

## **Lust zum Lehren, Lust zum Lernen – Eine neue Methodik fuer den Fremdsprachenunterricht**

Wolfgang Butzkamm

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Reviewed by Karen Palenski, London

As evinced by its title, this book seeks to offer a new methodology for foreign language professionals in the classroom. It is born of forty years of teaching experience and juxtaposes the views of European luminaries, such as Goethe, empirical research, the views of foreign language learners themselves and, most significantly, the conclusions drawn by Wolfgang Butzkamm himself.

The style is very accessible and peppered with apt and amusing analogies likening the learning of a foreign language, for example, to getting to grips with your golf swing. There is much useful target language material for an ESL teacher -highlighted in each chapter by a bold line on the left-hand side of the page -including tongue-twisters, rhymes, the occasional website address, and numerous phrases for use during lessons in a variety of contexts.

The main methodological thrust of the work is a plea to replace the dogged use of the target language with re-integration of the L1 as a vital classroom teaching aid. The main method underpinning this 'neue Methodik' is the sandwich-technique, whereby new words or phrases in the L2 are given on either side of the L1 translation:

Lehrer: I mean the last but one word. Das vorletzte Wort. The last but  
one word. (p. 15).

Similarly, Butzkamm emphasises the usefulness of authentic texts, which, with the help of the L1, need not be limited by prior vocabulary knowledge, but rather by their interest value. Parallel texts are encouraged, for, he asserts, these teach language through a process of 'doppeltes Verstehen' – the L1 translation facilitating the acquisition of the L2. He also pleads for a re-introduction of other unfashionable language teaching methods, for example

dictations and translation exercises, but delivered in an imaginative way and coupled with the new technologies at our disposal. Consequently there are a great many ideas for doing just that – karaoke games, buzz reading, look-up-and-read techniques– with, in many cases, an emphasis on good old fashioned memorisation.

Herr Butzkamm's work is informative, provided that you understand German and have the time to read this weighty tome. His main point is made repeatedly when, perhaps, it need only have been made convincingly just the once. Likewise, although the linguistic and historical asides are fascinating, is it really necessary to know about Biblical translation techniques or the idiosyncrasies of Korean? This work would benefit either from severe editing, or, better still, a division into two books, one informative and one functional.

I also doubt that much of the practical information here is of particular use in a British secondary school classroom. Our education system is used, after all, as an example on various occasions, of how not to go about teaching a foreign language due to the constraints of our testing and examination culture. German pupils have the enviable luxury, furthermore, of learning a 'cool' language, with extensive access to films, songs and books with cultural cache. Butzkamm makes frequent reference to these, but what could the German teacher in the UK use to inspire pupils in a similar way to, for example 'Harry Potter'– 'Emil und die Detektive?'

This is undoubtedly an enjoyable and informative read. I felt as though I were in the presence of a sage senior member of staff, who, nearing retirement, has the courage to offer common sense views, many of which contradict current methodology. Admittedly, he appears rather too convinced of his own opinion at times, reference made to empirical research, but only if it supports his views and the merest of lip service paid to any opposing opinion, as, for example, in the section looking at formal grammar tuition.

Nevertheless, Herr Butzkamm's enthusiasm and conviction are infectious. I fully intend to experiment with and adapt some of his ideas in my own foreign language classes during the coming year. This is, after all, what he intends his readers to do.