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ABSTRACT

While the concept of language awareness by language exploration and the use of performance objectives and testing seem mutually contradictory, they may not be. Where the processes of language learning are concerned, the two approaches may have important points of contact. In curriculum, the two complement rather than threaten each other. Both help the teacher and student recognize the value of second language learning as a process as well as a product, as an activity that is interesting in itself while providing access to other people and their ways of life. (MSE)

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AND LANGUAGE AWARENESS WORK

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GRADED OBJECTIVES AND TESTING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LANGUAGE AWARENESS WORK

Michael Byram

1. Introduction

This paper is to discuss from the standpoint of the foreign language teacher the relationship between two developments which affect foreign language teaching. One of them, Language Awareness, has its origins in a wider context than foreign language teaching alone; the other, Graded Objectives and Tests, is largely an initiative peculiar to foreign language teaching, although there are parallels in the underlying principles elsewhere (Harrison, 1982). For some foreign language teachers, the two developments may appear at first glance to be contradictory. To put it baldly, the ethos of Language Awareness is likely to appear to some advocates of Graded Objectives and Tests a retrograde step, a return to the kind of language teaching from which Graded Objectives and Tests have liberated them. I shall argue that this apparent mutual contradiction is superficial and misleading. In order to appreciate the unease aroused by Language Awareness, it is necessary to consider the model of language teaching which teachers enthusiastic about Graded Objectives and Tests are - rightly - attempting to cast off permanently.

Foreign Language teaching in schools has, from its beginnings in the nineteenth century, been in search of a methodology. Initially, as the label Modern Languages indicates, it took its methodology from its predecessor and higher status companion, Classical Language Teaching. It also took its purposes from the same source: to enable pupils to read and write in the foreign language. Although the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought an appreciation of the importance of being able to speak and converse in foreign language, the higher status of the written language - which is a common perception, not peculiar to teachers - has dominated the language teaching and examining process until well into the fourth quarter of the twentieth century. One of the significant differences between spoken and written language is that the latter is fixed in time, whereas the former flows irretrievably past. (The advent of sound recording alters this but little in so far as the intention of most speakers is not to say something which will be listened to later and heard over and over again). It is possible therefore - and perhaps particularly necessary with the high literacy texts which pupils were being prepared to read - to study the relationship between the form and meaning of written text, and to do this an understanding of the grammatical structure of the language in question is a *sine qua non*. In the course of acquiring such an understanding, pupils' attention was drawn to their own language and indeed translation was used both as a teaching and as a testing method. Thus pupils learnt about the language as a step to using the language; "language" meant

however only written language. The comparative emphasis of the so-called grammar-translation method also had the corollary that pupils began to understand something of the nature of human language, although this was limited to insights into grammar. In view of the purposes, the method was reasonable and successful. There has however been a gradual change of purposes - to the teaching of language for oral communication. The change began many decades ago but was given a surge of strength in post-war years, particularly with the influx of a new clientele of learners from comprehensivisation. The change was however not a revolutionary one; the new purposes did not replace the old ones but were added to them. There was not an immediately corresponding change in methodology, although the introduction of audio-lingual/audio-visual courses and language laboratories helped to provide for the teaching of spoken language. Yet the traditions of the grammar-translation method were strong and there was confusion about which purposes should dominate and which methods were most appropriate. Furthermore the audio-lingual/audio-visual methods did not produce the success expected of them. In the 1960s and 1970s the situation was, in broad terms, confusion about purposes for pupils of widely differing abilities and, in an atmosphere of insecurity due to failure of new methods, a tendency to continue the traditions of the grammar-translation method which had at least proved its worth for its original purposes. The H.M.I. survey of 1977 summarised the situation, but the summary held no surprise for language teachers themselves:

In all but a few of the (83) schools the learning of modern foreign languages was characterised by some or all of the following features: under performance in all four language skills by the abler pupils; the setting of impossible or pointless tasks for average (and in particular less able) pupils and their abandonment of modern language learning at the first opportunity; excessive use of English and an inability to produce other than inadequate or largely unusable statements in the modern language; inefficient reading skills; and writing limited mainly to mechanical reproduction which was often extremely inaccurate. (D.E.S., 1977:8)

2. The nature and origins of Graded Objectives and Tests

2.1 Origins

A year after the H.M.I. report, there appeared a booklet written by the Oxfordshire Modern Languages Advisory Committee entitled New Objectives in Modern Language Teaching. It is perhaps significant that the word 'objectives' is used, implying that the aims or purposes remain unchanged and uncontroversial. The introduction refers extensively and approvingly to the H.M.I. report and the latter describes the aims which "must be central to (the) teaching" in terms of the ability to speak to a foreigner in his own language and to understand the gist of both the spoken and the written word

(D.E.S., 1977:3). Within five or six years, the Oxfordshire group - and another important group in Yorkshire - had been imitated in their initiative by more than sixty other groups throughout the country. They had said in their introduction that there are widely differing opinions concerning the reasons for the present state of affairs but agreement that there is failure due to setting 'inappropriate targets and objectives' - again avoiding the word 'aims'. It is also very difficult to document those opinions but some of them will be expounded here in order to describe the climate in which the Graded Objectives and Tests movement flourished.

There were three broad areas of dissatisfaction: with the definition of the 'object', of what is to be taught; with the success rate; and with the motivation of pupils towards learning a foreign language.

2.1.1 In the strictest sense, there was no definition of what was to be taught. Examination papers and text books formed the basis for a consensus on what was 'expected' of pupils after five years of learning the foreign language in a secondary school, but this 'definition' was - and often still is - at best imprecise and at worst misleading as a basis for decision on what was to be taught. The Oxfordshire group therefore produced defined syllabuses, for the earlier stages of learning, and tests which tested only what was in the syllabus.

In broader terms the object on which a consensus was reached was unsatisfactory in nature. The language taught was that required for assertions about the world and for putting a number of assertions together to form a narrative. Pupils learnt to make statements in response to questions - more rarely to ask questions - and to tell stories. Their knowledge of the limited range of language required for this was tested by having them translate narrative texts and write their own stories within narrow guidelines. Yet the telling of stories is only one use of language and not the most frequent one. Pupils did not learn how to use language to discover a person's point of view or persuade them of their own, to greet people or take leave, to congratulate and so on. They learnt only the written language - with its formal style - not the vocabulary and different structures of spoken language, whether formal or informal. This was an unsatisfactory state of affairs if the purposes of language learning were to include learning to converse with a native speaker. Furthermore the skills involved in the use of written language - for production of narrative or understanding of narrative text - are of a different kind to those in use in conversation. There is time and opportunity in the written language to formulate precisely and accurately both in meaning and grammatical form. The skill involved is based in part on knowledge of the grammar of the language and an ability to carry out grammatical and semantic analysis. In conversation the grammatical and semantic analysis is supplemented by the ability to work together with the conversation partner(s) to

establish common understanding. That working together requires other linguistic, as well as social, skills: the ability to seize the drift or gist of the meaning by anticipation of what is going to be said, through knowledge of the discourse structures appropriate to the context of the conversation. Essentially, then, the 'object' was not sufficiently defined and was too restricted in nature.

2.1.2 It was already evident in the 1970s that the success rate - measured in terms of examination passes or of the number of pupils abandoning language learning as soon as possible - was low. The Secretaries of State for Education have emphasised this in a recent paper (D.E.S., n.d.). The failure rate was attributed by some to the limited relevance of the kind of object being taught. The ability to do linguistic analysis and to write simple narrative is not one which makes immediate appeal to pupils. Those who completed a five-year course were driven by other needs - especially to obtain qualifications - rather than linguistic ones. Those who saw little hope of obtaining qualifications, or little use for them, were not attracted by the 'object' itself. It was also thought that the very distance of the target set was problematic, in two ways. First, the examinations providing the qualifications were too distant in time: a five year course was too long for many pupils to apprehend. This is a factor common to many subjects and which has led mathematicians for example to consider intermediate testing. Unique to language teaching, however, was the sense in which little of what was learnt during the course could be used realistically before the whole course was completed. Already the ability to tell stories is of limited use on its own, but pupils could not even tell stories adequately until they had been exposed to all the necessary grammatical knowledge. And the grammatical, and semantic, knowledge was fed to them little by little over the whole course in such a way that items vital for narrative, and even more so for conversation, were withheld because, though common in conversation, they were considered to be too complex for the learner who had to have his knowledge of the grammar built up from simple to complex structures. (The basis for deciding what is complex or simple was unclear but not challenged).

2.1.3 The nature of the 'object', the distance of the target and the opportunity for pupils to opt out of language learning usually after three years combined to reduce their motivation. Motivation was particularly low in the year previous to opting out, and the lack of pupil motivation infected teachers too who, like their pupils, saw the task as impossible. Thus pupils dropped out of a course before it was complete and with no sense of having learnt anything which was usable or whole. They had no complete skill or knowledge, no matter how limited in nature. They had nothing to show for their efforts in another sense, too, because they obtained no qualification. Thus teachers were dissatisfied with the motivation of pupils towards the language and the people and culture it symbolised.

2.1.4 The climate of opinion and belief sketched above is one facet of the origins of Graded Objectives and Tests. The origins in the more positive sense of the contribution of ideas and the initiation of work could be the object of a fascinating piece of research on curriculum innovation. Harrison (1982) traces some of the relationships with other forms of graded testing, especially in music. The purpose here, however, is to describe the nature of the movement and its purposes in order to relate them to Language Awareness and because Language Awareness may be perceived as a retrograde step it is necessary to have clarified the state of affairs 'before' the onset of Graded Objectives and Tests. It is necessary now to clarify the nature of Graded Objectives and Tests as a response to the dissatisfactions described above.

2.2 The nature of Graded Objectives and Tests.

A Schools Council evaluation of the undoubted success of Graded Objectives and Tests documented above all a change in attitude to language learning:

There is, then, an impressive amount of evidence to support the hypothesis that pupils working with graded syllabuses and tests in French have very much better attitudes towards learning French than do other pupils.....As far as the pupils are concerned, the introduction of graded syllabuses and tests seems to bring considerable gains and no losses. (Schools Council, 1981:31)

Attitude and motivation are, however, dependent on other factors and it is important to consider what changes have been made to meet the factors causing the dissatisfactions outlined above. There are two facets of the innovation: the notion of grading - and the attendant certification procedures - and the notion of defining and re-defining the content, the 'object' to be taught. These two facets have developed together and contributed to the success in attitude change. It is not possible therefore to say which facet has contributed how much to that success. Yet the two facets are logically separable and need not co-exist. It is possible to consider each in turn.

2.2.1 As Harrison points out (1982), the notion of grading is commonplace. In language teaching there has been a grading of language content and presentation of 'simple' grammar before 'complex' grammar through textbooks and examinations. By consensus and tradition, for example, the French subjunctive is excluded from GCE O level, but the German subjunctive is included, thus implying that the French is more difficult than the German, or less necessary in some way or maybe some other basis for grading. The innovation in the Graded Objectives and Tests movement is to introduce more grades, more steps towards the target, steps which can be fully apprehended by pupils. To help them see the steps more clearly,

certificates are introduced for each step. Precisely the same procedure could be applied to the 'object' taught until the advent of the movement: for example, pupils could be rewarded with certification for learning the French Imperfect Tense and then move on to some other section of grammar. In fact, however, the grades are described in terms which refer to the use to which the acquired language may be put rather than to the terminology used in 'traditional' linguistic analysis. More precisely, the certificate refers to the activities which pupils can carry out with the help of the foreign language, that is to their behaviour. This owes much to the method of determining learning objectives in the form of behavioural skills. This is helpful to the pupil because more readily understandable and to the teacher because it is possible to use a meta-language which the pupil understands and appreciates. Furthermore, should pupils give up study after any given grade, they would nonetheless have learnt usable language with potential applications. The close definition of the behavioural skills, of the ways in which individuals make language work for them in contact with others, has origins in sociolinguistic analysis. Through terminological confusion however, the definition may be identified with the behaviourist tradition in language teaching. Thus the meta-language in current use may seduce both pupil and teacher into a view that language is learnt through habit formation, a theory which is much disputed (cf McDonough's paper Transfer knowledge and skill in Second Language development).

2.2.2 The description of grades in terms of use is facilitated by the second facet of the innovation: the re-definition of the 'object'. The language taught is no longer only or indeed primarily the language of assertion and narrative in the written mode. The differences between spoken and written language are recognised and uses other than narration are introduced: for example, the language for expressing preference or requesting help. At the same time there tends to be less emphasis on analytic skill and knowledge of the grammar of the language and more on the ability to perform, to produce appropriate language in defined contexts. This is a question of degree but can lead to training in performance without any knowledge about grammar. Doubts have then been expressed whether the performance is language or 'language-like behaviour', a problem of which those leading the graded tests movement are aware.

The change to a description of the language to be learnt in terms of use and context is accompanied by an explicit and detailed definition. Thus teachers now have lists of vocabulary items and of grammatical structures which they know will be the basis of the corresponding test. Pupils can also feel more secure and see an 'amount' of language which they will be able to learn in the foreseeable future. Furthermore the description in terms of use helps pupils to see the potential relevance of the language, which clearly helps maintain their motivation.

2.2.3 There are then several factors which coincide to encourage teachers to reduce and sometimes entirely abandon the teaching of knowledge about language. The new meta-language they have in common with pupils refers to use and to context as the criteria for choice of the language to be learnt. Previously the meta-language referred to the structure of the foreign language and if this was to be used with pupils they had to have some knowledge of the structure and the terminology. Second, the syllabuses and tests are described in terms of what pupils can do with the language rather than their knowledge about it. The tests are also devised in such a way that 'success' is defined in terms of the ability to use the language together with other inter-personal skills, and not in such a way that a knowledge of comparative grammar will be directly tested: translation is shunned. Any teaching about the language is only valuable if it contributes to skill in performance in the language.

3. The nature and origins of work on Language Awareness

Language Awareness work differs in two essential respects from the Graded Objectives and Tests movement. First it has its origins in other kinds of teaching as well as in language teaching. Second it involves a change from the aims of language teaching as identified by the H.M.I. report and implicitly accepted by the Graded Objectives and Tests movement, that 'communication' should be central. It involves putting equal emphasis on 'communication' and on "an awareness of the nature of language and language learning", as a recent document expressed it (GCE and CSE Boards, n.d.)

3.1. Origins

There is also a third difference: that the work which can be labelled Language Awareness work is far more heterogeneous. Again it is not the intention here to trace the literal origins of the diverse kinds of work, nor to speculate on the reasons for apparently simultaneous and independent innovations which have underlying common interests. Detailed descriptions are available elsewhere in this report. The purpose here is to list some of the purposes and thinking which lie behind the work involved.

3.1.1 Some foreign language teachers consider that their pupils will be more proficient learners if they are given the tools and techniques for learning. (cf. McDonough's discussion of 'technical know-how'). They usually consider that these techniques - which may be acquired in the course of language learning - ought to be made explicit before the process begins. Therefore they teach about languages, including the mother tongue, in a course which precedes the beginning of the foreign language course.

3.1.2 A second impetus is the desire to raise pupils' interest in language for its own sake. Behind this lies the belief that

education should extend pupils' knowledge about themselves and the world around them and that language here plays a central role. Thus pupils will be more sensitive to their own and other people's use of language.

3.1.3 Other work goes a step further along the same road by providing pupils with the tools for the study of language once their interest and wonder has been aroused. Such courses treat language as an object of academic study.

3.1.4 Some work springs from the desire to enable pupils who are almost certainly future parents to appreciate the importance of a rich linguistic environment in the development of their children and to show them how to provide such an environment. Such courses have been linked with Child Care courses.

3.1.5 Elsewhere, teachers of language from a number of backgrounds - English as a Second Language, languages of ethnic minorities, foreign languages - have joined together to establish common interests and attempt to make sense, for the learner, of the different styles of language teaching. In particular, the teaching of ethnic minority languages within the normal curriculum is seen as a way of raising the status of the languages and hence increasing the self-esteem of the pupils who speak them.

3.1.6 Foreign language teachers who are concerned that the justification of languages in the curriculum should rest on more than the provision of skill in languages have developed that part of their teaching which makes pupils aware of the nature of language.

3.1.7 Teachers of English as the mother tongue have in their discipline a strand of work on the nature of language, on an understanding of "Language in Use". Some teachers who have wished to give particular emphasis to this have joined with teachers of foreign languages; others have developed the notion within their own discipline, sometimes linking it with the techniques of drama teaching.

3.1.8 The seven areas of interest and the brief indications of how groups of teachers are working together do not exhaust the field. Furthermore there are many cases where the reasons for work in Language Awareness are combinations of the seven mentioned and others. In view of the variety, the following characterisation will attempt to deal with the common ground rather than the particular versions which have developed.

3.2 Nature of Language Awareness work

The common ground shared by the different groups is essentially a belief that language and languages are a worthwhile object of study

in themselves; a belief that pupils' education will be all the richer if they are aware of language. Pupils tend to 'see through' language and be ignorant of the role it plays in their lives, until occasionally it causes them a problem. They are not then in a position to understand their problem because they are not sensitive to language. Thus in a sense language and languages become an object of study in a way which superficially looks, to the foreign language teacher in particular, like a return to the 'grammar-translation' method which they have rejected. It is the danger that Language Awareness work may be rejected out of hand for this apparent identity, which this paper is concerned to remove. The similarity is misleading both with respect to the nature of the 'object' taught and to the methodology. It is more obvious that the aims of Language Awareness work differ from the aims of grammar-translation teaching of foreign languages.

3.2.1 The 'object' studied is different because the conception of what language and languages are is much more differentiated and developed. Whereas the 'traditional' language teachers were concerned only with grammar - especially with syntax and morphology - the definition of what is to be studied in Language Awareness includes sociological, psychological and anthropological aspects of language. It includes, for example, the study of varieties of a language and social attitudes to them, the study of child language and language acquisition, and the study of the relationship of human language to the systems of communication of other species.

3.2.2 The methodology of 'grammar-translation' was concerned with teaching the generative rules of syntax and morphology which would enable a pupil to produce correct and meaningful sentences, and at a later stage text, and to analyse and understand the meaning of sentence and text in the language. If the pupil acquired an interest in the generative nature of language, this was a valuable but essentially incidental corollary. The methodologies of work in Language Awareness stress both the learning of skills and the acquisition of some propositional knowledge about the phenomenon under study.

The skills may be behavioural: emphasis on the skills of language learning arising from an increased understanding of the nature of what is to be learnt and the processes involved. The skills emphasised may on the other hand be those of rational analysis: pupils may be taught how to analyse language - and not just textual meaning - on scientific principles, although the emphasis in method is likely to be on the doing of analysis rather than on the principles themselves.

The acquisition of knowledge about language and languages plays a significant role in Language Awareness work, although the role may be large or small depending on the kind of work. For example, pupils know that there are relationships between languages, that there are

differences between spoken and written varieties, that infants learn a mother tongue in particular ways. It is assumed that knowledge of this kind is an integral part of the learning process out of which a greater sensitivity towards language will arise. In most cases, it is not part of the ultimate aims that such knowledge should necessarily be retained and recallable. It is however assumed that the aim of sensitizing pupils to language is best done - and possibly only done - through a process which includes some knowledge about language. Such knowledge is more wide-ranging than that concerned only with syntax and morphology.

4. Points of contact and divergence

In my description so far, the emphasis has been on the removal of misunderstanding. By analysing the origins and nature of the two concepts, I wanted to clarify their historical position within foreign language teaching and in particular to anticipate the possibility that Language Awareness might be assimilated to a conception of language teaching which has rightly been rejected. This final section will be founded on the assumption that Graded Objectives and Tests and Language Awareness both have a role to play within foreign language teaching. It will therefore examine how the roles relate to each other. It will view the relationship from two angles: the process of learning one or more foreign languages, and the justification for language teaching in the secondary school curriculum.

4.1 Learning foreign languages.

4.1.2 The aims of Graded Objectives and Tests are usually formulated with exclusive stress on the use of the foreign language for communication:

The most worthwhile objectives would seem to be the ability to use the language for realistic purposes rather than, for example, the ability to describe the language or use it for purposes which the actual user would rarely need to employ. (Harding et al, 1980:4)

It remains unclear what contribution knowledge about language and languages can make to the ability to use a language. This issue is addressed by McDonough elsewhere in this publication. Krashen's Monitor Theory offers an attempt to clarify the relationship. (Krashen 1981). In so far as such knowledge is helpful however, Language Awareness work which emphasises lessons to be learnt about approaches to language learning (cf. 3.1.1) is also clearly supportive. In practice teachers in Sussex and at Archbishop Michael Ramsey School in London have written courses which include both Language Awareness and Graded Objectives elements. Such courses reflect an intuitive theory, by which many language teachers work,

that knowledge about the language is necessary to proficient language learning.

4.1.3 Although, as stated above, the origins of the notion of defining language behaviour for the purposes of graded tests are in sociolinguistic analysis, the determination of behavioural objectives for language examinations antedates the developments in Graded Tests and is part of a general use of behavioural objectives for examinations. Add to this the dominance of behaviourism in audio-lingual language teaching and the temptation to identify behavioural and behaviourist is strong, especially for practising teachers without the opportunity to tease out the difference. Furthermore, some materials used frequently with Graded Objectives and Tests, especially in the first year and with less able pupils, implicitly encourage teachers to carry over from audio-lingual methodology the drilling of stimulus and response. There is a danger of which the proponents of Graded Objectives and Tests are doubtless aware.

In fact Graded Objectives and Tests literature deliberately leaves the issues of methodology to the teacher. In the introduction to the course closely associated with the movement, Buckby discusses "The teaching approach":

It is now generally recognised that there is no single or simple key to the door of language learning, that different people teach, and learn, most effectively in different ways. Because of this, these materials suggest different ways of presenting and exploiting new language....

(Buckby, 1980:5)

With respect to grammatical structures, he points that they are not the base on which the course is constructed.

"However some understanding of key structures is clearly essential if the learners are to be able to communicate adequately and flexibly, and not merely to repeat phrases learned by heart.... The real goal is communicative competence, and grammatical principles are only explained when an explanation will help to reach this goal"

(Buckby, 1980:6)

Where Language Awareness work can contribute to grammatical understanding underlying communicative competence, it can surely be excellent preparation for pupils. Buckby also describes one of the aims of the course as "to encourage an awareness of the language learning process" and this too is a point of contact. People who teach Language Awareness are wary of criticisms that their interest in grammar - albeit only one of the topics taught - is retrograde. Buckby cites H.M. Inspectorate which points out that grammatical concepts are a means to an end and not an end in themselves.

From this kind of perspective, Language Awareness work might be perceived as contradictory to the spirit of Graded Objectives and Tests. It is the purpose of this paper to identify such potential "slippage" as from behavioural to behaviourist, or from awareness of grammar as one aspect of language to teaching grammar as an end in itself.

4.1.4 In addition to the divergence in language learning theory, Language Awareness work which specifically prepares pupils for foreign language learning differs in its emphasis on attitudes towards foreign languages. Such courses assume that pupils come to foreign language learning with an ethnocentric conception of their own language and its importance. This is particularly strong in a country which has until most recently perceived itself as monolingual. Such courses set out to change attitudes towards foreign languages and to make pupils more ready for the learning process which involves a questioning of their linguistic and cultural ethnocentrism which can lead to their feeling that their self-esteem is under attack. In this respect too then, Language Awareness supports in principle teaching by Graded Objectives which aims to make pupils proficient in the foreign language.

4.1.5 The divergence in theories of language learning is an important difference and a source of mutual contradiction. In other ways, some Language Awareness aims coincide with the implicit purposes of Graded Objectives and Tests. In so far as the learning of a foreign language by whatever methods is intended to give insight into the language learning process and thus facilitate further language learning, then both concepts share common ground.

It must be remembered, however, that Language Awareness has more aims than those which centre on proficient acquisition of a foreign language for use "for realistic purposes" and the additional aims are central to the nature of Language Awareness.

4.2 Foreign Language teaching in the secondary school curriculum.

4.2.1 The most recent reflections on the place of foreign language teaching in the curriculum are to be found in the Secretaries' of State consultative paper (D.E.S., n.d.), in which incidentally there is a perhaps significant change from the term 'modern languages' to 'foreign languages'. The paper lists, under the section 'the goals of foreign language teaching', a number of aims drawn up on the basis of good practice throughout Europe:

- (a) to enable pupils to understand speech at normal speed;
- (b) to enable them to speak the language intelligibly;
- (c) to enable them to read with ease and understanding;
- (d) to enable them to express themselves in writing;
- (e) to give them a knowledge of the foreign country and an insight into its civilisation and culture. (D.E.S., n.j.:5)

These aims require much detailed refinement and the paper stresses the need to differentiate according to ability, aptitude and duration of study, but also emphasises that schools "should concentrate more on the skills of communication particularly in the spoken form, adopting an approach more relevant to the use to which the pupil might put his learning". This emphasis is completely in tune with the purposes of teaching through Graded Objectives and Tests (cf. 4.1.2.) It shares with the implicit aims of 'traditional' teaching the notion of providing the pupil with a tool which he can put to some use. Traditionally the use was to enable pupils to read the literature written in the language and thus gain knowledge of a small part of the culture which nonetheless had high significance and status. The present-day use is to enable pupils to communicate with native speakers, especially in speaking. It remains unclear what relationship this ability has to a knowledge of the country and culture, but the latter is necessary for good communication and is doubtless worthwhile in itself. A significant difference between traditional and present-day views of aims is to be found in the recognition that native-speaker proficiency is beyond the reach of school teaching. After saying with suspicious under-statement that "mastering a foreign language is an ambitious and taxing objective", the consultative paper says later that "the proficiency enjoyed by the native speaker is not within the grasp of schools" (D.E.S., n.d.: 2,5.) Until most recent times, the implicit norm against which pupils were measured was in fact the native speaker and one who was moreover highly educated and linguistically infallible. In the understanding and production of the standard written language, this norm was reasonable although impossibly demanding. In spoken language it is quite unreasonable, yet it was implicitly carried over by teachers and examiners, even if in practice they had to recognise how unreasonable it was. Despite this change and the shift in emphasis from written to spoken language, the aims of Graded Objectives and Tests maintain the spirit of the language teaching which has exclusively stressed its purpose in terms of providing a tool. By quoting from the recent consultative paper I hope to have shown that this interpretation meets with official favour. In comparison with the aims of Language Awareness, however, the interpretation is singularly narrow.

4.2.2 Another recent statement of aims is to be found in the Report of the Working Party for French of the GCE and CSE Boards' Joint Council for 16+ National Criteria.

The aims of a course in French leading up to an examination at 16+ should be

- to develop the ability to use French effectively for purposes of practical communication,
- to form a sound base of the skills, language and attitudes required for further study, work and leisure,
- to offer insights into the culture and civilisation of French-speaking countries,

- to develop an awareness of the nature of language and language learning,
- to provide enjoyment and intellectual stimulation,
- to encourage positive attitudes to foreign language learning and to speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic approach to other cultures and civilisations,
- to promote learning skills of a more general application (e.g. analysis, memorising, drawing of inferences).

This statement goes far beyond that of the Secretaries of State both in reference to general educational aims and with respect to the specifically linguistic contribution to pupils' education. In particular the reference to the development of "an awareness of the nature of language and language learning" will not have gone unnoticed. Thus linguistic understanding is seen as worthwhile in itself and as a useful tool in language learning. In the philosophy of Language Awareness, linguistic understanding is seen as an essential element of the individual's understanding of self and of his understanding of significant aspects of social interaction. Language Awareness provides a tool for language learning but also a tool for understanding and functioning in a polyglot world.

The contribution which foreign language teaching makes towards the pupils' awareness of language, alongside contributions from other disciplines, thus puts a different interpretation on the place of language teaching in the secondary school curriculum. The difference between this view and that of Graded Objectives and Tests is partly in scope and partly in priorities. The former is wider and points to links with other parts of the curriculum, the latter is concerned only with language teaching itself, where language learning is seen more as a means than an end. In Language Awareness the priorities are reversed. In the D.E.S. consultative paper the case for language teaching in the curriculum rests largely on arguments for usefulness and practical relevance; there are several references to trading and the European Community. In Language Awareness, the case is made above all from the view that language is a significant aspect of social and individual reality, the study of which is a valuable contribution to pupils' education.

4.3 I have argued in this final section that conceptually Language Awareness and Graded Objectives and Tests are not mutually contradictory. In respect of the processes of proficient language learning, there may in fact be important points of contact. In respect of curriculum, the one is an expansion of the other rather than a replacement or threat to it.

In earlier sections I attempted to remove the danger that Language Awareness might be perceived as a reversal of current trends both in terms of the object of study and with respect to methods. Nonetheless, there may still be a fear that "talking about" the foreign

language will be detrimental to "using" or "talking in" the language. The fear might be expressed particularly with regard to the limits on time available to produce proficient users. Such fears can be answered in several ways. First, the differentiation of objectives of use ought to allow time for other worthwhile aims, including Language Awareness but not exclusive to it. Second, the recognition of the impossibility of using the native speaker as a norm ought to remove some of the unconscious pressure on teachers. Third, the recognition that Language Awareness is just as important in language teaching as developing ability in communication ought to lead to legitimisation of the methods involved alongside the methods favoured for teaching for communication. This in turn must lead to serious consideration of how, in practice, the two can be used to complement each other; and there are in practice several models already in use ready to serve as a basis for development. Above all it is necessary that Language Awareness work and teaching through Graded Objectives and Tests should be recognised as complementary aspects of language teaching. Both help teacher and pupil to recognise the value of foreign language learning as a process as well as a product, as an activity which is valuable and interesting in itself as well as providing access to other people and their way of life.

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