to contribute to an interdisciplinary and lively discussion among conference participants by providing an opportunity to present research projects with the help of an academic poster.

Posters will be displayed in central locations throughout the conference area. On Friday, 2 October, a plenary session will allow 7-9 presenters to briefly introduce themselves and their project and to draw attention to their poster (5 minutes each).

During two half-hour breaks on Friday and Saturday the focus will be explicitly on the presented posters, which can then be explained by their presenters and discussed in more detail.

Posters should be of A0 format and designed by using a programme such as QuarkXPress, InDesign, LaTeX, CorelDraw or even PowerPoint. They should be well structured and easily readable.

More information on how to design a poster can be found [here](#):

Advice on designing scientific posters:

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrrin1/posteradvice.htm>

Hinweise zur Gestaltung von Postern: <http://www.rz.uni-kiel.de/ausgabe/postermemo/>

If you are interested in presenting a poster, please send a proposal of not more than 200 words until 30 April 2009 to:

Bernt Ahrenholz (ahrenholz@ph-ludwigsburg.de)

and DGFF_Nachwuchs_2009@uni-leipzig.de

Please specify if you would like to give a 5-minute presentation on Friday, 2 October.