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Discussions and Articles

- Franciszek GRUCZA:** The Situation of Foreign Language Teaching in Poland Before
And After the Year 1989 5
- The year 1989 has to be considered special, mainly since decisions taken in that year were as crucial as they were surprising. Finally there appeared a possibility to initiate the process of a total change of social, political and economic environment. In 1989 all the features of our life and all the fields of our activity began to change. Some of them, however, still remain outside the main stream of change; for instance, the very core of the education system. Although it is evident that the events of 1989 did alter everything that comprises 'school' in its widest meaning, the surrounding world has changed much more than the real life of the school.
- It is necessary to pose the question why this happens. How is it possible that, according to the critics of our education system, instead of contributing to the development of the system, the otherwise positive changes of 1989 resulted in further diminishing its efficiency?
- The year 1989 undoubtedly brought a change for the better in the world of education, as well as in the development of foreign language teaching. Firstly, the FLT world was freed from various political limitations of its development. Secondly, it was allowed to make its own choices. The overall situation of FL teaching in Polish schools, however, did not change in its essence. It is evident that the new education officials are responsible for the fact that the possibilities which opened after 1989 were not used to the full. The new government did not give the FL teaching world the chance to develop according to the expectations of the outside world. It also remains silent as to the proposals which aim at fulfilling even the most basic glottodidactic requirements of 'real' foreign language teaching.
- Maria DAKOWSKA:** An Evaluation of the Communicative Approach from the Point of
View of Psycholinguistics 37
- The paper juxtaposes the conception of communication as presented by the proponents of CA and the view of communication developed in the field of psycholinguistics. Special attention is devoted to the following issues: a) the conception of target behaviour; b) the conception of language acquisition in the formal setting; and c) the conception of language teaching.
- The psycholinguistic view of communication is regarded as more comprehensive of the two allowing to identify several limitations of CA from the point of view of the interests of the learners, most notably the fallacy of the primacy of communicative effectiveness over accuracy, narrowing the notion of communication to the information-gap activities, and providing the learners with opportunities of automatizing knowledge which has not yet been fully developed.
- Agnieszka STENIKOWSKA:** Vera Birkenbihl's Method of Foreign Language Teaching..... 49
- The article discusses an alternative method of foreign language teaching developed by Vera F. Birkenbihl in West Germany in the 1970 s. The method was created primarily for the needs of a self-taught language learner. The author presents a detailed description of the four steps constituting the method, i.e. text decoding, active listening, passive listening and individual study of the language. The final part of the article provides a comparison of Vera F. Birkenbihl's method with other so-

called alternative methods of foreign language teaching.

Empirical studies

Sambor GRUCZA: Causes of Errors in the Usage of Articles in German by Polish Learners 59
The aim of this article is to analyse the causes of errors in the usage of articles made by Polish learners of the German language. The causes of such errors made by persons from whom German is not a native language can be divided into linguistic and glottodidactic causes.

A comparison of referential functions of German articles and the equivalent lexical structures in Polish is limited to a comparison on the cognitive level. The question remains whether Polish speakers/ hearers possess in their cognitive structure such categories as 'definite designate of the noun' or 'indefinite designate of the noun', and if they do, how those structures compare to cognitive structures of speakers/hearers of the German language.

The author concludes that within the field of glottodidactics the discussion of the causes of errors in the usage of articles by Polish learners of German has to be limited to the question of conceptual differences between the speakers/hearers of German and Polish languages, and consequently to a description of the 'definite/indefinite' category in both languages. The process of developing the language abilities connected with the usage of articles in German must be, therefore, regarded as a process of developing a new 'definite/indefinite' category in the conceptual structure of the Polish learner.

Magdalena OLPIŃSKA-MAZUREK, Agnieszka STĘPNIKOWSKA: Selected Issues from the Analysis of German and Polish Legal Language79
The article is an attempt to analyse some aspects of legal German. The analysis is based on authentic German texts such as acts, laws, regulations and commentaries. As it is not the aim of the article to provide a contrastive analysis of Polish and German legal texts, examples in Polish are treated as additional information.

Part I of the article is a theoretical background to further analysis, providing definitions and discussing lexical and syntactic aspects of legal German. Part II discusses practical implications of the knowledge of legal language and analyses situations in which special (professional) language may constitute a communication barrier. Part III is devoted to various aspects of translating legal texts. Examples of German-Polish translations are discussed in this part of the article.

Reviews and Reports

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