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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF
METHODS OF TEACHING
HIGH SCHOOL
GERMAN

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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF METHODS OF TEACHING HIGH SCHOOL GERMAN*

The purpose of this paper is to report some experimental work done in the University High School, on the methods used and the results obtained in the first year's work in German. Since the methods used in this work are related, more or less, to others which have been in general use in the teaching of modern languages, a brief description of some of these methods will precede the report.

I.—METHODS USED IN TEACHING MODERN LANGUAGES EXPOSITION

Probably one of the first of the methods to be used in teaching a modern language was the **Grammar Method**, which is simply an adaptation, or an imitation, of the method so long used in teaching Greek and Latin. According to this method attention is given from the first to the formal side of the language; paradigms and rules and exceptions are memorized apart from any connected reading or conversation in the foreign tongue. When this study of grammar has been completed, the students are allowed to read, but even then the reading is made a basis for further drill in grammar. Composition is also used mainly for grammatical purposes. Careful analysis and translation are required and, as a consequence, the amount of reading done is very small. The foreign language is not spoken and pronunciation is not considered important.¹

The **Natural Method** is a result of a reaction from the abstract grammar study according to the **Grammar Method**. Its aim, evidently, is to teach the new language in a way similar to that by which the mother tongue is acquired. The method is oral in character, at least until considerable familiarity with the idiomatic spoken language is attained. In its extreme form it consists of conversations between teacher and pupil, in the foreign language—the use of the mother tongue is not permitted. At a comparatively late period reading is begun, and, at a still later period, the study of grammar. The material for composition is taken from the oral work of the class.

Another oral method used in modern language teaching is the **Psychological Method**. This method is often called the **Gouin**

* A master's thesis submitted in the graduate division (School of Education) of the University of Missouri, 1910. The original copy with the acknowledgments is on file in the library of the University.

(1) Committee of Twelve, Report, p. 14.

method also, from the man who originated it, and sometimes the Betis method, from the man who brought it into general notice. The term Psychological, implies at least this much of its general character, that it is an attempt to adapt the teaching of the language to the commonly accepted methods of mental development. The basic principle of the method is that of association of ideas. Each lesson is presented orally and consists of a group of short idiomatic sentences closely connected in thought. Sometimes objects are used to illustrate. The students are expected to form a distinct mental image of each thing or idea presented. From day to day these groups are connected until finally a more or less complete speaking vocabulary is supposed to be mastered. Throughout the course most of the talking is done by the teacher, although the pupils are continually asked to repeat what has been said or to answer questions. Thus it would seem that pronunciation was not considered very important.² Reading is postponed until most of an ordinary vocabulary has been acquired, but instruction in grammar is begun early in combination with the other work. Composition is based upon work done orally in class.

The next method to be considered is variously known as the "New" method, the "Reform" method, and the "Phonetic" method. For the sake of convenience it will be called here by the last name, **Phonetic**. As it is variously known, so is it variously described, but there are some ideas, the main ones concerning the method, common in all descriptions. The method is the result of a reform movement, started in Germany in 1881 by Professor Viëtor of Marburg, against contemporary methods of teaching modern languages.

According to Direktor Walter (of the Musterschule, Frankfurt-on-Main) some of the main ideas for which Viëtor and his followers stand are: Emphasis upon the living spoken language rather than the dead letter; the teaching of grammar inductively in its true nature as an abstraction of the language and therefore subordinate to it; the use of the phonetic science in teaching pronunciation.³ The major emphasis, then, is given to the spoken language, and the principal aim, evidently, is to acquire a practical use of it. The instruction begins with a training of the ear and the vocal organs, and with drill upon the various sounds. Later, texts are used, usually in phonetic transcription at first. A systematic study of grammar is not taken up until a late period, though this phase of the language is studied inductively earlier. Translation comes last.

(2) Report of Committee of Twelve, pp. 21-22.

(3) Taken from a quotation in Bagster-Collins, pp. 3 and 4. *Die Reform des neu sprachlichen Unterrichts auf Schule und Universität*, Walter, Marburg, 1901.

The fifth and last of the methods to be considered is the **Reading Method**, the title of which so far explains itself that further description is hardly necessary. The controlling aim of this method is to learn to read the foreign language quickly and easily. The reading of connected texts is begun at once and much sight translation is used. Grammar and composition are considered merely as helps to reading and are treated as such. According to the Committee of Twelve, pronunciation in the Reading Method receives little attention, and there is little or no oral or written use of the language.

These, then, are some of the methods used in teaching a modern language. No doubt there are many others, most of them, however, modifications or combinations of those mentioned. One in particular—a modification of the pure grammar method—by which an attempt is made to teach grammar in a more inductive way, is very largely used. Since this method is one of the two used in our experiment, a fuller description of it will be postponed until later. The remainder of this portion of the paper will be devoted to a criticism of the methods already described.

CRITICISM.

In criticizing any method, its aim must be kept in view. A method may be very good for one purpose and yet quite inadequate for another. A method adapted for high school students must take into consideration not only the maturity of the students but also the two general classes into which they are divided, in our country at least—the larger class, perhaps nine-tenths, who will never go beyond the high school even if they complete that, and the other class, who will continue work in college or university. Probably all would agree that for the larger class the emphasis should be upon the concrete or practical phases of the work. These, because of greater interest, will make a more lasting impression and become a more permanent possession. For the students who will continue their work in higher institutions, a knowledge of the more formal technical side is of more value than for the former class. Since the average high school class, however, includes both kinds of students, the needs of both must be kept in view. Bearing this in mind, the methods may be criticized.

For the **Grammar Method** certain advantages have been claimed. It was thought to be of great value on account of the mental training involved in the drill. This doctrine of formal discipline, however, is no longer generally accepted; formal training in any one

study is no longer made a pedagogical aim. The method may, perhaps, give training of some value in purely philological work, but it has so many disadvantages that this one possible advantage is almost lost sight of. Aside from the fact that pure grammar study, especially with an extremely limited vocabulary, is not likely to inspire interest on the part of high school students, the method is based upon a false idea of the nature and function of grammar. That grammar is really a series of classifications and deductions made by scholars concerning the living language, and not a number of abstract rules in accordance with which the language is constructed; that it is thus only a means by which we may be guided in a systematic study of the real thing, the language, and is not an end in itself—these facts do not seem to be recognized in the method. In this respect it may be compared with the old methods of teaching the sciences, by which the real things considered came in as an after-thought, if at all; the main attention was given to studying classifications and generalizations about them. Fortunately along with the changes in science teaching has come a change in modern language teaching. The grammar method in its original form is rarely found. But it is probable that too much emphasis is still given to grammar as an end.

In contrast to the grammar method the Natural, Psychological, and Phonetic methods are all good in that they are a reaction from the formal, lifeless study of the language. They treat the language as living, and are thus more likely to inspire interest. In the hands of capable and especially trained teachers who could speak the language fluently each of these methods no doubt would prove successful, especially in giving a practical command of the language.

But there are several reasons why they do not seem adapted for use in our high schools. In general, the teachers are not prepared, either naturally or by education, to use them. If the teachers were so prepared there would still be other objections. Each of these methods emphasizes too much its one principal aim to the neglect of others, and in each the aim seems to be practical rather than cultural. In Germany it may be, and probably is, most desirable that the student of modern language—of French for instance—emphasize the ability to speak the language, but with us, living on another continent, there may be other aims more desirable. As Bagster-Collins says, the majority of our students will never have occasion to speak the language but they can always have pleasure in reading it.⁴ It is not meant to imply by this that the oral use of the language should be neglected, but that speaking the language should not be for us the leading aim, as it seems to be in the methods

under discussion. According to these methods reading is delayed until too late a period when we consider the students who stop after one or two years of high school work, or at least at the end of the high school course. It may be added, that the Natural method is not necessarily ideal, just because it is natural. It must be remembered that the child takes years to acquire even an imperfect knowledge of the language he is using and hearing constantly. What then of the new language which, at most, the student can use and hear only a small part of the time? That he can learn it as he has his own is, as Sachs says in an article on modern languages,⁵ "a flagrant impossibility". As for the Psychological method, in the form outlined, its failure to emphasize pronunciation sufficiently is a defect even from a psychological point of view. Its underlying aim, however, should be kept in mind in all good methods.

The Reading method, as described, is also too one-sided in its aim. It is probably successful in giving its students the ability to read quickly and easily, but perhaps superficially also. It is doubtful if there could be real literary appreciation with a knowledge of the language such as would be thus obtained. Then, by merely reading and translating with little attention given to pronunciation, and by never getting into any orderly system facts concerning the language which are learned incidentally, a student is not prepared in the best manner for more advanced work he may wish to take in college.

It may be concluded, then, that although each of these methods has its good points—and some of them are excellent when judged from the point of view of their particular aims—no one of them alone seems satisfactory when judged from the point of view of the needs of the ordinary high school classes of our country. The Grammar method, in its original form is too formal, too abstract and mechanical to be at all suited to the interests of high school students anywhere, and this alone is enough to make it unsatisfactory. The Natural, Psychological, and Phonetic methods, are unsatisfactory as regards amount of time left for reading, and the Reading method, besides the danger of superficial work, does not sufficiently prepare its students for more advanced work in the language. The problem arises, then, as to how these disadvantages might be overcome by improvement in method. How shall the language be taught in the first year so as to insure a knowledge of the grammar, at least in its essentials, and yet not give this study undue emphasis; how attain as much ability as possible during this year in the use

(4) Bagster-Collins, *The Teaching of German*, p. 22.

(5) Sachs, Julius, *Modern Language in Secondary Schools*. *Educational Review*, vol. 29, p. 168.

of the spoken language and yet not make this the chief aim; how acquire an easy reading knowledge of the language, and yet not be superficial; and finally, how adapt the year's work to the interests of the high school students—these were the questions kept in mind in the following experiment.

II.—THE EXPERIMENT.

Before describing the methods used in the experiment, some information should be given regarding the conditions and the material with which we worked. These facts will concern the students, the teachers, and the amount of time spent.

The students were divided into five classes as nearly uniform in size as possible. No attempt was made to apportion them as to age, ability, preparation and the like—they were simply allowed to enter the classes most convenient for their schedules. Moreover, care was taken that changes from one section to another should not be made, unless it might be from one section into another in which the same method was being used, and even these changes were limited. The only change, then, except the few which will be mentioned in specific cases, was that caused by students dropping in this way at the opening of the second semester. It is probable, however, that this change did not affect the work to any greater extent in one class than in another. The facts which concern the sections and the students individually—facts which should have, it would seem, some bearing on the work done—will be given as briefly as possible in the following table. It may be said here, however, that, of the five sections in first year German, three were what will be called Reading sections—Sections II, III, and V below—and two, Grammar sections—I and IV below.

TABLE I

DATA CONCERNING THE STUDENTS

SECTION I

Students by Number	Age	Years of Latin	Times Absent	Application
1	17	0	2	Good
2	23	2	0	Very good
3	15	0	5	Good
4	22	3	2	Good
5	21	1	3	Fair
6	16	0	3	Very good
7	12	0	0	Weak
8	16	0	0	Very good
9	17	0	2	Very good
10	14	0	0	Very good
11	17	0	1	Very poor (dropped)
12	17	0	1	Very good
13	14	0	4	Uncertain
14	16	0	0	Good
15	14	0	0	Good

SECTION II

16	14	0	1	Fair
17	18	3	7	Indifferent
18	16	1	0	Rather Slow
19	12	0	12	Fair
20	20	0	0	Very good
21	18	3	1	Frivolous and careless
22	18	0	0	Serious—earnest
23	14	0	0	Excellent
24	16	0	1	Excellent
25	15	0	0	Very good
26	18	0	1	Listless and inattentive
27	18	2	3	Serious but poorly prepared
28	15	1	1	Good but has outside work

SECTION III

Students by Number	Age	Years of Latin	Times Absent	Application
29	15	0	0	Indolent—careless
30	18	1	1	Very poor
31	18	2	2	Poor
32	17	0	2	Uncertain—backward
33	15	0	2	Very earnest worker
34	17	0	0	Serious but slow
35	20	2	2	Good steady worker
36	20	2	2	Very good
37	17	0	0	Fair—rather careless
38	17	2	3	Poor—very frivolous
39	18	0	7	Very poor (left school)
40	18	2	4	Good
41	18	3	0	Excellent
42	18	2	4	Uncertain—careless
43	16	2	2	Good
44	18	0	0	Very good

SECTION IV

45	22	0	0	Earnest—has outside work
46	19	2	0	Earnest but weak
47	20	2	0	Very earnest but handicapped
48	18	0	2	Excellent
49	24	2	0	Fair
50	21	0	3	Good
51	20	1	0	Good
52	20	3	9	Good
53	18	0	3	Very good
54	18	2	4	Uncertain

SECTION V

Students by Number	Age	Years of Latin	Times Absent	Application
55	17	3	1	Excellent
56	18	1	4	Careless and uncertain
57	18	0	3	Very good (left school)
58	15	2	2	Bright but lacks industry
59	21	1	2	Superficial
60	18	0	8	Very poor (left school)
61	18	0	0	Tries—very timid
62	16	0	2	Frivolous
63	20	0	0	Fair
64	19	3	0	Serious
65	14	0	0	Good but lacks industry
66	19	2	6	Careless — lacks preparation
67	17	0	11	Very poor (left school)

From the above table it will be seen that the classes were not very different in size, the first having fifteen students; the second, thirteen; the third, sixteen; the fourth, ten (this fourth class was larger at the beginning, but several students dropped out); and the fifth, thirteen.

In age the students in all classes combined ranged from twelve to twenty-four years with an average of seventeen and one-half. To show how the different sections compared with regard to distribution of ages the following table is given:

TABLE II

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS WITH REGARD TO AGE						
Age	CASES IN EACH SECTION					All
	I	II	III	IV	V	
12	1	1	0	0	0	2
13	1	1	0	0	0	0
14	3	2	0	0	1	6
15	1	2	2	0	1	6
16	3	2	1	0	1	7
17	4	0	4	0	2	10
18	0	5	7	3	4	19
19	0	0	0	1	2	3
20	0	1	2	3	1	7
21	1	0	0	1	1	3
22	1	0	0	1	0	2
23	1	0	0	0	0	1
24	0	0	0	1	0	1
Average	16.7	16.3	17.5	20	17.7	17.5

Upon comparison of the different sections it is found that in each section except Section IV the majority of the students were between sixteen and eighteen years of age. Section II had a slightly lower average than any other of these sections, and Section V, a slightly higher. The students in Section IV were decidedly older than in the other classes, the average of the class being twenty, with no student under eighteen. If age is an important factor in learning a language, as is generally believed, it may be said that, as far as this one factor is concerned, the four sections first mentioned were upon an equal footing. From Section IV some difference might be expected.

Referring again to Table I the sections may next be compared with regard to the number of students in each who had studied another foreign language, Latin. Sections III, IV and V were about equal in this respect, about half of the students in each having had some work in that language, in most cases two years. In Section II, only five students had studied Latin, and in Section I, only three. It would appear, then, that Sections III, IV and V had a slight advantage over the other two sections in this respect. It will be seen, however, in a later table of results, that this advantage was not evident, at least in the majority of cases.

The absences as given in the table are for the first semester. As regards the number in the different sections, the differences do not seem great enough to be of significance except in the case of Section V. In this section the number of absences was decidedly greater than in any other section. The fact may be of significance and will be mentioned later.

The final comparison to be made in this connection is that concerned with what is called "Application" in the table. Under this heading have been given the estimates of Mr. White, Principal of the School, regarding the character of each student insofar as it might affect his school work. The statements were made the first week in May, that is, near the close of the school year. Mr. White was probably in a better position to make such statements than most principals are, since he has as one of his special duties the careful observation of all the students.

Comparing the sections it would seem that, on the whole, the attitude and character in Section I was most favorable, and that of Section V, least favorable. As these estimates, however, do not admit of quantitative measurements the reader is referred to the table.

It may be said, then, summarizing the comparisons just made, that, regarding the number of students in each section and their distribution as to age, the differences between the sections were not great enough to be of any significance except in the case of Section IV. From this section, because of its older class of students, some difference in quality of work might be expected. On the basis of knowledge of Latin, the students in Sections I and II might have been at a disadvantage.

As to absences Section V had the greatest number. Finally, as regards a favorable attitude toward work, Section I seems to have stood first and Section V last.

The teachers may be considered next. They will be designated by numbers, corresponding to those of the sections taught. Teachers I, II and IV were practice teachers, that is, they were teaching for the first time in preparation for their future work. Teachers III and V had taught German before, the former for only one semester and the latter for one year; Teacher III had also had some experience in grade teaching. As regards preparation for the work, the teachers were probably about equal. All had taken more than sufficient University work in German for a life certificate—that is, eighteen hours' work—and all but Teacher I had made that subject a major. In general, it may be said, upon the authority of the general supervisor of the school, that the differences between individual

teachers were not great enough to be of much significance.

The same amount of time was given to the work in each section. The classes met three times a week, and each period was fifty-five minutes long. Counting out all vacations and holidays, there were ninety-nine periods in all. The time spent on different parts of the work is more directly concerned with the discussion of the methods used, which is the next topic to be considered.

Two methods were used, so that by comparison the advantages or disadvantages of either would be more evident. One was the method, already mentioned as being quite extensively used; a grammar method, it may be called, because, although it differs very much from the pure grammar method already described, it gives the emphasis to grammar study. The other method used may be called a reading method; although it also differs very much from the reading method described; it emphasizes reading. With both these methods there were the same underlying aims. The first aim was to attain the ability to read and understand with comparative ease simple idiomatic German; to understand it when it is spoken; and to speak it with good pronunciation and as much facility as possible after a year's study. The second aim was to secure a good foundation in German grammar. It will be noticed that these aims correspond closely with the problems raised at the close of the discussion of methods, which may be repeated: How learn grammar in the first year and not give this study undue emphasis? How acquire an easy reading knowledge and yet not be superficial? How attain some ability in the use of the spoken language and yet not make this the chief aim? How, finally, adapt the work to the interests of high school students? According to the degree in which these aims were realized, and according to the success with which these problems were solved, the methods must be judged. The two methods may now be described more fully.

THE GRAMMAR METHOD

According to the first of the methods to be described, the Grammar method, it was planned to begin the study of the language with a study of its grammar. It was further planned to complete this study, at least as far as its essentials are concerned, in as short a time as possible considering the method used, and then to devote the remainder of the time to reading. Conversation to a limited extent, was to be carried on in both grammar study and reading.

Following this plan, then, the work began with the study of Spanhoofd's Grammar, *Lehrbuch der deutschen Sprache*. In contrast to the study by the pure grammar method, and following the

plan of the text used, an attempt was made to make the study as inductive and concrete as possible, considering the very limited vocabulary of the students. The book commenced with a very simple and easy vocabulary, most of the words in the beginning lessons being very much like their English equivalents: for example, the first sentence, "Der Sommer ist warm". Each lesson consists of several parts:

- (1) A development section which is preparatory to the grammar concerned in the lesson.
- (2) A reading section, the material of which is small in amount, being as the author says, of "minor importance" at this stage of the work.
- (3) A grammar section, which, according to the author, is the "foundation" of the lesson.
- (4) A vocabulary including the new words used.
- (5) A section devoted to exercises based upon the grammar concerned in the lesson. These exercises consist of conjugations, declensions and the like, and translations of German into English and English into German.

Although the plan of the book was closely followed, the teachers did not confine themselves entirely to it. For instance, especially after the first few weeks, they did not find it necessary to read over all the material in every development section, but often devised ways of their own to develop the same facts. Then as to the exercises, not all the English into German was translated; for the first two months this work was omitted entirely, then the class went back and devoted several weeks to it. In this way an effort was made to limit the use of the English as much as possible. The topics were taken up in the order in which they occur in Spanhoofd—an order not unusual in grammar. The lessons as divided in the text could not all be taken as lesson units; in many cases they were too long and had to be subdivided into two or three lesson units. Of the thirty-five lessons as divided in the text, thirty-three were covered in eighty-five periods, (fifty-five minutes each). The class began to read the fifteenth of May, having fourteen periods until May twenty-seventh (the close) to devote to this work. Thus about five-sixths of the time had been given to the study of grammar, and the remaining time to reading.

THE READING METHOD

The other method used, the Reading method, as it may be called, is almost directly opposed to the Grammar method just described. According to this second method the study of the language began

at once with the reading of easy German stories, and ended with a brief systematic study of grammar. The discussion of the work as conducted falls into several parts, corresponding to the different periods into which it was divided.

The first period of the work, occupying almost three months of time, was governed by the following principal aims:

- (1) To acquire a good pronunciation.
- (2) To learn a relatively large German vocabulary.
- (3) To develop, as much as possible in so short a time, a feeling for the German language, its form and use.

To accomplish these aims the work was conducted as follows: Simple easy German stories were read aloud, careful attention being given to pronunciation and expression. This reading was done, a sentence or two at a time, at first by the teacher and then by the students. For several periods at the beginning of the work every part of the new lesson was read first in class; and the home work of the students consisted in going over the same work trying to better their first attempts made in class. The meaning of each new word, when not evident from the context, was told in this class study, and the students were expected to remember it next day. Whenever possible, the new word was explained by a synonym already familiar to the students. The text first used, Foster's *Geschichten und Märchen*, was not provided with a vocabulary or with notes—it was selected partly because of this fact—so the students had to depend largely upon memory. Direct translations were not often called for, being required only when there was doubt as to the meaning. Instead of direct translations, questions were asked which would show whether the reader understood what he was reading. This was judged also by the expression with which it was read. The students knew, however, that at any time translations might be called for and they were usually ready to give them. To give practice in understanding the spoken language, stories were often read, in German, to the class, and either the meanings of different passages called for at intervals or the content of the whole at the end. This last was given in English, necessarily. At other times students were asked to tell in German short stories or parts of stories which had been read in class. To do this, of course, special preparation on their part had to be made. Grammar in this first period was entirely incidental. It was introduced only when necessary or particularly helpful in understanding what was read, or in response to questions of students. Any grammatical fact which was thus introduced, however, was kept in mind and used from day to day. It was hoped and expected that even with this incidental attention, a

good many things concerning grammar would be learned and in a concrete way. Toward the close of this period a kind of oral test, not recognized as such by the students, was given to find out just what results along this line had been attained. The results of this test decided, in part, the plans for the next period.

In the second period of the work, beginning the first week in January—that is, in the fourth month of the school year—although the aims of the preceding period were still the leading ones, some more definite attention was given to grammar. What had been incidentally learned thus far was gotten into an orderly system, and the study of new grammatical facts became more systematic. It was planned to emphasize some one grammatical fact in each lesson. Numerous examples were found in the reading material each day to illustrate the fact selected, and further examples were found by the students as a part of their outside work. Note books were kept in which all work relating to this grammar study was recorded. For instance, when word-order received special attention, different illustrations were found in the reading lesson for that day, and from these examples as well as from what had been absorbed—one might say—from the continual use of the German sentences, rules were formulated by the students. Examples either from reading, or in original sentences were then written in the grammar note books. These books were called for at any time when it was thought desirable. Thus, although the main attention was still given to reading, some study of grammar in a very concrete way was accomplished.

In the third period, which began the second week in April and included six weeks of time, a very systematic study of grammar was taken up. Reading was laid aside and for the first time a text in grammar was used—the same one used in the grammar sections. The method used differed necessarily from that used in these sections. Of the five divisions in each lesson as divided by Spanhoofd, only the grammar division was used. The brief preparatory work, corresponding to the development section in the text, was original with each teacher. The vocabulary used was that acquired by the students throughout the year. The exercises used to apply the grammatical facts of each lesson, were also taken from reading material already familiar to the students. The lessons were not taken up in the order of the text, but were selected in accordance with the topics studied. These topics were taken up in somewhat the following order: nouns and adjectives; pronouns; prepositions; conjunctions and adverbs; and verbs, including participles, modals, active and passive voice, and subjunctive mood. This does not mean

that the lessons were disconnected, one dealing with nouns alone, another with prepositions alone, and so on; it denotes rather the emphasis given at different times. It may seem odd, for instance, to see nouns and verbs so separated. In reality they were not, for the students had a comparatively large vocabulary to draw from, and could use different verb forms in connection with nouns. Moreover, in most cases the sentence was the unit and not single words. Thus, although word-order does not have a definite place in the order above, it was considered in practically every lesson. On the whole, eighteen lesson periods were given to this work, leaving four more until the close of the year to devote to reading. Thus, in the study of the language according to this method, only one-fifth of the time had been given to work in which the study of grammar was the leading aim.

TEXT-BOOKS USED

The text-books used in the Grammar sections were:

- I. Spanhoofd—Lehrbuch der deutschen Sprache
- II. Guerber—Märchen und Erzählungen I (81 pages)

Those used in the Reading sections were:

- I. Foster—Geschichten und Märchen" (102 pages)
- II. Guerber—Märchen und Erzählungen I (92 pages)
- III. Allen—Herein (36 pages)
- IV. Spanhoofd—Lehrbuch der deutschen Sprache

III.—TESTS

The methods were judged, as planned, according to the comparative success with which the aims of the year's work were realized and the problems, as stated in connection with these aims, were solved. Concerning the second aim,—that relating to grammar—specific tests could be given which, as far as custom is concerned, might be considered conclusive. As regards the other aim,—that relating to reading—it was not so easy to give such tests. Careful observation from day to day seemed the best way to decide as to the comparative ability of the different classes in this respect. However, one further test was given in connection with this aim, a discussion of which will be given later. The test given in grammar will now be considered.

GRAMMAR TEST

The same grammar test was given to all classes, both grammar and reading sections, at the same time. The students had not pre-

pared for it in any way. Formal tests are not a usual thing in the University High School, and the students had not been told that this particular one was to be given. Thus no special preparation was possible. The test was given the first week in April. It will be remembered that it was just at this time that the different sections were about to change their plans of work; to shift the emphasis given thus far. The reading sections were to lay aside reading and take up a text book in grammar for the first time for systematic study, and the grammar sections were to lay aside the study of grammar and begin reading. The test was given at this time simply to get some definite data concerning the comparative ability of the two divisions in grammar—of the one which had made the study of grammar, so far, incidental, and the other which had emphasized the study of grammar.

The questions called for the use of a vocabulary which should be familiar to any class at this period of work, but which was not taken expressly from any material used in any class. They called for declensions of nouns with adjectives, using both definite and indefinite articles; for principal parts and conjugations of verbs, both strong and weak; for comparisons of adjectives; for a translation of a German selection, taken from a book unfamiliar to any class (Collar's *Eysenbach*, "German Lessons," page 167); and finally, for a translation of English sentences into German. This last question called for a knowledge of word-order—normal, inverted, and transposed; of personal and relative pronouns; of adjectives used with nouns and as predicated adjectives; and of cases governed by different prepositions. The questions are given below:

I. Decline in both numbers:

1. The old woman, the little child, the dear brother.
2. An old woman, a little girl, a good brother.

II.

1. Conjugate in Present Indicative (active):
sein, sagen, sehen.
2. Give Principal Parts (with auxiliary) of:
sein, sagen, rufen, kommen.

III. Compare:

- jung, alt, grosz, neu.

IV. Translate:

Ein Hund und ein Hahn schlossen Freundschaft und wanderten zusammen in die Fremde. Eines Abends konnten sie kein Haus erreichen und muszten in Walde übernachten. Der Hund sah endlich eine hohle Eiche worin für ihn eine vortreffliche Schlafkammer war. "Hier wollen

wir bleiben" sagte er zu seinem Freunde. "Ich bin es zufrieden," sagte der Hahn, "aber ich schlafe gern in der Höhe." Damit flog er auf einen Ast, und bald schlief er ein.

V. Express in German:

1. Today Karl went into the woods.
2. He took his brother with him.
3. His brother's name is Wilhelm.
4. Wilhelm, who is a little boy, soon became tired.
5. They saw many beautiful flowers in the woods.

The translations of English into German had never been asked before of students in the reading sections; in the grammar sections such exercises had been given in connection with the first half of Spanhoofd's grammar. The results of the test may now be considered.

In order to make a better comparison possible the grade each student made in the test is given in connection with the grades he received in all subjects (including German) studied the first semester. In the table giving these, the students will again be designated by numbers, corresponding to those in Table I.

TABLE III

GRADES OF STUDENTS IN VARIOUS SUBJECTS								
SECTION I (Grammar)								
Student	English	History	Mathematics	Sciences	Manual Training	Latin	German	Test in German Grammar
1	S	S-	S-S				S	73
2	S	E	S			E	S	96
3	M	M	M				M	76
4	M		S		M		S	49
5	S	M			M		I	60
6		E					E	68
7	M	I	M				M	19
8	S	S	S				S	74
9	S	S	S				M	60
10	M	S	M				M	60
11	I	S	M				I	left school
12	E	E	S				E	83
13	S	M	S				M	42
14	E	S	S				M	68
15	S	S	M				S	44
SECTION II (Reading)								
16	M	M	M				I	59
17		I	F		M-M		M	57
18	M	M	M				M	65
19	I	I	M					Absent
20	E	M	M		S		M	Absent
21	M	S		M			M	71
22	I	M			M		M	56
23	E	M	S				S	78
24	S	M	M				E	96
25	M	M	S				M	70
26	I	M-I	M				M	46
27	E	I			S		M	50
28	M	M	M-S				S	51

SECTION III (Reading)

Student	English	History	Mathematics	Sciences	Manual Training	Latin	German	Test in German Grammar
29	In school only part of first semester							70
30	I	M	F				M	44
31	I		S			I	M	62
32	F	I					M	55
33		I	M	I			S	65
34	I	M	M				M	66
35	M	M		M			M	65
36	M		S	E	E		M	68
37	F	F	M				M	77
38	S	M		M			I	Absent
39	M	F			I		I	left school
40	I	M	M				M	77
41	S		M				E	96
42	M	I			I		M	64
43	M	I	M				M	75
44	I	M	M				S	Absent

SECTION IV (Grammar)

45	I			M			M	63
46	F	F	M				M	43
47	M		F				F	58
48	M	M	E		M		S	80
49	M	M	M	M			M	75
50	M	S	S				M	82
51	I	M	S				M	61
52	M	I		M			M	58
53	S	S	S				M	65
54	I	F	M				M	24

SECTION V (Reading)

Student	English	History	Mathematics	Sciences	Manual Training	Latin	German	Test in German Grammar
55	M	M		M			S	67
56	I	F					M	25
57	M			M			S	left school
58	M	S	I			S	S	76
59	M			M-F			S	50
60	M	M	F				M	left school
61	I			M-I			M	Absent
62	M	M			S		M	52
63	M	M		E	M		M	56
64	S		S	E		M	S	46
65	M	S	I				S	80
66	I	I					I-(F)	43
67	M	M	M				F	left school

The grades denoted by letters were given more or less in accordance with the system used in the University. M means average, or medium; S means a grade above medium; E means excellent; I means inferior; and F means failure.

It is supposed that about one-half the students in a class would receive a grade of M, one-fourth S and E, and one-fourth I and F. Only very excellent students are supposed to be given E, and those who fail, F. However, it is not required that every class be graded in this way. For instance a class may be composed of only average students, in comparison with what the standard should be, and may be graded so. Probably this explanation is sufficient for these grades.

As for the grades made in the test it was thought best to use a numerical system. The following plan was adopted in order to make the grading of each student as accurate as possible. All the first-year German teachers decided just what percentage would be allowed for each question. Then the examination papers were divided into groups, which were corrected in turn by each teacher. The grades as recorded by each were then compared. The differences in grades given were very slight. In cases of difference the aver-

age grade was taken. The grades in general are not high. It must be remembered, however, that the test was a complete surprise to both teachers and students, the more so since such tests are very unusual in the school. Moreover, the grading was probably much more severe than is usual with most teachers. Had it not been for these facts the grades might have been considerably higher.

A comparison of the different sections is rather difficult to make from the table just given, because of its length. To make the comparison easier the following table is given. It will show the distribution of grades in each section—that is, of grades made the first semester—and the average grade of each section as made in the test. Thus it is a summary of the preceding table.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF GRADES MADE DURING FIRST SEMESTER IN VARIOUS SUBJECTS

*Section		Number in each Section					Percentage in each Section			Av. Test Grade in German Grammar
		E	S	M	I	F	E & S	M	I & F	%
(G)	I	8	28	20	4	0	60	33 1/3	6 2/3	62
(R)	II	4	9	34	8	1	23 3/14	60 10/14	16 1/14	64
(R)	III	3	6	30	15	5	15 15/59	50 50/59	33 53/59	68
(G)	IV	1	7	23	4	5	20	57 1/2	22 1/2	61
(R)	V	2	12	26	9	4	26 22/53	49 3/53	24 28/53	55

In the above table it is seen that, as regards general scholarship, denoted by semester grades, the sections stand in the following order: Section I decidedly first; Section II, second; Section V, third; Section IV, fourth; and Section III, decidedly lowest. As regards the average grades made in the grammar test, however, the sections stand thus: Section III, highest; Section II, second; Section I, third; Section IV, fourth; and Section V, last.

An explanation should be made concerning the last section, Section V. Besides the fact mentioned above that in this section there were more absences than in any other, there is another reason which partly accounts for the section's low standing in grammar. The

*(G) indicates Grammar Section; (R), Reading Section.

teacher who taught this class the first semester, although very capable, did not conduct the work quite in accordance with the plan for the reading sections. Each day's lesson was not planned as carefully as it was in the other two reading sections. The class read more German during this semester than any other class and read well, but the grammar work was somewhat superficial. Little record was kept, mental or otherwise, of grammatical facts considered incidentally in class, and as a consequence the work from day to day was not connected.

However, even though this section with its low grade is included with the two other reading sections (II and III) and the average grade taken of all the students in these sections, the result is favorable when compared with the average grade of those in the grammar sections. The average of the former group is 63% and of the latter 62%. This difference of one per cent is, of course, not striking. When we consider, however, that Section III, a reading section, ranks six per cent higher than one grammar section (I), and seven per cent higher than the other grammar section (IV); when we remember that this reading section stood far below both the grammar sections in general scholarship (See Table IV), the differences are significant. The same thing is true when the other reading section (II) is compared with either grammar section.

From this particular test, then, it may be concluded that the reading sections, though they had not up to that time emphasized the study of grammar, ranked considerably higher in their knowledge of grammar than the grammar sections, which had emphasized grammar study thus far. Their comparative ability in reading will be considered in the next section.

READING TEST

A test in reading was given to all classes in first-year German on May twentieth. It is very probable that in this test, as in the former, the grammar sections had a slight advantage. They had been reading aloud connected stories in German during every class period for a month and a half, while the reading sections had been giving the same amount of time to the study of grammar and had not, during this time, done any connected reading. It was necessary, however, to give the test at this time, if it were to be given at all, because of the short time until the close of school, May twenty-seventh.

This test was also a complete surprise to both teachers and students. The five sections were divided into three groups, which were judged in turn. Stories were selected with which the students

had been familiar but which they had not read recently. There was one exception to this,—Section I read the story which had been their preceding lesson. The reading of each individual student was graded on the basis of pronunciation and expression. Professor Almstedt, Professor of German in the University of Missouri, was the judge, and the results, as given later, are based entirely upon the report which he gave. This much should be said: Professor Almstedt emphasizes pronunciation in reading and it is therefore probable that a student who received from him an average grade in pronunciation would, according to the usual standard in high schools, rank as a very good student in this respect. It should also be said that Professor Almstedt did not know to which Section individual students belonged.

The results of the test are given in the table below according to individual students in each section. The grades given should not be confused with the system used in the University, and, with some modifications, in the High School, as has been explained. Letters were used simply as a matter of convenience; numbers or words might have been used instead. **M** indicates a medium grade, **S** superior, and **S—** or **M+** or **M—**, between. **I** indicates a grade below average, and **I+** or **M—**, grades between. Grades such as **M—/I+** indicate doubt on the part of the judge; they are on the border-line, one might say, between **M** and **I**. **F** indicates failure.

TABLE V

INDIVIDUAL GRADES MADE IN READING TEST				
Section I	Section II	Section III	Section IV	Section V
*1. M	16. M—	29. M—	45. M—	55. M—
2. S	17. M—/I	30. I	46. M—	56. I
3. M—/I	18. M—	31. M	47. M—	57. Absent
4. M—	19. Absent	32. M	48. M	58. M+
5. I	20. Absent	33. S—	49. M—/I	59. M
6. M—	21. S—	34. M—/I+	50. M	60. Absent
7. F	22. I	35. I—	51. M+	61. M—
8. M+	23. M	36. I	52. M—/I	62. Absent
9. I	24. S+	37. Absent	53. M—/I	63. F
10. I+	25. M—	38. Absent	54. M—	64. M—/I+
11. Absent	26. I	39. Absent		65. M+
12. M—	27. M—/I	40. M—		66. I—
13. M—/I+	28. M+	41. M		67. Absent
14. M—		42. M+		
15. M		43. M—/I+		
		44. S		

Only a few comments on individual students seem necessary. Student Number 2, the only S student in both grammar sections, had these advantages over the other students in these sections; first, he is of German parentage; though he did not speak the language to any extent when he began the year's work, yet he had often heard it spoken in his home; and second, he had been in a reading section for the first three months of the year, during which time the class read the first book—one hundred and two pages. Student Number 24 in Section II, who received a grade of S+, is also of German parentage, and thus probably had an advantage over her classmates. Besides these two students there were several others whose names, at least, were German. Since, however, they seemed to possess no advantages over the rest of the students further comment is unnecessary. The following table will show the distribution of the grades just given according to sections.

*Numbers designate students as in preceding tables.

TABLE VI

GRADES RECEIVED IN READING TEST												
Number of Students in Each Section												
Sections	S+	S	S-	M+	M	M-	M-/I+	M-/I	I+	I	I-	F
*(R) III		1	1	1	3	2	2			2	1	
(R) II	1		1	1	1	3		2		2		
(R) V				2	1	2	1			1	1	1
(G) IV				1	3	4		2				
(G) I		1		1	2	4	1	1	1	2		1

Comparisons from the above table are not easy to make: the pluses and minuses and the doubtful cases are a little confusing. For purposes of comparison different groupings might be made. For instance a grouping might be made with all the M's, above and below, in one division, the S's in another, the I's in another, and the F's in another. Were it not for the doubtful cases this might be the best arrangement. As the records stand, however, the best and simplest grouping is probably the one given below.

TABLE VII

GRADES ARRANGED IN GROUPS										
Grades included	Upper Group			Median Group			Lower Group			Total Number of Students
	S+, S, S-, M+	M			M-, I+, I, I-, F					
Number and percentage of students in combined sections:	No. % of Total			No. % of Total			No. % of Total			
*(R) III	3	23 1/13		3	23 1/13		7	53 11/13		13
(R) II	3	27 3/11		1	9 1/11		7	63 7/11		11
(R) V	2	22 2/9		1	11 1/9		6	66 2/3		9
(G) IV	1	10		3	30		6	60		10
(G) I	2	10 4/14		2	14 4/14		10	71 6/14		14
Reading										
III, II, V	8	24 8/33		5	15 5/33		20	60 20/33		35
Grammar	3	12 1/2		5	20 5/6		16	66 2/3		24

* (R) indicates Reading Section, and (G), Grammar Section.

Thus the grades are divided into three groups, M naturally being the medium group, all above that grade, the upper group, and all below it, the lower. An ideal plan, if possible, would be to divide the students, for purposes of comparison, into two groups only, those above and those below the midline of average ability. Although it was not possible to do this with the grades used, the plan adopted approaches it closely, since the "M" grades form a comparatively small median group of division. The number of students in each group are given, first according to individual classes, or sections, and then in the reading sections combined, and in the grammar sections combined. A comparison of the individual sections shows that they stand in this order: 1. Section III, 2. Section II, 3. Section V. (These are the three Reading sections.) 4. Section IV, and 5. Section I. It may be noticed that Sections III, II and IV stand in the same order as in the grammar test, but that Sections I and V have just changed places—Section I from third place in grammar test to fifth place in reading test. For the present purpose, however, a comparison of the individual sections is not so important as that of the combined sections, the reading sections III, II and V being one combination, and the grammar sections I and IV, the other.

The groups which are of concern in a comparison of these combined sections are, of course, the upper and the lower. The median group simply shows the number of students in the two combinations who are, supposedly, on a par; thus the 20 5/6% of the grammar section students and the 15 5/33% of the reading section students who are on a par may be excluded from the comparison. Considering, then, both the upper and the lower groups it is seen that the combined reading sections are decidedly superior. The percentage of their students in the upper group is 24 8/33, while that of the grammar sections is only 12 1/3; this means that there are practically two students of the former to one of the latter in this group. Moreover, the percentage of students from the reading sections in the lower group is 60 20/33, while that from the grammar sections is 66 2/3—a difference of a little more than six per cent in favor of the former.

It is evident, then, that the reading sections, both singly and combined, are decidedly in advance of the grammar sections. If the test had been given a few days later, after the reading sections had had one or two periods of time for oral reading of connected material after their month and a half of grammar study, the differences might, and probably would, have been still greater. As it is, when

we compare the sections as they rank in this test with their rank in general scholarship, the difference is striking.

CONCLUSION

The two methods have been compared as to the results obtained by each in the study of grammar and in reading. It has been seen that the reading sections which gave the study of grammar much less emphasis than the grammar sections—and probably much less emphasis than is usually given this study in the first year's work—stood better in a grammar test given before they had even begun on the final period of their work, the period devoted to grammar study. It has also been seen that these same sections stood decidedly better than the grammar sections in a reading test given toward the close of the year, after the grammar sections had spent a month and a half in reading. Moreover, the amount of reading material covered by the grammar sections was very much more than that covered by the reading sections. The former read two books and part of a third (two hundred and thirty pages in all) and the latter one quite one book (eighty-one pages). This does not, of course, include the grammar text.

Earlier in this paper it was said that the methods were to be judged according to the comparative success with which the aims were realized and the problems connected with these aims were solved. It may be concluded, then, that, as far as the aims regarding grammar, pronunciation and reading are concerned, the reading method, as used, has proved decidedly the better. Moreover, from what has been said it is evident that the reading method has been more successful in solving at least two of the problems raised: How learn grammar and yet not give this study undue emphasis? How acquire an easy reading knowledge and yet not be superficial? The aim concerned with speaking the language, and the problem connected with the interests of the high school students, yet remain to be discussed.

No specific test was given concerning the ability of the students in speaking German; this could best be judged by observation from day to day. Judging from this, then, it may be said unhesitatingly that in this respect the reading sections also ranked first. It would be quite natural that they should, considering that for almost seven months they read German stories constantly, very often answered questions upon this reading in German, and often told either whole stories or parts of them in German. Their ability to understand the language when spoken or read aloud to them was decidedly better than in the grammar sections. At different times this experiment

was tried: Easy German stories were read aloud to the different classes and the students were asked to tell the content in English. In every case the reading sections were better able to do this. This judgment is based upon observations made by the writer.

We come, finally, to the problem of interest. Here, also, it may be said quite unhesitatingly, that the reading method seemed better adapted to the interests of the students than did the grammar method. This statement is based, not only upon careful observation of all classes, but upon the opinion expressed by the different supervisors and teachers and, more especially, by earnest students. During the first semester of the work the difference in interest between the two sections—that is, between reading and grammar sections—was very evident to those who went from one class into another for the purpose of observation. The reading sections were doing work of a more concrete character and it was natural that their interest should be greater. Moreover, it was natural that the reading sections should be more interested in the systematic study of grammar taken up after they had acquired a large German vocabulary and after they had learned, incidentally, many things concerning the formal side of the language, than were the grammar sections at the beginning of the year, when the language was new to them.

It may be concluded then, from the study and comparison of these two methods, that the reading method, in that it has more nearly realized the aims of the first year's work in German and more successfully solved the problems connected with this work, is the better adapted for high school use.

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