

make. Our other friends: 'the brave new world', world village, mass media, internet, experts and specialists in higher education, ever-increasing number of private competitive language institutions.

Professional foreign language teachers have even more crucial role to play at present. Not only do they need to keep this side of their job alive when teaching their students, they should keep it active and growing in their own daily activities.

**(e)**

A few down-to-earth practical guidelines for your students to make their learning real:

- Your students are not to *study* the foreign language. Make them work with the foreign language. Make them listen to, read, and write the foreign language.
- You are not in the Hyde Park in London or JFK Airport in NY. You are in a language learning CLASSROOM. Use your students' language as often as you can. You know and they know you are not the native user of the language you teach. In following cases the use of the foreign language is recommended: To win your students trust that you know the language, it is preferable at the beginning of each class and when you feel that they are with you and you have their full attention. This need not focus on complex explanation of grammatical points. They could be around everyday topics like weather, time, about the classroom, opening or shutting the window, pre-

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vious lessons, etc. You continue using the foreign language as long as you feel that you have their attention. Otherwise, you immediately switch back to their mother tongue.

- You are obliged to teach from the book. Remember you are expected to cook according to the recipes in the book. You are not to cook the book itself. Less

chained to the textbook, the better.

A few suggestions to make the foreign language work for you not you work for the foreign language:

- Do not confine the foreign language use for classroom and language teaching purpose. Try to use it for pleasure and profit both.
- Find a hobby like painting, chess, music, house interior decoration, gardening, and use the foreign language to learn about them.
- Whether you like it or not, you have decided to be a foreign language teacher. You have contracted as an educated person to take a mature part in the world, where it is crucial to have sound values and clear ideas of your own, and a mind open and able to grasp the ideas of others. There are numerous professional journals and resource books to help you further develop yourself as a professional teacher.
- Every class you teach is a genuine context for experimenting and experiencing. Do not lose them free. Research and solution of teaching problems would give you precious job satisfaction.
- To keep you further busy, I add one question to this note: Swear and/or four-letter words of a foreign language do not seem so biting and cutting. Why is it so?

school subjects are not the same, identical. School-subjects are not natural real world problems. They are abstract constructs, disciplines, limited and selected pictures of reality. Some problems in real world can be easily photocopied and studied as disciplines, some are not so easy. Linguistics is a good picture of language in school curriculum. If we teach it we are not teaching language but a good abstract picture of it. Language exists as a reality inside and outside world. It is a reality as lived and experienced by the people. Earlier in this writing I referred to conjoint concepts, though analyzable, but if analyzed they lose important part of their meanings and connotations. Language is a conjoint and composite concept. Simultaneously it is knowledge, skill, social and mental behavior, art and science. A composite problem requires a composite treatment. Knowing language is simultaneously 'know-what' and 'know-how'.

**(d)**

In this section I attempt to answer a basic question: How can we teach or learn a foreign language without changing it to a school-subject, an abstract description of it. We have one arch enemy and a good number of bosom friends. Knowing these virtual friends and enemies is of prime importance. Let me introduce them to you, the rest you decide. Contact me further guidance.

Our arch enemy is the fact that a foreign language is by definition a misplaced creature. It is removed from its own community where it was given life and growth to full bloom. Any small blow could knock it off the ground. Our virtual friends are many. The first is the realization of the fact that we are dealing with something live and living not a dead description on the paper. This is very important realization that a teacher and even a learner make and it could and should show its color in any stich they



an answer to this question successfully, I have the feeling that you would share with me what I think about 'false-language' or 'step-mother tongue'. You may even like to provide us with a few examples from your own foreign/false language. How does this kind of language come about?

**(c)**

How have you learned things you already know? How do you think you can learn the things you have not yet learnt? These may be interesting questions to raise, but surely many among us may not have enough time, motivation, or justification to involve themselves with such questions. In addition, what is it we want to know, why do we want to know, who is the one who wants to know, and so on may influence the nature and depth of 'knowing'. It is, however, worth a try. What is your own feeling and what are your answers to the above questions.

To cut the long story short, research has documented the fact that there are basically two types of 'knowing': 'know-what' and 'know-how'. School-subjects basically focus on 'know-what'. They are knowledge-oriented. Crafts and sports are 'know-how' and 'skill-oriented'. This specification is true to certain extent. Real world is not that simple. There is more to knowing than gathering of information or pure practice.

In schools, school subjects are '**studied**'. In school curriculum, history, mathematics, literacy, physiology, geography, botany, languages, literature, etc. are treated as school subjects. The nature of these



details of this hypothesis, let me quote an example or two from fiction. Research dictates that fiction models of reality are very similar to models in social sciences. Alice in Wonderland (Lewis Carroll) and Gulliver's Travels (Jonathan Swift) have always provided me with interesting examples.

Alice in one of her adventures meets the Cheshire Cat sitting on a bough of a tree smiling. Following is a brief extract from a conversation between the two:

...  
'Did you say pig, or fig?' said the Cat.  
'I said pig,' replied Alice; 'and I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly: you make one quite giddy.'  
'All right,' said the Cat; and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.  
'*Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin,*' thought Alice; *'but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in my life!'*

Surely seeing a smile without a face is a curious thing, is it not? The other languages one learns aren't 'smile without face'? You know what I mean?

Widdowson (1983: 28) in one of his papers where he professes a complementary relationship between theory and practice,

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teacher training and teacher education, refers to one of Gulliver's travels to an island. The island is full of academic institutions, dedicated to the pursuit of abstract speculation and engaged on research. Gulliver visits the most prestigious of these, The Grand Academy of Lagado.

There he meets some of the academics. One of them has been working for eight years on a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers. Another has devoted a lifetime's fruitless toil in trying to convert human excrement back to its original food. Another is working on an extensive scheme to grow crops not from seed but from chaff. There is in this Academy a school of languages engaged in researches of a similarly abstruse and fanciful kind.

Time, space, and purpose do not let me go further into details to build up the necessary context. Let me return back to the basic questions. What is a false language? How a foreign language turns out to be a 'false' language, a mother tongue in disguise, or 'step-mother tongue'? If I attempt a paraphrase for these names, as I see it, false language or step-mother tongue is a language that an adult learns as a school-subject, with affected grammar and lexicon, but no meaning of its own and no culture to stand for. How does this kind of language, empty language come about? If I attempt



# Foreign or False Language

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(a)

The author is an individual born to a language with no writing system. He learns a second for literacy and schooling. In the secondary school, school regulations compel him to study a foreign language, allegedly for success in higher education. Following the mood of the years after the World War II, to secure a profession jumps on board the band wagon and gets his first degree in English Language and Literature. Upon graduation, he is employed as a teacher of a foreign language. After 15 years of teaching the languages he knows to the speakers of other languages, he is awarded a scholarship to do his Ph.D. degree in Linguistics.

The English have a saying: *Whatever you play sticks to your fingers*. After almost half a century of playing with languages he goes through his life wondering what it is like to live with one old sweet mother tongue. Understanding the nature of languages other than one's native, becomes

the motive for the present note.

(b)

The whole is bigger than the sum of its parts. **A conjoint concept** is a notion made up of analyzable constituents. A sheet of paper, magnet, language, teaching, education in general are examples of a conjoint concept. A jigsaw puzzle is another good example of a conjoint concept. Only when the many pieces are properly placed in their proper places the meaning is achieved. You might have read about physiognomy, physiognomic perception, or convergence theory of knowledge. The present note focuses on languages other than one's own, their effect on one's life and work. Two basic types of knowing is explained and asserted that if we fail to strike a balanced harmonious note between them, the language we learn or think we learn becomes 'false language' or 'step-mother tongue'. Before I go further down into the