

is ceaseless. I have experienced it in the writings of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and others. A text does not simply 'reads', it raises questions and incites answers. Often it is the user/reader that makes it talk. We agree or disagree with the text. We wander away from it. We underline, highlight, add footnotes, or write at its margins. Often what is jotted down on them is more interesting than the text itself. These texts encourage interactions.

How does a periodical help?

The question may be complemented in two ways: First, do language teaching periodicals help teachers and teacher-trainers do their task more effectively and with better understanding? Second, do they help them in their professional development and further learning? There seems to be a common consensus that they potentially do both. We follow that consensus and tend not to question it. We explain a few points and in the light of them make the assertion that periodicals more than any other resources have the potentials to help them achieve both.

When a teacher's education or training is formally over; the certificates issued, diplomas and degrees sealed and signed, a teacher is left with the following resources for further support: *His/her own practice, learned and experienced colleagues, professional associations, published research, periodicals, and a few more.*

Periodicals share a few features. We refer to them in passing. Obviously, they are periodically published publications, thus they are open for change and development. They address a certain readership in a field of interest and enquiry. They have a board of directors and editors, they also get changed and reshuffled as

time goes on and as thinking and practice in the field evolve and develop.

Three items are pivotal in shaping their fame and fate: Their Board of Editors, Content Page, Contributors. Three items are in the forefront: titles of articles, its editorials, and the articles themselves.

The 'Table of Contents' Page

A periodical is very much like an anthology, unlike a novel, nobody start reading it from the first to the last page. The first page most readers check first is the table of contents page. After the periodical's title, this page puts the readers in touch of its content. Many users of a periodical when they pick up one, they go to the Content Page. They have a certain topic or less often a certain author in their mind. They mentally tick the page number and if they have the time, they locate it and go straight to 'read' it. We should not overlook the importance of titles.

The *Editorial* plays a crucial pivotal role in any periodical. The *Editorial* in any periodical not only could introduce the topic of each article it can, in a helpful manner, prepare and encourage readers to read each critically. It may attach a few questions to make its full reading possible and fruitful.

Some periodicals commission articles for publication. This, if it does not fall victim to certain theologies or beliefs, can be a useful practice. They can publish articles relevant to their readership needs. True advantage of periodicals over other resources available to teachers and teacher-trainers could be the fact that they are not based on the private experience of individuals, certain theologies of professional associations; they are not published once and for all; they are companions that constantly evolve and develop.

satirical remark about ignorance. Its parody here could be: 'I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural education. Natural education is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone.'

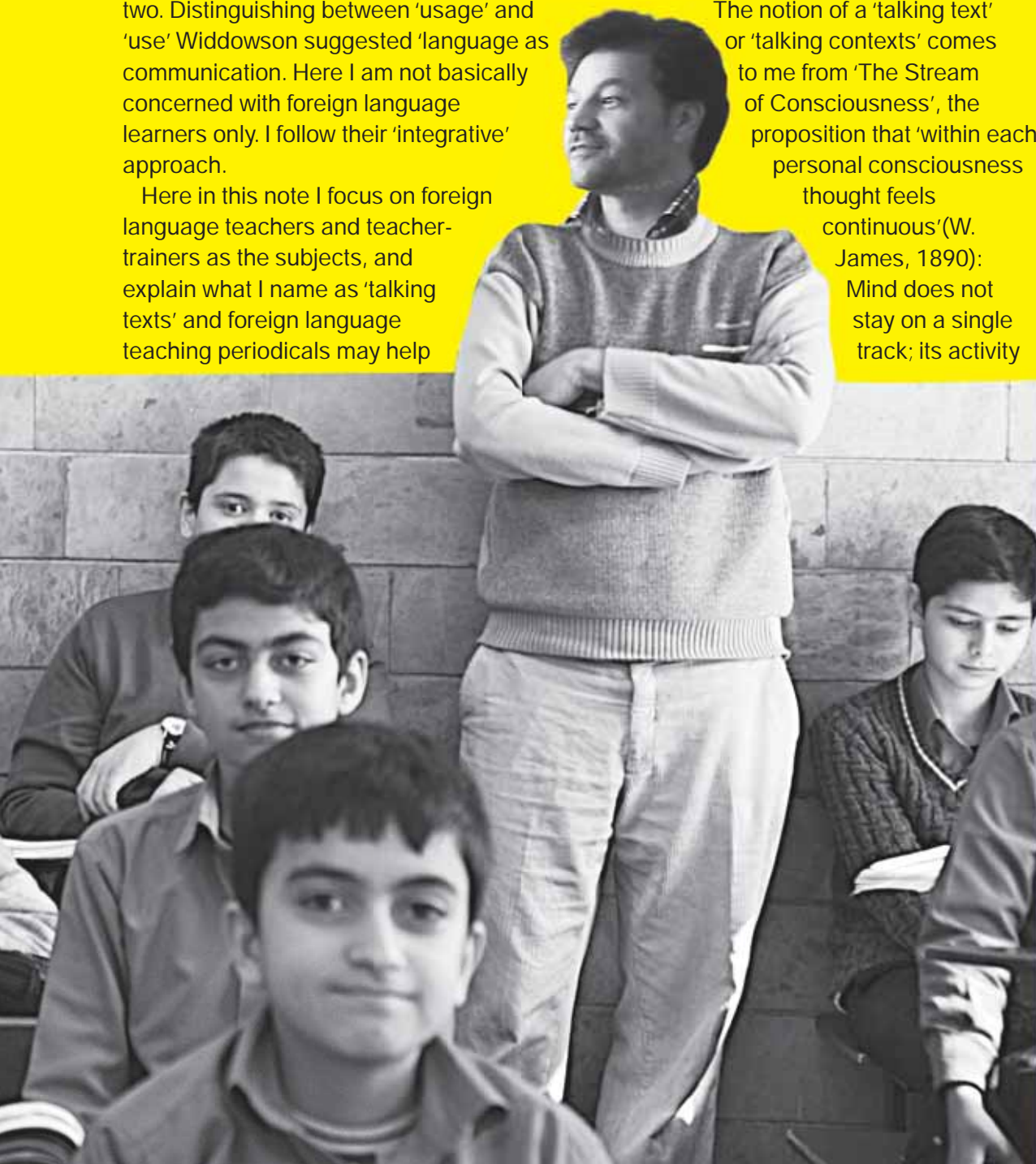
Michael West and Henry Widdowson have introduced fresh ideas into foreign language study and pedagogy. M. West (1955, 1961) distinguished between 'factual languages' and 'language as behavior'; he suggested a 'realistic method', based on a combination of the two. Distinguishing between 'usage' and 'use' Widdowson suggested 'language as communication. Here I am not basically concerned with foreign language learners only. I follow their 'integrative' approach.

Here in this note I focus on foreign language teachers and teacher-trainers as the subjects, and explain what I name as 'talking texts' and foreign language teaching periodicals may help

them peel off foreignness of a foreign language: something they need doing in order to learn to use the foreign language for further learning and professional development. The practical suggestions made here are based on the convergence of theory of knowledge and integrative, and interactive approach to language pedagogy.

What is a talking text and talking contexts?

The notion of a 'talking text' or 'talking contexts' comes to me from 'The Stream of Consciousness', the proposition that 'within each personal consciousness thought feels continuous' (W. James, 1890): Mind does not stay on a single track; its activity



to listen carefully to what is happening. The words you hear are no longer poorly pronounced 'words'. Their foreignness has gone. They are no longer terms, codes, but picturesque, functioning, meaningful 'things'.

Example 2

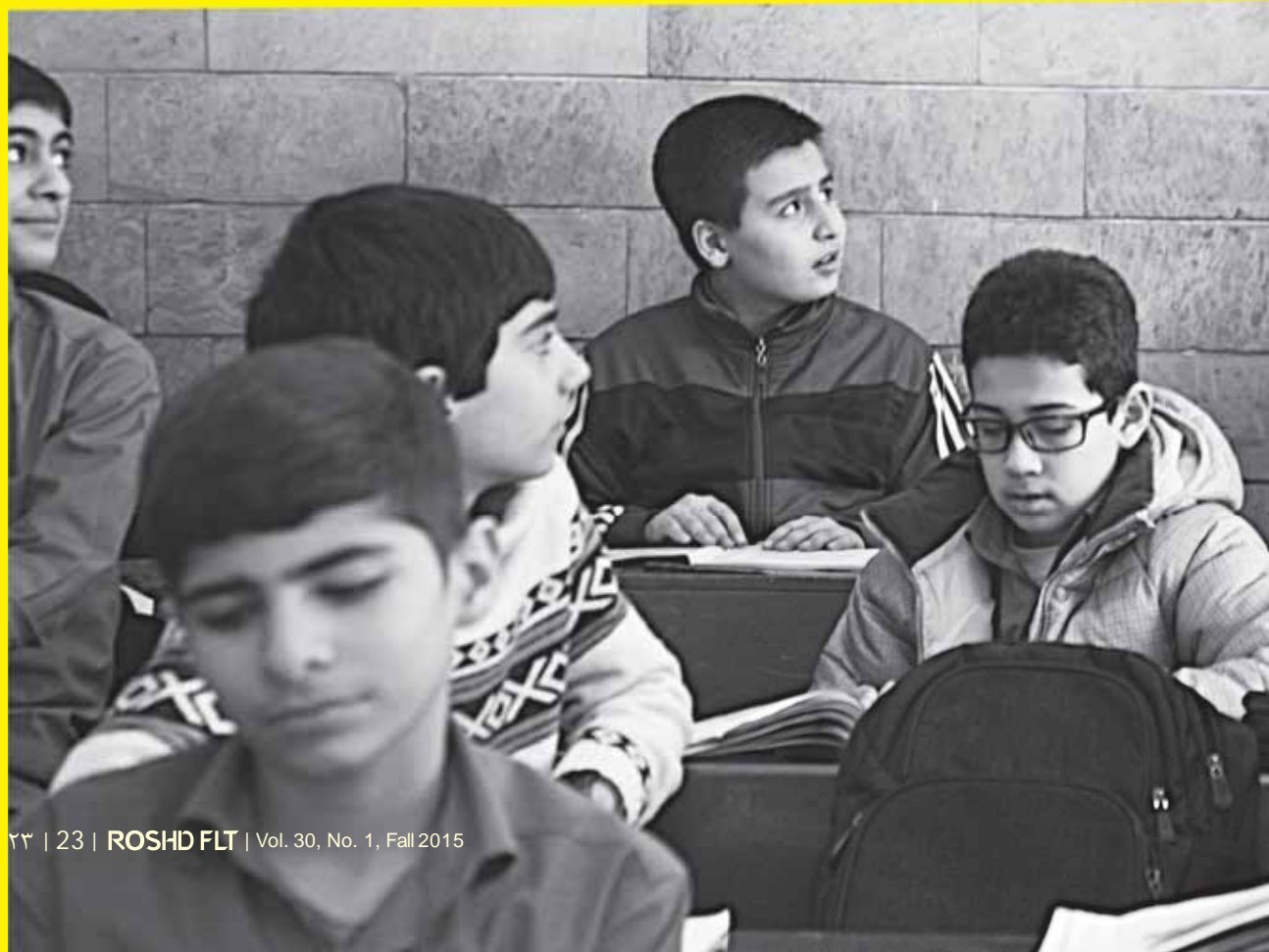
You are similar to the person described in example 1. You have been exposed to the foreign language at school as a school subject, like history, geography, biology, chemistry, etc. You have a modest storage of the vocabulary of the language; you know its word-formation and sentence construction rules. These have been assessed in many school examinations. One day, on the sidewalk of a street, a worried strange-looking foreigner approaches you, and asks you for something. You understand him, give him a few directions. The man is happy. He thanks you and disappears in the crowd. You feel your heart beats. It is a remarkable

experience and much more different and deeper from the entire classroom dialogue recitations. Language comes alive in you.

Example 3

You are in the foreign land. You are staying in a student-hostel for graduate students. You are doing your higher-education there. One day while under the shower you sing loud saying: "As mad as a hatter!" A native speaker passes by opens the door and seeing you there, slams the door apologizing: "Oh, I thought it was my brother Billy!" You are not disturbed. On the contrary, you are happy. A sign of recognition!

These examples are not to prove anything. One thing, however, may come out of them. They show in a proper context, under certain circumstances the foreign language can come closer to a real language. I do not approve spoon feeding. Oscar Wilde in his masterpiece, *'The Importance of Being Earnest'* has a



Later in our secondary school education, a foreign language, English in our case, is inserted into school curriculum. We are exposed to it through our language teachers and school textbooks. We, generally speaking, have a very different experience of a natural, though foreign, language. We take it, treat it, and assess it as one of our school-subjects.

Language is behavior and needs to be acquired. Acquiring language is an experience. Experience is knowledge or skill you gain because you have been doing it for a long time, in an appropriate context.

Foreign language needs to be known and learned. Knowing and learning of a foreign language is an experiment. It can be tested and evaluated.

I am not sure how clear the above 'bold' assertions are to you. I am comparing and contrasting 'learning' and 'knowing', learning through 'experiencing' and knowing through 'experimentation'. A foreign language and your mother tongue both are 'languages'. They must be used as language is used. A car is a car and must be used as a car. But your car is different from mine. I have to get used to driving it. I need to experience driving it for quite some time. Then I might learn to handle it as my own. Do not run away with it. This is only an analogy. Analogies have their own tricks. They belittle the differences and highlight one or two minor similarities.

Teachers of English as a foreign language and teacher trainers, more specifically non-natives, throughout their long years of studies, language pedagogy studies, have **experimented** on English as a foreign language and **know** what it is like as a foreign language. Have they **experienced** it as a real language? Do they need to? As teachers of English as a foreign language and teacher-trainers

how can they **learn from experiencing** the language? I focus on these questions in the remaining part of this writing. I leave you here with another 'bold' assertion. I intend to hang my argument on its peg.

Science unravels its mystery when it is proved through experimentation and realized through experience.

Here we come close to the question of this writing:

How do we peel off the foreignness of a foreign language?

Before we come with a well-worded answer to the question, let me cite a number of examples, personal experiences, and later I brief you with thinking of two pioneers in the field. I close this writing with references I make to my own thinking and ideas on the subject.

Example 1

You are living in a country where English is a foreign language. You are a non-native teacher of English and have the habit of listening to the news in English very often from international broadcasting news networks. It is news time. You turn on your shortwave transistor radio to listen to the news: there are all sorts of news from every corner of the world. You feel you are not much keen listening to them. The moment you decide to turn off the radio and go back to your work you notice a pause and a sudden change of news announcer. There is a newsbreak. A reporter reports directly from an airplane-crash site. The crash site is a residential area close to the airport. The names sound familiar, though poorly pronounced. It is your hometown. The airport is that small old airport for home flights just a short distance away from your house. As a saying goes: 'you have two ears and now you borrow another one'

How to Peel off the Foreignness of a Foreign Language

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Foreword

English as a foreign language learned at school as a school-subject stays 'foreign': fails to shape and share experience. The language of journal articles, academic papers, and conference proceedings in English is equally prosaic and unreal. Non-native teachers of English as a foreign language in using this language and the resources for further learning and professional development experience serious problems. A periodical meant to interest these teachers and teacher-trainers; an author who takes an 'interactive' approach to research; and a learner who focuses on 'learning' rather than on 'knowing', each has the potential to play a crucial role in understanding and amelioration of these problems.

In search of my notes on the topic, I came across the following sharp observation. I did not find any reference to any author. I expect it must be my own. No matter who, the author is, the note is interesting and revealing. It reads:

"Have you ever borrowed a friend's car for an out of city trip? What you experience on the road would be very

similar to using another person's language."

Is it not interesting? I like analogies. They teach lots in a nutshell. The car might be a new and a more expensive one, but nothing seems to be in the right place and functioning exactly like yours. Do not forget the analogy, but let's deal with some hard facts.

We grow into our language, we learn it, but do not remember how. We become conscious of it when we are sent to school for schooling and literacy. In school we become conscious of our language and the fact that there is another aspect to it: writing. It takes a long time, for some a number of years, to learn to sound the letters of the alphabet, read what we and others write and put on the paper what we want others to read. Since we learn to use this newly learned skill for our schooling, that is, learning school-subjects, taking school examinations, reading and writing messages, signs, letters, etc. we learn to use the skill unconsciously, very much like the spoken aspect of our language. With some, this does not take place easily or completely.