Materials Review

Bung, Klaus. *Probleme der Aufgabenanalyse bei der Erstellung von Sprachprogrammen (Problems of Task Analysis in the Production of Language Programs)* Heidelberg, Germany: Julius Groos Verlag, 64pp. DM 8.50.

The basic purpose of Klaus Bung's writings in the area of language programming is to lay the groundwork for a systematic approach to language instruction, based on the nature of language and how people learn and use it. With this groundwork it is intended to make it possible to lead the learner from aspects of language that can be carefully controlled or programmed, to less controlled, then unprogrammed, and finally to liberated language use.

This latest contribution is an analysis designed to show to what extent language skills can be independent of one another and to what degree they are interdependent. Twenty-five language skills are discussed. They are: 1) sound discrimination, 2) imitative articulation, 3) use of sentence fragments, 4) use of sentence structures, 5) free or liberated speech, 6) diction, 7) reading aloud, 8) use of standard expressions, 9) use of vocabulary and idioms, 11) liberated auditory comprehension, 12) conversation, 13) recognition of writtten symbols, 14) production of written symbols, 15) controlled writing, 16) use of grammar as an aid to writing, 17) liberated writing, 18) sensible guessing, 19) reading comprehension, 20) use of grammar as an aid to reading, 21) liberated reading, 22) correspondence or letter writing, 23) use of the dictionary as an aid to reading, 24) use of the dictionary as an aid to writing, 25) use of formal grammar.

Each of the 25 skills is clearly defined and discussed separately. Numerous diagrams, charts, and examples are used to differentiate between the various skills. Distinctions are made between graphic and acoustic skills, receptive and productive skills, and between skills that can or cannot be programmed.

Bung emphasizes that this work is only preliminary and not a detailed analysis. He indicates that his main purpose in this volume is not to delve into details of practical applicaton. Nevertheless, he does explain how many of his theoretical formulations may be put into practice. One of his recommendations for programming language instruction, and also for providing grammatical summaries, is to use a binary flow diagram. This consists of questions that have yes and/or no answers. Each answer is followed by appropriate commentary, special directions, or additional questions.

As a tool for programming language instruction, the binary flow diagram guides the programmer and/or the learner systematically and in small increments through language concepts, including principal elements of the sound and structural systems, along with variations and exceptions. For example, the diagram that centers on German adjective endings has questions and statements that lead to the correct use of endings in given circumstances. The circumstances involved are: 1) whether or not the adjective is preceded by a definite, indefinite, or no article, and 2) which genders and cases in singular or plural are used.

Each yes or no answer leads to subsequent steps until all alternatives are exhausted in the process of developing every aspect of the concept under consideration. Some yes or no answers lead back to a previous step because a yes or a no answer may not be possible in certain situations. Occasionally, the reader may be told to go to some specific reference point such as a dictionary, or to write such and such before proceeding further.

As a grammatical summary for the learner, the binary flow diagram is offered as an alternative to the conventional charts and traditional textbooks. These charts are usually intended to be memorized in paradigmatic form. They typically contain verb endings in various tenses, definite and indefinite articles, prepositions, adjective endings, and the like. Bung suggests that many learners who have difficulty memorizing aspects of language in such charts, learn more economically and thoroughly when using the binary flow diagram. In fact he claims that many learners can create their own binary flow diagrams as an alternative to memorizing charts.

Also offered in this volume are illustrations to show how learning objectives may include emphasis on certain skills to the exclusion of others. An example is discussed of the learner who wishes to read for the sole purpose of understanding scientific articles in his field, and not to speak the foreign language. By employing some of the principles suggested by Bung, this individual can follow certain steps to accomplish his goal most efficiently.

The role of the teacher in programmed instruction is outlined. It is indicated that the teacher is an indispensable part of the learning process, since he controls how the student program is to be used and spends his time working in areas, such as face to face communication, that cannot be programmed. Although a division of responsibility between the teacher and the program is referred to, it is suggested that the ultimate success of the program is highly dependent upon the teacher.

Throughout the volume, a perspective is maintained between the systematic approach to language instruction and the realization that much of language is extremely intricate and cannot be systematized. The reader is reminded frequently of the importance of making non-programmed language learning a real-life experience for the learner. In other words, non-programmed language learning is viewed as the bridge between highly structured programmed learning and liberated communication in everyday situations.

A few typographical errors that should be corrected in a subsequent edition are as follows: p. 17 "kömmen" should be "kommen"; p. 19 "glehrt" should be "gelehrt"; p. 34 "Es" referring to "der Shüler" should be "Er"; p. 35 "Wöterbuch" should be "Wörterbuch."

In summary, this volume strikes a good balance between humanization of language learning on the one hand, and mechanical aspects on the other. It is therefore a welcome addition to the field of language programming and should be considered an important contribution in the development of this rapidly growing area of endeavor.

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