SUMMARIES
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RESEARCH-ACTIONS AND DIDACTICS
OF FRENCH

Homage to Hélène Romian

• Presentation
Gilbert DUCANCEL and Michel DABÈNE

• Enlightening and discussing research-actions
- Hélène Romian and « research-action »
Louis LEGRAND, Université Pasteur, Strasbourg

- The Reform Programme for the teaching of French at Elementary school;
from innovation to didactic research
Christine BARRE-DE MINIAC, INRP, Didactiques des disciplines

- Research-action and initiating pupils in the culture of written language
Jacques Fjalkow, Serge Ragano, EURED-CREFI Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail

This paper enables us to review the research-action which is currently being carried out. From the different types of practices used when initiating pupils in written language, we have chosen an epistemological approach which consists in working « with » those involved in this initiation, that is to say the teachers and the pupils. This perspective, which implies a partnership between primary school teachers and university researchers, usually arises from a social need which must then be problematized so that university research may be carried out. We must therefore make our aims « universal » and not « local » as they are at present, as well as define a problematization for research which is likely to provide us with knowledge about aspects of pedagogy, didactics and psycholinguistics.

This research is centred around two main axes : the first is didactic and deals specifically with the organization of written language teaching as a social practice rather than as an academic subject. The second, which is pedagogical and concerns the handling and organisation of the class itself, depends to a large extent on the autonomy of the pupils. These different modes of action also constitute lines of research. The research action should enable us to specify what mechanisms can be used to explain the results of these different studies.
- Points of view concerning research-action
with Danièle Manesse, Michel Dabène, Marianne Hardy and Hélène Romian

Three protagonists express their opinions on what was probably one of the most debated about aspects of research into the didactics of French during the (heroic) seventies: research-action; according to two of them, this notion is just as pertinent now as it was then; for the third, it no longer has any real autonomy. These points of view, which are based on responses to four questions, are compared in this paper.

- Research pieces of work responding to teaching-learning problems

-From GLO to VARIA: Twenty years of INRP primary school research into the didactics of spoken language in French
Jacques TREIGNIER, INRP and CNRS-UPRESA 6025 Rouen

This paper goes back over twenty years of INRP research into the didactics of spoken language in primary schools. It aims to bring out the main aspects of this work, from the GLO research (research into spoken language) to the VARIA research (research into variations in spoken language).

The fact that the VARIA research was never completed shows that research into the didactics of spoken language presents many difficulties, especially as regards research into variations in spoken language. Nonetheless, the fact remains that this period of INRP research has enabled us to develop the main principles of an ethical and democratic language education.

- Writing and creativity: constants and shifts over the course of thirty years of primary school research in French by INRP teams
Catherine TAUVERON, INRP

This paper takes both a retrospective and prospective look at the major developments in research into writing carried out by INRP research teams from 1970 to the present day, thus enabling us to think up a better didactic framework for literary writing in the future. The introduction of otherness has modified our conception of writing (from expressing oneself to seducing others, from the outpouring of energy to entering into standardized social practices) as well as the conception of creativity and the activity of the writing subject (from unbridled imagination and language to controlled, strategic and systematic activity), and thus has also modified the characteristics of didactic activity. The developments signal a loss of interest in literary effects. With a view to creating a new didactic framework for literary effects, rather than create links between old and recent research into « poetic function », we intend to progress from one conception of writing to another: that is to say from writing as a strategic activity designed to help solve problems to writing as a tactical activity during which the author thinks up problems (for the reader).
- Producing and receiving language complexity as early as initial learning
C. FABRE-COLS, Université de Grenoble-LIDILEM and IUFM
M. MAUREL, IUFM de Poitiers

In the tradition of the work carried out by the INRP in French didactics over the last thirty years, this paper intends to show: a) how the directions which were proposed, in the light of research, in the Reform Programme for the teaching of French at elementary school, have become a part of daily schooling in some classes, in particular as regards the diversity and "crossing" of language practices; b) how their development in return requires that tests be carried out and validated. This work provides scope for new research and deals with complex subjects which are resistant to the creation of simplistic models.

We describe a few key moments of the "crossed" activities (oral work, intermediary written work, reformulated work, interaction, assessments...) and focus upon reflection regarding two situations which resemble problem situations; our aim is to show how pupils and their teacher tackle the complexities of discursive and linguistic work. As a basis for this research, we used 3rd-year infant school (6-year-olds) reading/writing practices.

- From yesterday to today: learning the written language through problem solving
Gilbert DUCANCEL in collaboration with Bruno NIBAS, IUFM d'Amiens and INRP PROG

Learning French via problem solving is a research topic which first came to the fore in 1984 when Hélène Romian was in charge of INRP primary school research teams. We give you a brief reminder of the origin of RESO research, its main advances, and the questions which remained unanswered at the end of the research. We then develop upon a few current responses put forward by the INRP PROG research team (Progressive building-up of written language skills in cycle 1 and 2 (3 to 7-year-olds) at primary school). Our work centres upon games and problem situations (in the fields of comprehension and production) which were given at the start of the year to a CE1 class (7-year-olds) in Amiens. We analyse Thomas and Marjorie's attitudes as well as the procedures they used to solve problems, what they learnt, and what they still have to learn. Our conclusion centres upon the difficulties, obstacles and problems encountered and the need to link pedagogical and didactic perspectives.

- Fifteen years on... A look back at the research into the didactics of spelling
Jean-Pierre JAFFRE, UMR 8606, LEAPLE-CNRS

As early as the late seventies and during the whole of the eighties, the didactic objectives of the research carried out by the INRP primary school research teams couldn't afford not to take into account the cognitive dimension of the pupils as subjects. This was especially true in the case of spelling. This paper tries to show to what extent, despite certain limits particular to this period, the empirical analyses carried out at that time heralded the emergence of the pupil as subject in a linguistic field which was entirely centred upon the object.
- French spelling and its acquisition
Jean-Michel SANDON, LEA-UMR 8606 CNRS and IUFM de Bourgogne-Mâcon

- Workshops in graphic negotiation
A framework for developing metalinguistic skills amongst pupils in the third cycle (8 to 10-year-olds)
Ghislaine HAAS, Université/IUFM de Bourgogne

This paper puts forward a didactic framework devised by a research team at the IUFM of Burgundy: workshops in graphic negotiation. It shows how these workshops can establish new learning situations in the didactics of spelling by providing a framework in which the pupil can put into words and develop his conceptualizations relative to the written language system as well as develop metalinguistic skills which allow him/her to gain a command of orthographical reasoning. Two examples of metalinguistic behaviour which were revealed during these workshops in graphic negotiation are presented in this paper and analysed using the above thesis as a basis. They are: a) the practice of making judgements about grammaticality and b) an example of grammatical reasoning which has led pupils to identify the syntactic functioning of an impersonal verb.

- The taught subject: towards a plural methodology for analysing teaching practices in class
Sandra Canelas-Trevisi, Christiane Moro, Bernard Schneuwly, Thérèse Thévenaz, Educational Sciences Department, Université de Genève

Using as a basis Hélène Romian's observation that we need to be better acquainted with what happens in French classes, the authors of this paper first take a look at a change of paradigm from interventionist didactics to descriptive didactics, a change which better enables us to respond to this need. They then outline a way of responding to this same need via work on transposition mechanisms used in class during the interactive construction of the taught subjects. In order to better describe and understand these mechanisms, a pluridisciplinary approach proves necessary. Three further methodologies, which are being devised at present, illustrate this approach. The first uses the concept of semantic isotopes which were put forward by Rastier as a means of understanding conflictual contexts during which teachers and pupils construct the taught subjects. The second looks into teaching acts in order to accurately reconstruct the teacher's guidance which in itself allows for the construction of the taught subjects. The third is a semiotic approach which notes the development of the meaning of the subjects, for example when they are «staged» in front of the pupils.

- Achieving coherence in the teaching of French at primary school reflexion and propositions
Maurice MAS, IUFM de Grenoble-Privas

Since publication of the propositions outlined in the Reform Programme (1970) («Plan de Rénovation»), the teaching of French at primary school has been gradually and partially modified. Nearly thirty years on, we can see that new practices, brought about by the dissemination of the principles outlined in the programme, have been adopted; we can also bear witness to the results of the research which was carried out in the light of the programme's recommen-
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dations as well as the changes made to official guidelines in the light of the contributions made by this research. However, if we observe classroom activity in today's schools, we become aware of the fact that new practices (in reading and written work) and old practices (especially in grammar, spelling and vocabulary) are juxtaposed. Many teachers are acutely aware of the incoherence which is created by this juxtaposition and which does little to help pupils progress. This paper attempts to show that the advances made in recent pieces of research in the didactics of French not only create conditions which allow for a new form of coherence (something which present official guidelines advocate explicitly), but also suggest tools which might help teachers to create coherence within their class.

- Hélène's writing

Hélène's writing: a few yearning
Éveline CHARMEUX, IUFM de Toulouse