

ZMATH 1999a.00107

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Modern times: the symbolic surfaces of language, mathematics and art.

Puig, L. et al., 20th Conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education (PME 20). Proceedings. Vol. 1. ,. 35-50 (1996).

The author is particularly concerned with the practices of mathematics teachers in classroom, especially language practices. One of his starting presuppositions is that there are important particularities about mathematics which strongly mark attempts to engage with it in classroom settings. Another is in the value of close-focused, specific, detailed investigative work, carried out in the belief that the particular is much richer than any general theory. In the section “Linguistics, language teaching and mathematics education” he uses a broad brush to delineate some of the links between linguistic theories and second language teaching methods, while all the time listening for both echoes and silences from mathematics education. In “A ‘modern’ perspective” he adds the area of visual art to the discussion. The metaphor of “art as a language” is at least as prevalent as the corresponding formulation of mathematics. By comparing and contrasting the uses of linguistic ideas and procedures in the two disciplines, he hopes to approach the question of what is particular about mathematics in the discipline of mathematics education.

Classification: C50

Keywords: foreign language teaching