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00866 - Title page

ANNOTATED  
INSTRUCTOR'S EDITION

# Wie, bitte?

## INTRODUCTORY GERMAN FOR PROFICIENCY

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# Overview

Sprache ist Verhalten in einer Situation. Spielend löst man sich aus der Situation.

HARALD WEINRICH,  
*Tempus: besprochene und erzählte Welt*

*Wie, bitte?* has but one purpose: the promotion of proficiency and practical competence in elementary German. To our minds, there is nothing more important in our field than the teaching of introductory German, and we have found – as we hope you, our colleagues, will also find – that there is nothing more challenging or rewarding.

*Wie, bitte?* seeks to promote proficiency. The modern notion of proficiency is reflected not only in its theoretical orientation, but also in its major structural features, its smallest details, and in the conception of the teaching techniques that we consider appropriate to the package. Oral proficiency is emphasized, in part because oral proficiency is vital to communication in most realistic situations, and in part because a talking classroom is a happy and productive classroom. But the *Wie, bitte?* package also carefully seeks to nurture skill in reading and listening, those skills often termed “passive” or “recognition.” The collection of visual and aural realia is rich, and the material is actively employed. As for writing proficiency, we have tried to encourage the notion that writing in a foreign language means far more than using a pen or pencil to perform grammar, vocabulary, and dictation exercises, or to write intellectual essays.

The *Wie, bitte?* package is tightly integrated. The various linguistic skills or modalities are not merely cultivated individually but also developed jointly. Nor is the cultural aspect of language neglected; we have striven to provide the student with an insight into many features of German culture – with “culture” understood in the broadest sense of the word, and yet with a concentration on material of lasting importance rather than ephemeral popularity. Above

all, we have sought to show how closely language and culture are interrelated.

## SUMMARY OF MATERIALS

*Wie, bitte?* comprises the following resources:

1. The Class Text is a medium-length book intended for intensive use in the proficiency-oriented classroom. Model dialogs and contextual communication tasks are prominent. Grammar is presented by pattern and brief comment rather than by analytic exposition. Vocabulary is presented in highly visual, thematic displays; there is also a German-English glossary. A section of “recyclable” realia provides resources for situation exercises and texts for reading practice. The end papers offer ready reference materials.
2. The Study Text is a workbook intended for individual use primarily outside the classroom, but also useful in it. The volume contains: 1) an orientation, with advice on study methods; 2) chapter-by-chapter exercises in the various proficiency modalities and in analytic grammar; 3) English renditions of the Class Text dialogs; 4) chapter vocabulary lists; 5) a reference grammar, to whose various sections the student is directed by marginal annotations in the brief grammar presentations in the Class Text; and (6) a collection of recyclable realia which parallels that in the Class Text.

*The Study Text is an integral part of the package. It contains many resources that are ordinarily found in the main “textbooks” of conventional packages.*

3. The tape set is divided into two parts: 1) renditions and expansions of the textbook dialogs; 2) aural realia and cultural offerings, organized by theme and linguistic structure; these items are the material for homework exercises, for some listening tests, and for cultural enrichment.

The development of listening comprehension with taped materials is an integral part of the package. The student must use the tapes when working with the Study Text, and the model syllabus envisions the use of tapes (or live renditions of the dialogs) in class.

4. The Test Bank contains: 1) materials for proficiency-oriented speaking, listening, reading, and writing tests; 2) answer keys or guidelines for those tests and for selected Study Text exercises; 3) a set of recyclable realia that parallel those in the Class Text and Study Text and are therefore suitable for use in the tests provided in the manual; they can also be used in exercises and tests that the teacher devises. The construction of proficiency-oriented tests requires considerable effort, and it would be inadvisable to teach from *Wie, bitte?* while still intending to rely primarily on conventional tests of grammar-transformation ability and vocabulary memorization.

5. The computer software includes: 1) contextualized listening, reading, and writing exercises; 2) computerized versions of tests in the testing manual; 3) administrative software intended to aid the teacher in record-keeping, test administration, and development of auxiliary materials. Supported computers are the IBM PC and compatibles, Apple IIe/c/gs, and the Macintosh; for the last there is special courseware with natural speech recorded digitally on the disks.

### **Pedagogical Orientation**

*Wie, bitte?* can be used by teachers espousing many different teaching methods. Its subtitle, however, makes clear our commitment and debt to the ideas of language proficiency developed by colleagues formally or informally associated with the U.S. Government Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The ILR/ACTFL/ETS concepts of linguistic competence and methods of evaluating it, though they were decades in development, began to invigorate our profession so much just a few years ago. Here we can only summarize that work, particularly as it applies to our first-year German package; the

interested reader is referred to the publications listed in the bibliography below.

Central to the ILR/ACTFL/ETS notion of proficiency is practical knowledge of the language, the ability, that is, to use it effectively for communication. That notion of competence does not at all deny the usefulness of analytic knowledge of the language, or grammar in the traditional sense. But it does suggest that in language instruction such knowledge should not be an end, as it has often been made in our classes and our textbooks, but rather a means. Here we might note that, whatever language teachers have done in the classroom, this concept of proficiency lies close to our hearts, and to those of our students. We all want to be able to use the language.

It is, or at least has been, far easier to test and to attempt to teach analytic knowledge of a foreign language than it is to teach and test for genuine proficiency. A worthy achievement in itself has been the evolution of the proficiency guidelines now widely familiar to our profession. Their chief feature is the careful description of proficiency by profiles that take into account function, context, and accuracy. Equally beneficial has been the evolution of corresponding testing methods, particularly for oral proficiency, but lately also for listening, reading, and writing. Thus the "oral proficiency interview" is a widely known register of language proficiency, though still not commonly part of mass instruction programs – and for good reason, since such oral testing is extremely labor-intensive.

A more controversial aspect of the ILR/ACTFL/ETS work in language proficiency has been the transformation of standards of measurement into descriptions of and prescriptions for language acquisition. In other words, do the proficiency guidelines constitute a syllabus for language instruction, rather than just a methodologically neutral description of performance? In offering *Wie, bitte?* we share the view of those who have declared that the proficiency guidelines can indeed be a learning syllabus, and that there is nothing wrong with "teaching for the test," if the test and the teaching are both proficiency-oriented.

Our fundamental attitude, then, is this: We share the sentiments of language teachers who preach the gospel of competence. We prize students who say, "When I go there I want to understand them and I want them to understand me." We regret that all too many students recall their study of foreign languages by saying, "I had four years of it, and I

can't now and never could say anything." To put it another way: The fundamental premise of *Wie, bitte?* is that if we are going to preach language competence, then we must teach it; if we are going to teach it, then we must test it; and if we are going to preach and teach and test it, then we must grade for it. But we need not regard that prospect as depressing. Instead, it permits us to entertain the notion that we might actually do what we want to do, and that is to teach, in the truest sense of the word.

What are the general implications of the ILR/ACTFL/ETS work for *Wie, bitte?*

1. It has become evident that the traditional first-year text, which attempts to offer in one year "all" (whatever that means) of German grammar, envisions an inordinately high level of grammatical competence. Typically, such texts culminate well in the ACTFL/ETS Superior level (= ILR 4). Although it is possible to lead some students through carefully targeted exercises with such features as the special subjunctive or the past perfect passive, in a genuine proficiency test even an excellent first-year German student, taught under favorable circumstances, is unlikely to rate higher than Intermediate-High (= ILR 1+) in speaking or writing. The magnitude of the discrepancy is enormous, since the progression between proficiency levels is described by an ever-steepening curve. One notes that Advanced-Plus/ILR 2+ in speaking has been proposed as a target level for graduating language majors and prospective high school teachers.

Consequently, in *Wie, bitte?* we have lowered the target level considerably. For the speaking modality, the aim of the text is to produce from the best students a proficiency performance of Intermediate-High. Since that level in turn requires rich but not constant demonstration of Advanced performance, the grammatical material intended for occasional production – but *not* mastery – culminates low in the ACTFL/ETS Superior (= ILR 3) level, with heavy concentration at the Advanced (= ILR 2) level. The communicative functions and contexts of *Wie, bitte?* are consonant with its grammatical level. Indeed, we outlined the package in terms of function and context, and then wrote many of its nuclear dialogs, before they determined the details of its grammatical syllabus.

The *Proficiency Guidelines* also lead one to conclude that the traditional first-year package, whatever its ultimate target level, may well neglect the

student's development at the very lowest proficiency levels, levels that would seem to be vital way-stations in the quest for higher proficiency. It is our impression that there is too little active work with simple echoing, transcription, list-making, and note-taking; that survival vocabulary, phrases, and everyday cultural knowledge are neglected; and that emphasis on generation of complex grammatical patterns has suppressed instruction in practical discourse strategy and the use of intelligence, common sense, and real-world knowledge.

The lowering of target level and increased attention to the lowest levels of proficiency should not be regarded as implying a lowering of standards. The change represents, instead, a shift from discrete-point instruction of analytic knowledge to teaching and testing of genuine proficiency. We believe that proficiency-oriented instruction and testing can remove some of the major frustrations of our profession. The results of proficiency-oriented theory and research impel us toward a revision of target levels, but they also open to us the prospect of enforcing our standards more rigorously.

2. Very important in the idea of proficiency are the concepts of *function* and *context*: what communicative task the language user undertakes to do and under what circumstances. The third ingredient, *accuracy* – or grammar, in the expanded sense of "structural competence" – completes the description. According to the *Guidelines*, the Advanced or ILR 2 speaker of German, for example, is "able to satisfy routine social demands and limited school or work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social and general conversations. Can narrate, describe and explain in past, present, and future time." Thus it is not sufficient merely to set standards in purely grammatical terms, to introduce and demand, say, "the past tense." One must specify, rather, what genuinely communicative act the student/user/speaker is to be taught and expected to perform with the past tense, and under which conditions, and with what degree of precision. Thus the Advanced or ILR 2 speaker of German can, among other things, reliably express facts (past, present, or future) about concrete topics in a manner understandable to native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners. Still more specifically, in an oral proficiency interview such a speaker will exhibit a rich stock of past participles, with choice of *haben* or *sein* correct most of the time, and also produce many regular and irreg-

ular verbs in the imperfect, and among the latter of course the modals especially.

The adoption of a proficiency-oriented curriculum has immense implications for testing. The traditional grammar-translation test cannot remain the mainstay of evaluation, though it may still have some value as a preparatory exercise, as a check of analytic and monitoring skills, and even as a nose-to-the-grindstone prod. Instead, at least some testing, and certainly the ultimate evaluation of proficiency, must be conducted in a way that indeed measures the ability to carry out useful communicative tasks in the several modalities. Here volumes could be written, and indeed have been (see the Bibliography). Sample tests are provided below, and the optional test bank and software contain a basic stock of tests for the entire course.

The principles that govern proficiency testing are clear. The test should gauge functional ability, not analytic or intellectual knowledge; thus one poses a task like "Tell me about that great weekend in Köln," rather than demanding, item by item, the conjugation of various verbs in the past tense, the replacement of nouns with pronouns, or the translation of English sentences into German sentences. A corollary is that it may often be advantageous to pose tasks in English, rather than German, to hinder translation attempts and to avoid revealing target structures and vocabulary. Second, the German that students encounter in tests should be quite realistic, though of course selected to fit the anticipated proficiency level. In oral tests the examiner should maintain normal intonation and pace, and reading and listening tests should incorporate *realia* as soon as possible. Third, error evaluation should consider the actual communicative effect of the error and should seek to ascertain the level of consistent performance, rather than fix on idiosyncratic highs or lows in production over a short period. Fourth, if the tests have been designed to mimic "real-world" conditions, one should have no qualms about "teaching to the test" or, of course, testing what has been taught, with regard to either the manner or the content of the test. Students who have several times energetically practiced negotiating for a hotel room or talking about their special interests deserve tests that give them the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in carrying out such practical tasks as negotiating for a hotel room or talking about their special interests. As concerns the actual format of tests and their relation to the *Wie, bitte?* exercise materials, we have

sought to make the tests and the exercises very similar; thus the Class Text *Situationen* bear a close resemblance to the situation cards used in the standard oral proficiency interview.

3. Explicit reference to the "four skills" of speaking, listening, reading, and writing has been common for years. But often speaking became a matter of pattern-parroting, writing was exercised in the form of sentence transformation or else high-level essayistic composition, and the so-called "passive" modalities of listening and reading were neglected or trivialized into exercises with vapid synthetic language. The ILR/ACTFL/ETS proficiency concept, with its emphasis on context and its detailed guidelines for each modality, transforms listening and reading into active skills, with the further demand that the student be evaluated according to performance with genuine language materials. Writing skill is viewed as the ability to communicate effectively when performing realistic tasks, such as filling out a hotel registration form (Novice-High/ILR 0+), writing a simple postcard (Intermediate-Low/ILR 1), or composing a short personal letter (Advanced/ILR 2). The evaluation of speaking skill through the conversational oral proficiency interview is, of course, a widely familiar feature of proficiency evaluation and needs no further discussion at this point.

But a fifth ingredient or "modality" should indeed be mentioned - "culture," or the evidence of knowledge of the society as it appears in the use of the language. Here the most important effects of the proficiency concept are, first, the broadening of the notion of "culture" from the very restricted "high-brow" notion of *Kultur* still present in many German programs, and, second, the suggestion of a hierarchy of cultural-linguistic proficiency that is described in terms of function, context/content, and accuracy, and whose levels parallel those of the other modalities. Thus the Intermediate language user, for example, has among other similar skills a survival-level stock of greeting and leave-taking utterances, knows how to provide addresses in German form, knows where to buy basic consumer items, and understands the *Sie/du* distinction; the Advanced student demonstrates, for example, guest etiquette, ability to apologize, and basic use of telephone; near-native competence is typified by detailed use of geographical and historical knowledge, perception of allusions and paralinguistic clues, and flexibility of speech register.

4. A distinctive feature of the modern concept of proficiency is the perception that many linguistic phenomena treated as single topics in the traditional grammatical syllabus are in fact complex congeries of functional and contextual competences that are distributed over a considerable range in the proficiency scale. Thus the past tense, for example, is not a discrete entity that can or should be "done" (= analytically processed) in some neatly bounded section of a textbook. Instead, elements of a past tense may be learned lexically quite early, followed perhaps by a systematic and generally effective, if flawed, notion of morphology and usage, and then a more sophisticated analytical comprehension and practical management of the tense. The graphical analog of language acquisition, then, is not a neat curve but rather a spiral; the learner climbs higher, but at the same time always dips back down for refreshment, expansion, and refinement of skill in linguistic behaviors that the proficiency-oriented pedagogue understands to be disparate functional and contextual phenomena. Those same phenomena the analytic grammarians, and with them the conventional language textbooks, lumped together into a single decontextualized, function-blind intellectual mass, one that foreign language students have indeed found hard to swallow.

The overriding structural principle of *Wie, bitte?* is not sequential presentation of discrete, conceptually neat blocks of grammar-oriented material (e.g., "Chapter 4: dative case," or "Chapter 17: the present perfect"). Instead, the program employs the "spiral syllabus." Communicative *function* has priority over grammatical *form*. The student gets what is needed for the communicative task, and care is taken both to encourage review and to introduce, at first tacitly, features that will later be presented more analytically. Thus a given grammatical feature, such as the dative pronouns, may be addressed in several distinctly separated chapters, first as a gently insinuated "lexical" item or element of a stock phrase ("*Bitte, bringen Sie uns . . .*"), then in the overt presentation of high-frequency dative pronouns, then in the comprehensive presentation of the full system of dative pronouns. The treatment of dative pronouns will overlap as well with the use of other elements that involve dative case, for example articles and prepositions. Similarly, work with the reading or listening materials might expose the student quite early to structures that, like the preterite, are dealt with systematically only in the later chapters of the text.

It will be noted that the grammatical content or level for a given chapter is not neutral with regard to modality. That is, it is not assumed that the student will encounter and work with similar structures in all the modalities at the same time. Instead, we pose listening and reading tasks that are aimed at higher levels of proficiency than the speaking and writing tasks. Thus the grammatical content or target level of a given chapter should be understood to be the grammar that is presented for emulation in the "active" or "production" modalities of speaking, primarily, but also writing. It may be expected that the student will long since have encountered listening and reading realia that include those same structures. Correspondingly, the *Struktur* pages with their associated Reference Grammar sections are keyed largely to the target level for speaking and writing, though the exposition in the Reference Grammar will often expand the current topic with higher-level material. We consider that policy legitimate for two reasons: 1) The student is thereby exposed in a preliminary and as it were "passive" way to structures that will later be presented for "active" use. 2) Genuine comprehension of authentic reading or listening materials is not based on discrete-point management or translation of vocabulary or grammar, but rather on the parallel and recursive processing of interrelated linguistic materials that constitute the bits and pieces of a larger whole. Thus the reader may functionally "understand" a segment of language as having a past sense, not necessarily by recognizing its past tense(s), but rather by noting time phrases, or even numerical data, that seem to point toward past time. It should go without saying that, in constructing exercises with such material, nowhere do we demand performance that can be achieved only with knowledge of structures that have not yet been presented for use in the "active" modalities.

5. With regard to teaching technique, the orthodox formulation of the proficiency notion claims to be methodologically neutral. And indeed, as testing tools the *Guidelines* and the associated techniques used to elicit language samples for evaluation do not pass judgment on how the examinee has acquired any proficiency that is demonstrated, other than to suggest rather pointedly but also rather generally that, for example, a student who has not been accorded much opportunity to speak will likely do poorly on an oral proficiency test. But the *Guidelines*, and those persons who have been associated with

them, do not ordinarily state a positive preference for, say, the Total Physical Response method, as opposed to the Silent Way. Yet it is not too difficult to perceive that the notion of proficiency is hostile to certain individual techniques encountered frequently in our classrooms and exhibited rather prominently in the popular image of foreign-language teaching. Such techniques include, for example, presentation of detailed analytic grammar in the target language,

rote pattern drills, and stringent error correction regardless of the functional importance of the error. Consequently, later in the Introduction we present a detailed discussion of teaching techniques we consider appropriate to the *Wie, bitte?* package.

Such principles have determined the overall structure and content of the *Wie, bitte?* package. We turn now to its more specific features.

# The Materials and Their Use

We again remark that the *Wie, bitte?* package does *not* consist of a main text supported by more or less optional workbook, tapes, and so on. The Class Text, considerably shorter than most first-year books, has two main functions: 1) it is a handbook and resource center for the proficiency-oriented classroom, in which active use of language, particularly in speaking, is paramount; 2) the terse *Struktur* or grammar pages demonstrate, always with provision for immediate communicative practice, the chief grammatical targets of the chapter, with reference codes directing the student to study the expositions of grammar *outside* the classroom. Thus the Class Text does *not* focus on the elaboration or exercise of grammar in the traditional sense, though the Class Text and the *Wie, bitte?* package as a whole indeed do demand and further competence in grammar.

The Study Text has complementary functions, and in fact the student working outside the classroom will often find it convenient to have the two books open side by side. Where the Class Text will always be used intensively in the classroom, with the Study Text as an occasional resource, the Study Text is intended to be used intensively in study outside the classroom, with the Class Text as a secondary resource. Thus the Study Text has many functions: 1) It conducts the student through listening, reading, and writing exercises. 2) It prepares the student for speaking in the classroom. 3) Its Reference Grammar, accessed by codes on the Class Text *Struktur* pages, presents analytic grammar and could indeed serve as a concise survey of German grammar throughout the student's study of the language. 4) It offers contextualized analytic grammar exercises. 5) It provides extra realia and "props" for use both in and outside the classroom. 6) It includes renditions of the Class Text dialogs and chapter-by-chapter German-English vocabulary lists.

As for its thematic structure or "plot," *Wie, bitte?* is organized around a fairly typical trip to Ger-

many, with entrance from the northwest, a stopover in Aachen, a short stay in Köln, a trip down the Rhine to Freiburg, a lengthier or even indefinite stay in München, and then sidetrips elsewhere within countries where German is spoken. We chose that framework not because we wished to write a "German for Travelers" text (though for some users *Wie, bitte?* might well have such a *vade mecum* use, with our blessing), nor simply because that pattern, augmented with a rich assortment of materials from East Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, does indeed conduct the student-traveler on a grand tour of the realm in which German is spoken.

Instead, we considered the needs and likely behavior of one who enters, survives, and then begins to thrive in the foreign language and culture, on its own terms. Short-term survival needs are satisfied first, in brief interchanges intelligible to the native speaker used to dealing with foreigners; active communication is accomplished largely in memorized utterances or brief sentences (= Novice High). The text and the student then progress to longer-term but still everyday, concrete matters, with encouragement of some linguistic creativity in interchanges involving speakers relatively accustomed to dealing with foreigners (= Intermediate Low/Mid). The final part of the package encourages the learner to communicate relatively freely about somewhat larger but still typically concrete and immediate topics with conversants who are generally congenial but cannot be expected to understand or leniently tolerate foreigners struggling with the language (= Intermediate High). Within the final chapters are topics and structures that probe somewhat higher in the proficiency scale, mostly within the Advanced to Advanced-Plus range, so that the better student can indeed aim at the frequent exhibition of Advanced behavior that characterizes Intermediate-High performance in speaking.

In accord with our own and others' investigations



of language proficiency, we have de-emphasized or even eliminated certain grammatical features that are commonly presented – though seldom really learned – in traditional first-year German courses. The future tense, distinctly beyond the Intermediate level and commonly replaced by the present tense in native speech anyway, is not presented for use in the spoken language, nor are – for similar reasons – the genitive prepositions, Konjunktiv I, the adverbial superlative, or daunting verb combinations like the past passive modal subjunctive. Certain of those features, however, are addressed in the Study Text Reference Grammar, which does present the “complete” grammar contained in traditional classroom texts.

But we do not regard the grammar offered in the Class Text as incomplete. It provides all the structures even an excellent student can be expected to learn to handle proficiently when faced with speaking tasks characteristic of the Intermediate-High level. Field-testing has confirmed the appropriateness of the grammar level and has reinforced our confidence in the principle of letting function lead form. Frequently when our students confidently undertake an oral task, they discover that, though they may be able to perform the function passably with available resources, they need some more sophisticated grammatical feature to do the task well. They will indeed ask for it – often enough just a few classroom hours before it is scheduled for presentation.

### The Class Text

The Class Text is intended to be the main everyday resource in a proficiency-oriented classroom, one in which there is much communicative use of language but little analytic discussion of it. We have excluded from the Class Text those elements that, while they may have a purpose in language study, do not have a place in a classroom where demonstration, simulation, and emulation of genuine communication are emphasized.

The Class Text material divides into two parts: the chapters and the resources. The chapters – two preliminary units and 26 regular units – are of course intended for sequential study. Since they are organized on the principle of the spiral syllabus, however, individual functions, contexts, and grammatical topics are covered not once but several times, and there is also careful provision for review. A special chapter, *Feste und Feiertage*, is intended for use as appropriate to the season and contains material keyed to many different levels.

The main section of the Class Text consists of the two preliminary chapters and the 26 regular units. The preliminary units consist largely of brief dialogs intended for memorization and intensive contextual exercise. Their chief purpose is to boost the student as quickly as possible to the ACTFL/ETS Novice-Mid level in speaking. There is no presentation of grammatical features, because at such a level the speaker has effectively no grammar – or rather, what appears to be structural competence is actually lexical achievement. Nor are there any formally posed situation exercises of the kind offered in the main chapters; the student cannot yet be expected to create at any length with the language.

Far more complex are the 26 regular units. In a proficiency-oriented course the classroom text must serve as a departure point for exercise in communication rather than as an object for contemplative examination and cautious precision drill. Thus the *Wie, bitte?* Class Text chapters are always of the same length, and, for each location, their chief features always appear from chapter to chapter not merely in the same sequence, but in precisely the same place and on the same page within the chapter. Care was taken to lay out the pages so that there was no overflow from page to page in the presentation of dialogs, grammar, and exercises. The guiding principle was that the student and teacher involved in energetic use of the book should not have to struggle to find needed materials. The same principle determined the typographical policy – we wanted a text whose vital sections could be read at a glance while the ears, eyes, mouth – and even the rest of the body as well – were engaged in communicative exercise. Typographical emphasis is used frequently, and explanation is kept to a minimum. Photos and realia are included, not as pretty pictures or supposedly intriguing documentary tidbits, but rather as integral parts of the language-learning process.

The first page (page # = chapter # + 0) always presents visual material that suggests the themes of the chapter's two basic contexts, and then itemizes in everyday language the aims of the chapter in terms of the “functional trisection” of function, context/content, and accuracy. The facing page (page # = chapter # + 1) presents dialogs (*Gespräche 1*) that explore the chapter's first theme; there follow a page of relevant structural paradigms and exposition (*Struktur 1*) and a page of oral exercises (*Situationen 1*). The second theme of each chapter is presented in a similar way. Between the two thematic sections

is a two-page spread, *Strategie – Kultur und Sprache*, which fits the chapter's main linguistic and cultural features into a wider context, shows how to exploit communicative resources, and offers enrichment vocabulary.

The second half or theme of each chapter definitely presupposes knowledge of the first. But the pages of each chapter need not be presented and studied in precisely their given order. Although we recommend that the dialogs, or *Gespräche*, be undertaken before the corresponding *Struktur* sections are presented, some teachers may prefer the reverse order. The *Strategie – Kultur und Sprache* page can be introduced anywhere (or left largely for home study), and certainly the *Situationen* can and should be undertaken over the course of the chapter or sub-section, rather than just at the end.

Several controversial points must be addressed here. In terms of verisimilitude and *Stilfibel* correctness, the *Gespräche* present a spoken German which aims above all at being comprehensible to and functionally reproducible by the first-year student. Though we sought to give the language real flavor, we did not overload it with notorious flavor words (stressed/unstressed *doch*), ephemeral slang, studiously cultivated casual contractions (*'nen* for *einen*), or other warts and wrinkles that would impede the acquisition of functional competence. On the other hand, we did not offer speech that demanded that the student metamorphose into a model *Abiturient*; thus *bekommen* is allowed to do the duty of *erhalten*, as it often does in real conversation, and "*Wann ist der nächste Zug?*" is promoted in early chapters instead of the above level "*Wann fährt der nächste Zug (ab)?*" In general the authors, both non-native speakers of German, can attest that the German of *Wie, bitte?* was conceived in fond recollection of many an actual conversation, that it was passed cautiously through an effective affective filter, and that it was then judged carefully by two and sometimes three or more well-educated native speakers of German – who often differed on what constitutes correct or even natural German.

The presentation of grammar through model language, paradigm, and very brief exposition on the two *Struktur* pages in the Class Text chapters, and the location of the Reference Grammar in the Study Text, are intended to discourage any tendency to turn the class into a lecture on linguistics, when it should be instead a vigorous exercise in communicative skills, with the teacher as model and coach. The an-

alytic Reference Grammar is intended for study outside of class; the *Struktur* pages should be used in class to demonstrate the functional nature of grammar. The instructor should show how acquisition of new structures can make communication more efficient. Thus proficiency in handling attributive adjectives enables one to express in one sentence ("*Ich habe einen braunen Regenmantel gekauft.*") what otherwise would require two sentences with attendant labor of conjugation, tense selection, and attention to word order ("*Ich habe einen Regenmantel gekauft.*" "*Er ist braun.*"). In general, it is also beneficial to point out the compensatory relationship between grammar and vocabulary: strength in one can offset weakness in the other.

The two *Situationen* pages in each chapter, and the corresponding preparatory exercises in the Study Text, exemplify the target activity of *Wie, bitte?*, the use of language for communication – and particularly, in the classroom, oral communication. That is indeed the purpose of the *Gespräche* and the *Struktur* pages. The *Situationen* are posed largely in English, which may initially disconcert some teachers who prize the notion of a "German only"-classroom. Colleagues familiar with the standard oral proficiency interview (OPI) will perceive our inspiration and anticipate our argument. For several reasons, proficiency interview situations are usually offered in English, at least at the levels with which we are concerned here. If the situation is posed in German, and the interviewee does not perform well, one cannot be sure that one is measuring oral proficiency, since the deficiency may lie in listening comprehension. In fact, posing in German a situation of sufficient complexity to yield good interview data may be quite difficult; in any case, one risks giving away target structures and vocabulary.

The *Situationen* are phrased in relatively low-level, idiomatic English that should be readily comprehensible to most students. It is more important that the idiomatic formulation seeks pointedly to thwart attempts at translation, and that quite often the situations solicit the expression of emotions and the performance of gestures. The student must learn that it is futile or at least extremely dangerous to attempt word-for-word or structure-for-structure transformations, and that language does not exist in an emotional and physical vacuum. Instead, one should establish and reinforce the ability to convert concepts into language, and constantly demand emulation of emotion, gesture, and other paralinguistic

plain

phenomena. There are collateral benefits to that effort and to the periphrastic formulation of situations: the students can be led to the confidence that they can find a common means to handle tasks expressed in a variety of formulations, and that what appear to be complex ideas can be divided into several more easily managed concepts. Our goal is that the student who seeks to express a notion like "agree" will resist the urge to consult the dictionary, only to become lost in a web of words – "übereinstimmen? sich einigen? zustimmen? übereinkommen zu (inf)? (affect one's health) bekommen (dat)?" – and will instead realize that direct agreement can be expressed simply by saying *Ja* and that it can be discussed – indeed fluently! – by combining *ja* and *sagen* or *glauben* and *auch*.

Our own classroom experience with printed situations posed in English argues strongly that students in a proficiency-oriented classroom will not revert more than occasionally to English discussion of the situations rather than German performance of them. Of course, we cannot prevent them from thinking in English – nor can one in a "German only" classroom; and even there, unless the text is in German only, the student will in any case be reading some English. The chief goal, of course, is that the student encounter and produce a lot of German. In a proficiency-oriented classroom that will be the case whether or not one adopts the "German only" policy.

Similar considerations apply to the *Strategie – Kultur und Sprache* sections, which are almost entirely in English, except for the associated realia. They are not intended as *Lesestücke*. We wanted the students to absorb the content of the *Strategie* pages, not struggle with artificial German texts. When reading was the explicit target skill, we wanted everything the student read to be an authentic text. Quite likely the *Wie, bitte?* package, with its extensive realia scattered throughout the Class Text, and its large *Drucksachen* collections in both Class Text and Study Text, exposes the student to considerably more German than other first-year books. That exposure is intensified by the Study Text reading exercises and the test-bank reading tests, which lead the student through a vast range of realia and vigorously promote the active processing of large amounts of language. The same can be said of aural realia in the package.

The Class Text resources, like the spiral-syllabus grammatical features in the chapters, are intended for repeated use or recycling throughout the pro-

gram. They include materials of a kind found in many texts and of course assumed to be recyclable, such as a glossary. Other resources are not so traditional.

The *Afterword* of the Class Text contains a detailed yet plain language discussion of linguistic proficiency. Though students may not be able to appreciate the intricacies of either our profession's methodology or of proficiency-oriented instruction, most of them are curious about how they are progressing. At strategic points in the course you may wish to discuss pedagogical matters briefly. The rest of the *Afterword* provides information about further study and travel. Such material can be integrated into the course at many points, especially if at least a few students intend to travel or study abroad, or have already done so.

The *Glossary* serves two overall purposes. It enables the teacher to ascertain when and where which words have been "officially" introduced, and it provides the student with a core dictionary of words we consider important. Both points deserve explanation, and once again we emphasize that *Wie, bitte?* aims to promote *functional* skill rather than memorization of word lists or intellectual mastery of rules. The glossary is proficiency-oriented, in several senses. It is *not* intended as a translation help for the student who wants to look up every word. Most important of all, it does not and could not contain each of the many thousands of German words that the student might encounter – but not necessarily have to understand overtly! – in the various *Wie, bitte?* materials. Instead, it is built around the chapter *Gespräche*, in which the basic structures and vocabulary of each unit are presented. A few incidental words in the *Gespräche* are glossed in page margins, and thus may not appear in the glossary; many obvious cognates are simply ignored. Similarly, compound nouns that are not quite transparent but whose parts should already be familiar are glossed in the text with indications of division; they may not be listed in the glossary.

The *Glossary* is intended to promote the skills of skimming, scanning, and risk-taking. And, in conjunction with the *Bildwörterbuch* and the recommended conventional paperback dictionary, it takes into account differences in language modalities. The glossary is not a single alphabetical list. Rather, it is divided functionally, and in a manner consonant with the development of proficiency at the Novice-High to Intermediate-High levels. We would hope that the student earnestly working with the *Gespräche*

would use the dictionary as a secondary resource, and instead would rely primarily on contextual guessing, recursion, and other practical strategies to comprehend not only the basic meaning of a word but also its subsidiary characteristics (e.g., gender, tense).

Students who wish to look up words in the *Glossary* will have to commit themselves linguistically; that is, they will have to take some risks that are consonant with progress at the Novice-High to Intermediate-High level. Their first decision will be a gross classification: Is the word a noun or "something else?" Then, if the word is a noun, the student must venture a guess about its gender, for the nouns are listed alphabetically *by gender*, with prominent reminders about their articles. The process is not as laborious in practice as it is in description, since the pages of the glossary have been designed to reduce page-thumbing to a minimum.

There is no English-German lexicon. Our intent is to discourage dependence on translation and to encourage students to make do with whatever they have readily available, especially when the linguistic task involves realistic conditions in which use of a dictionary would be inappropriate or impossible. In speaking situations that are truly impromptu or permit only short preparation, the ordinary listener – even the well-disposed native speaker used to dealing with foreigners – will not often wait long enough for the struggling speaker to look up a word. Second, wrong-headed ventures at one-for-one translation can be disastrous or inadvertently comical, in the manner of the "What watch, treasure?" exchange in the film *Casablanca*, or of Thomas Mann's British tourists who render "Look at that!" as "*Besichtigen Sie jenes!*"

Therefore in rapidly paced speaking situations the student should be encouraged to use fluently a smaller but handier stock of words (and grammatical structures). Where time allows for reference to an actual lexicon, in whatever form it is presented, we would hope the student would learn to manage vocabulary thematically; that is, would come to perceive and conceive of words in contexts. One tactic might be recourse to the *Gespräche* themselves, since the dialogs are indeed conceived thematically and ordered according to the functions appropriate to the various proficiency levels. Even more important is the *Bildwörterbuch* with its extensive stock of words arranged contextually. Lastly, you may well recommend that your students acquire a paperback

German-English/English-German dictionary. You should remind them, however, that dependence on a dictionary can be dangerous, and that, even in the listening and reading exercises, where they will encounter many unfamiliar words, they will not be asked to undertake anything that cannot be accomplished without the resources they have been given.

The overall principles of vocabulary management in a proficiency-oriented environment might be summed up thus: When it comes to acquiring and applying vocabulary, virtually anything is fair; students should learn to obtain words wherever they can. Second, such complaints as "But this word isn't in the glossary," or "We haven't had this word yet," are not valid objections to linguistic tasks posed in exercises or tests – as long, of course, as completion of the tasks does not hinge directly on comprehension or production of such words in total isolation.

More important than the glossary are two other sections, the *Bildwörterbuch* and the reading materials, or *Drucksachen*. The former, already mentioned, consists of a set of pictorial vocabulary presentations organized by context (e.g., transportation, family) and rough order of proficiency level (e.g., first vital subjects like food and basic environment, then such complexities as landscape and personal interests). Our guiding principles in designing and offering the *Bildwörterbuch* are: 1) we should encourage our students to learn vocabulary in context, and without the easy access to English equivalents that encourages the dangerous assumption of a one-to-one correlation between languages; and 2) although many other textbooks carefully restrict vocabulary but then present grammatical content that is inordinately high in level, a proficiency orientation, at least at the ACTFL/ETS Intermediate level, may favor the opposite – namely, solid command of a modest range of structures, with confident recourse to available lexicons. The student should feel free to consult the *Bildwörterbuch* displays, and the Class Text and Study Text direct attention to them. The teacher should also make systematic use of them in class – not by preaching the vocabulary, but rather by setting appropriate communicative tasks.

The Class Text reading materials – they are actually much more than that – consist of a rich collection of realia that is intended to be useful rather than ornamental. It should be noted first that neither the main chapters of the Class Text nor the corresponding sections of the Study Text include any *Lesestücke* in the customary sense. That is, there are

R / no set pieces which, whether they are drawn from genuine sources or, as is more often the case, are composed especially for the text and are intended, whatever their actual effect, to be a cultural enrichment and a carefully targeted linguistic exercise.

Instead, the reading materials for *Wie, bitte?* were chosen and organized according to other principles. First, every text that the student approaches as material for work in reading, whether as a primary or secondary skill, is a genuine piece of German, something created by speakers of German for the ordinary use of other speakers of German. All texts are presented in essentially their original typographical format, so that the student will immediately feel their genuineness and will also not be deprived of the visual clues and cues so important to proficiency-oriented reading. We have exercised our function as editors or language "input filters" not in the creation of the materials, but rather in their selection and pedagogical transformation. All of the print realia in *Wie, bitte?*, and indeed even many of the incidental photos that contain samples of language, were carefully collected and selected by the authors. Nothing is there simply because a space had to be filled by something visually cute or vaguely apropos in theme.

Second, we intended, as much as possible, to integrate the act of reading into other communicative acts. Thus the *Drucksachen* are eminently suited to use in communicative tasks involving speaking, listening, or writing, and indeed the *Wie, bitte?* program offers many such exercises. But lastly, we wished to follow and reinforce the notion of the spiral syllabus in yet another way. Much of the recyclable realia is archetypal, in several senses. The topics it addresses – food, transactions, transportation, serious personal interests, social issues – are those of lasting import, not just to the native of a culture but also to someone who is visiting it, and particularly to someone who is seeking eventually to function on the levels of proficiency at which *Wie, bitte?* aims. The items themselves have been carefully selected to be accessible to some significant degree at even the lowest levels, and yet to continue to offer challenges when the student returns to them later in the course. The result will be a sort of extended, even months-long version of the kind of exercise that seems so valuable in even a single session: repeat skimming, scanning, and inference-making, with emphasis on recursion, comprehension of context, guessing strategy, and risk-taking, and with care to present language that is constantly challenging but does not

unduly raise the student's "affective filter." Indeed, the students' confidence should be enhanced by repeated exposure to such mature realia, even in early chapters.

Many textbooks offer realia, but quite often such materials are offered simply as visual accents, without serious followup, in the sense of including them in communicative tasks. Class testing of *Wie, bitte?* indicates that students very much like to work with realia, even such supposedly dreary things as maps and timetables, provided the realia are introduced in a functional way – that is, as integral parts of communicative tasks. Moreover, sometimes even the most mundane of cultural artifacts – the guidebook to the BMW Museum or a tourist brochure summarizing the history of Freiburg – can open wide vistas into the culture and history of the German-speaking countries, even for the student who is struggling with the language already and who – like most of our students these days – cannot be expected to survive long enough to enroll in our third-year language, culture, or survey of literature courses.

### Study Text

The Study Text is *not* an optional part of the *Wie, bitte?* package. Instead, it assumes many of the functions of conventional "main" textbooks and provides certain of the materials ordinarily found in them. The chief principle of separation and inclusion was that the Class Text should provide the materials needed in the communication-oriented classroom, while the Study Text would contain those suitable for study outside of class, whether such study were the rather contemplative examination of analytic grammar, the exercise of listening, reading, and writing skills, or the preparation of spoken material for the classroom. The overall assignments that direct the student's study are also given not in the Class Text, but rather in the Study Text, though the teacher should of course be sure to clarify assignments in other ways.

It should be noted, however, that certain Study Text materials, like the realia and other "props," may well be of use in class, and that the *Gespräche* and *Struktur* pages in the Class Text must be consulted outside the classroom as the student studies them more reflectively. The purpose is twofold. The Study Text contains rich realia resources that would have made the Class Text unwieldy. Some of them are eminently suitable as "props" that might be torn out of the Study Text for more effective situational work, and some are printed forms that might be filled out

and handed in. Second, the arrangement obviates annoying book-thumbing; in many activities students will have their books open side-by-side, with one book directing them to study part of another.

The Study Text contains the following major sections:

- a) study guide, with advice about language-learning in general, and cultivation of the several modalities in particular;
- b) chapter-by-chapter listening, speaking, reading and writing exercises, and worksheets with contextualized exercises of analytical grammar;
- c) translations, or rather, somewhat liberal renditions of the Class Text dialogs;
- d) chapter-by-chapter German-English vocabulary lists;
- e) the Reference Grammar, accessed from the Class Text *Struktur* pages but suitable for study section by section; and
- f) a set of *Drucksachen*, or recyclable realia, parallel to that in the Class Text.

## Tapes

The tapes consist of:

a) A set of cassettes containing renditions of the Class Text dialogs and performances of the conversations for the Study Text listening exercises. Most likely students will use these materials linearly; that is, they will study them as they work on the successive chapters, and then not need them again. The speech on the tapes is natural or virtually natural in intonation and pace, though free of gratuitous sloppiness or background noise, even though such interference is encountered under real circumstances. The recorded conversations serve two purposes: 1) the Class Text *Gespräche* provide models for student speech production, though we do not recommend slavish memorization; 2) the *Gespräche* and the expanded dialogs used with the Study Text reinforce listening comprehension, so that the student does not become dependent on a single voice – the teacher's – and thereby fail to learn how to understand other speakers, as may happen to an alarming extent in some cases.

b) Two cassettes with aural realia, intended primarily for listening comprehension exercises of a more flexible nature, but also for cultural enrichment. Use of these materials will *not* be linear, but rather anticipatory and recursive. Thus early in the book a

student might be asked to audit a news segment or weather report, listening only for city names and numbers. Later on the same items might be audited again, perhaps even several times, but each time for content higher on the proficiency scale.

c) For the instructor only, a separate cassette with materials suitable for testing.

The exercises and tests conducted with the *Wie, bitte?* tapes are always proficiency-oriented. They consist not of pronunciation and grammar-transformation exercises, but rather of an initial encouragement to reproduce or respond orally to speech models, followed by listening exercises which involve information searches, checks for structural competence, drawing of inferences, and risk-taking. An important stage in the student's use of the tapes is the transition from auditing (without printed script) the rather tame elaborations on the Class Text *Gespräche*, to confronting the aural realia, whose speech segments are genuine and, internally, unedited, though by no means haphazardly selected.

If your program is in a position to take advantage of the publisher's permission to duplicate the tapes, you might suggest that your students purchase three cassettes. Two, used unchanged throughout the course, would store the aural realia ("b" above). The third would provide revolving storage of the current chapter materials ("a" above). Some students, of course, will want to include one or more previous or upcoming cassettes.

The chapter tapes are recorded at fairly natural pace and intonation, as is – of course – the speech on the aural realia tapes. Some students will require careful tutoring in listening techniques and acclimatization to the notion that word-by-word comprehension or imitation is not being demanded of them.

A tape manual contains scripts for the Study Text listening exercises dialogs, selected transcripts of aural realia, and keys for some of the listening exercises that are not open-ended. It appears in the Test Bank.

## Test Bank

- a) Materials for speaking, listening, reading, and writing tests at intervals of approximately 2 chapters;
- b) Test keys and, for speaking and writing tests, descriptive standards and samples of student performances; and
- c) Transcripts of selected taped materials.

## Software

The larger part of the supplementary computer software for *Wie, bitte?* runs on Macintosh, Apple IIe/IIgs, and IBM-PC compatibles in common configurations. It consists of:

- a) Sets of multiple-choice contextualized reading exercises and tests, many of them using the *Wie, bitte?* realia;
- b) Similar listening exercises and tests using the *Wie, bitte?* aural realia;
- c) contextualized writing tutorials;
- d) listening comprehension exercises using on-disk digitized speech (for Macintosh only);
- e) for the teacher, a test curver intended to make bookkeeping simpler and thus help meet the likely need for more time devoted to oral testing.

The courseware aims to be as proficiency-oriented as the rest of the *Wie, bitte?* package. That is, there are neither mechanical drills nor childish games. The student is asked to carry out communicative tasks, such as reading a museum guide, listening to a weather report, or rewriting a social note. Instruction and error correction emphasize the functional learning of language, though analytic grammar is not shirked. Although the courseware can serve as a useful adjunct to the Study Text exercises, and provide a bridge to actual tests, the computer and software are not intended to replace either formally administered tests or classroom instruction. But they may help the teacher and student to use the classroom more efficiently, as a place where human beings rehearse and refine communicative skills.