

*You speak, they speak: focus on target language use*

### **Introduction: making the language real**

We have set out to do three things in Part 1 of this book:

- to show how it is realistic and possible to teach in the target language;
- to propose effective strategies;
- to offer some suggestions for departmental workshops on the theme.

The National Curriculum for England for Modern Foreign Languages requires that:

*During Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding ( as set out in the Programme of Study) through:*

- a communicating in the target language in pairs and in groups and with their teacher;*
- b using everyday classroom events as an opportunity for spontaneous speech;*
- c expressing and discussing personal feelings and opinions;*
- d producing and responding to different types of spoken and written language [...];*
- e using a range of resources, including ICT, for accessing and communicating information;*
- f using the target language creatively and imaginatively [...];*
- h using the target language for real purposes;*
- i working in a variety of contexts [...]*

*(DfEE 1999:17 para 5)*

We believe that this requirement is best met if we teach our classes, as often and as systematically as we can, using the target language as our main and sometimes exclusive means of classroom communication. This is not to ban the use of English. To do so would be dogmatic. We would, however, only aim to use the learner's mother tongue to fulfill certain, well defined purposes. These may include discussion by pupils and teachers of grammatical features, concepts and understanding or of their developing learning and study strategies, or of their understanding of 'otherness'. Even these aims, as have been described elsewhere (see Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy 2001), have been successfully met by using the target language.

### WHY?

There are four main ways in which it will help our learners if we teach them in the language they are learning.

- They need to experience the target language as a **real** means of communication.
- If we teach them in the language they are learning, we give them a chance to develop their own built-in language learning system.
- By teaching through the target language we are bridging that otherwise wide gap between carefully controlled secure classroom practice and the unpredictability of real language encounters.
- By encouraging pupils to understand and use the target language – at times, a struggle – we are seeking to develop strategies for listening and strategies for expressing meaning when they may only have limited language available.

### MAKING THE LANGUAGE REAL FOR THEM

It is not enough to keep pointing out to the learners that real people ‘out there’ actually use the target language both in daily speech and for normal understanding. Nor does it make much impact to say that at some later stage in their lives they themselves may really need to use it in both those ways. Both those concepts are too distant. We need to make the language real here and now. By teaching in the target language we can make it something that they themselves experience and use today. It is not just a vehicle for exercises and activities, to be put into real use sometime later.

### HELPING THEM TO LEARN BY EXPERIENCING LANGUAGE AS WELL AS BY CONSCIOUS LEARNING

Until relatively recently, language classes have tended to operate almost exclusively as occasions for conscious learning and practice. The focus has been on deliberately working things out as accurately as possible. But we all know that there are other ways in which we can acquire a language. As part of our own language experience we have learnt a foreign language not only as a result of someone else’s teaching but by finding ourselves in situations where it is being used around us. We get it by experimenting with it and living it as well as by studying it. Our learners bring this same dual capacity with them to the foreign languages classroom. By teaching in the language we are giving this powerful system a chance of operating alongside deliberate language learning.

As they try to make sense of and find patterns in the language they encounter and use, they acquire language. It is, after all, this ability to apply built-in learning strategies which helps learners learn more than they are taught. It is certainly the case that they learn, too, in ways other than those which we decide for them.

### **BRIDGING THE GAP**

In real life, the speakers of a foreign language often have to cope with not understanding everything they hear or read or with not being able to say exactly what they want. It will help our learners if right from the start we build up their confidence in this respect. They need to learn to take risks, both in understanding and in speaking. They need strategies for getting by. Teaching them in the target language prepares them for this.

## **1 What makes it possible to teach in the language they have not learned?**

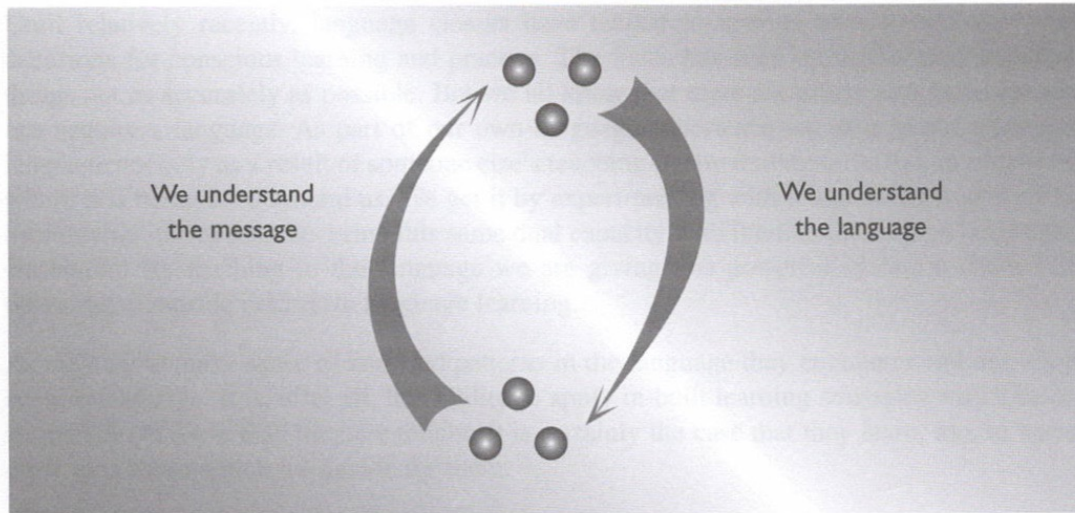
It is important to remember that messages are not carried by words alone.

Some teachers have one or more of the following reservations about teaching in the target language.

- They worry that children won't understand and won't know what to do.
- They worry that because classes resent being put in this position they will misbehave.
- They worry that they themselves sometimes do not know enough of the language to be able to do it effectively.

These worries arise because, as teachers whose work relies so heavily on words, we can easily forget two things. Firstly, nobody need all the words they hear to understand perfectly what is said to them. Secondly, there are other sources of meaning. Even in our mother tongue a great deal of our understanding comes from our ability to interpret messages independently of the words. In fact, we often rely quite heavily on what we think the message is about rather than what is actually said. (This process is so common and so effective that most of the time we do not notice that we are doing it. In fact, it is most noticeable on the occasions when we get it wrong!)

We do not just take meaning **from** language; we also take meaning **to** language.



There is a kind of reinforcing reciprocity.

Among other things we take the message from:

- the immediate context;
- our knowledge of how the world works;
- demonstrations;
- our reading of intonation patterns/ facial expressions/ general body language, etc.

### **The immediate context**

Imagine you are standing watching someone you know doing some woodwork. They hold out their hand mumbling something through a mouthful of nails. You are unlikely to think that they are offering to shake hands. Even if we do not hear a word, our understanding of the immediate context is likely to make us hand over a hammer.

### **Knowledge of the world**

We learn from experience to expect people to behave in certain ways in certain situations. In terms of the classroom that means that the learners have expectations about teacher behaviour. So, for example, if a teacher walks across to one of the class and hands over a pile of worksheets, few children would think of asking what they have to do with them. They know. Indeed, these anticipated messages are sometimes so strong that the class ignores what you actually tell them to do and does what they expect you to want them to do. Even in the mother tongue the role of the language is often simply to confirm a message already received. In the case of a foreign

language, the message we have already received will enable us to understand and to process the language that comes with it. For most schoolchildren this ‘knowledge of the world’ is still closely culturally determined. The more they encounter a foreign language in a cultural context the better they will interpret it when they meet it for real.

### Watching for meaning

Words on their own are a poor source of information. Imagine being instructed over the phone how to change a nappy. We are much more likely to be able to follow instructions if we can see someone doing what we have to do.

### Interpreting social signals

From our earliest days we read the messages from facial expression, gesture, body language and intonation. Irritation or encouragement, determination, enthusiasm and amusement do not need words.

Because the message is carried and interpreted through these and other channels, it means that in the classroom:

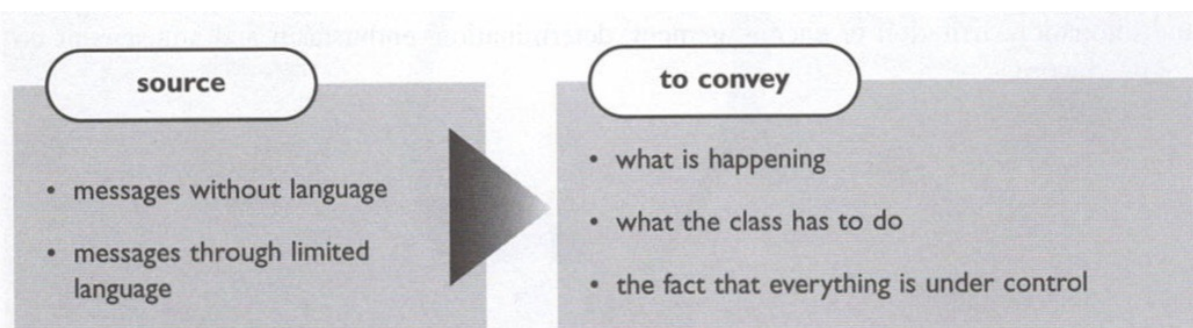
- the learners can understand what is going on even if they don’t yet know the words / structures (that is why it is possible to teach complete beginners in the language they are learning;
- the teacher does not have to be a fluent bilingual, able to say anything and everything in the target language. Limited language can carry quite complex messages.

In fact, some people believe non-specialists are often at an initial advantage over the native speaker. Although this may not be so, they are **trying** to do two crucial things:

- to go for clear messages in limited language, whereas the native speaker or highly skilled specialist tends to talk on, relying on words because for them they **do** carry the meaning. This is worth remembering if we are in the fortunate position of having a Foreign Language Assistant in the school. Simplifying the language is something she or he will probably need particular help with;
- to provide a parallel source of information by means of actions, demonstrations, gestures, facial expressions, etc.

So we need to remember that we do not need to put into words everything in the target language which we would have said in English. In fact, if we do try to operate through the equivalent amount and the equivalent complexity in the target language, we can make life very difficult for the learners. They will then probably respond by making life difficult for us! Of course, as the classes understand more of the language

and get more used to the situation, we can begin to rely on more words and to use more complex language, which we can build up systematically. Meanwhile, to begin with we are trying to get the message across in two main ways in order to do three basic things:



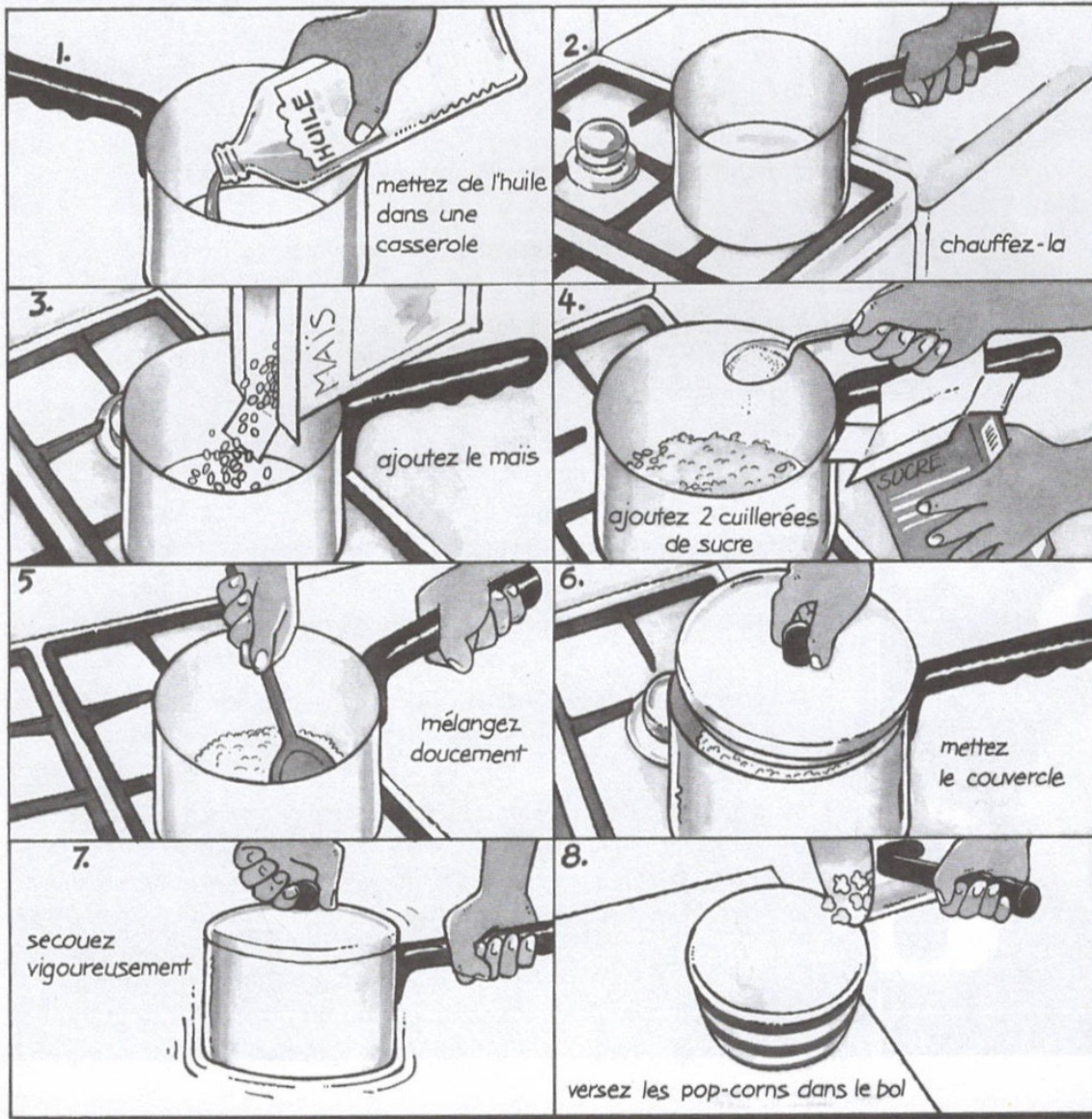
### PROVIDING MESSAGES WITHOUT LANGUAGE

Two key features help here:

- breaking things down into short easy stages;
- ‘telling’ by showing and doing.

These are in fact simply extending something we all do already in our teaching. If we watch good teachers teaching any subject in the mother tongue, they rarely describe a whole activity in one go and then expect the class to remember the whole thing. They are much more likely to set the activity up in small, clearly defined stages. They also very often do what they are talking about as they speak. If we do this in the language class, it is not just a longwinded way of going about it. In the process of setting the activity up by doing it we are:


- confirming the language patterns both for understanding and for the use that is about to follow;
- establishing more clearly than is possible with words alone, what the class has to do.



Spirale 2: Overhead transparencies (Jacqueline Jenkins and Barry Jones, Hodder & Stoughton, 1993)

In the example here above we have temporarily omitted any language other than the language being practised. This should illustrate how the message about what to do and how they should do it is carried by what the learners **see**.

It is quite common for textbooks or real first aid leaflets to describe ailments and injuries and their treatment by a series of numbered pictures. In the initial stages of teaching these we want the learners to recognize the sound of the phrases and mentally match them up with the event depicted. We can set up an activity to do this, entirely on the explain-by-showing-and-doing principle. If you were using an authentic leaflet the activity could go like this:

- 
- Hold up the leaflet and point to the appropriate page of the pictures (labelled a–j). Hold it so that the class can see whether they have found the right page on their photocopy.
  - Write the numbers 1–10 on the board.
  - Say aloud one of the phrases.
  - Search **obviously** for the picture which matches the phrase.
  - Write the letter of the matching picture alongside 1 on the board.
  - Repeat the process for a second phrase. By the time you get to the third phrase the learners will be anticipating and will tell you which letter to write up.
  - Pick up someone's exercise book and hold it up.
  - Open it at the back.
  - While the class gets organised rub out the preliminary examples.
  - Point to the numbers 1–10 and indicate that they should write out a similar list.
  - Start again with a new phrase. (For the first two watch to see that they have got the idea and to confirm, for the slower ones, that they are on the right track. We can do this by again writing up the answers. After that we can leave them to it.)



Written out like this it looks almost insultingly obvious. Yet it is precisely this kind of very simple system of non-verbal messages which enables us to teach even complete beginners in the language they are learning. Instead of trying to give all the information about the activity at the beginning, it has been built up stage by stage by actually **doing** it. At each stage the necessary information has been **seen**. This does not mean that the teacher is just relying on gesture and miming. The whiteboard or OHP also acts as a very important source of visual information and instruction by example. The strategy also mirrors what teachers of other subjects often do when giving complex instructions or information so does not appear odd or out of place.

The same very simple process underlies all teaching in the target language. It is even **more** important, not less, when setting up more complicated activities and it remains crucial even when increasingly complex language is added.

By working in this way we are not just enabling our learners to cope with the target language. We are actively helping them to acquire it. A TV cookery demonstration is understandable with the sound switched off. Accompany it with language and as well as the cookery techniques the associated language is learned. We should not be too concerned that we do not know if **all** our learners in this situation are acquiring the **same** language, or, indeed, if they are acquiring **all** of it. What we can guarantee, however, is that, without it being systematically taught and practised, all of them will learn something that they would not otherwise have learned. In other words, learning can take place **without** explicit teaching and often without a learner immediately realising what he or she has learnt.

We can now look at some strategies for adding limited language to the messages which are already carried by what the class can see and predict.

## PROVIDING MESSAGES WITH LIMITED LANGUAGE

It helps to:

- avoid long bursts of language without other sources of message;
- keep eye contact in silences and voice contact when looking away;
- use volume, intonation, emphasis and repetition to highlight meaning;
- use cognates – in written form – initially where they exist;
- use marker words to convey the structure and sense of purpose;
- signal the general nature of each activity;
- use **single** words, initially, to signal the specific nature of what you are about to say;
- use a small selection of all-purpose phrases
- if English surfaces use it indirectly.

We will look at each of these separately and then see what they look like as a whole.

### Keeping it short

A long flow of the foreign language without any other source of message, particularly at the beginning of the lesson before the learners are tuned in, can produce panic and resentment. It helps to keep the message pithy and to use something else to back it up.

Instead of ...	Try
<p><i>Aujourd'hui on va écouter une conversation entre Astérix et Obélix. Ils sont dans leur village en Bretagne. Bien! Je vais jouer la cassette. Puis vous allez répondre à mes 10 questions. Bien! Sortez vos cahiers et écoutez la cassette. Ça va?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <i>Regardez, voilà Astérix voilà Obélix. (write names on OHP or board)</i></li> <li>2 <i>Ils parlent. (mime)</i></li> <li>3 <i>Ils sont dans leur village. (show)</i></li> <li>4 <i>Voilà des questions sur la conversation. (show on OHP)</i></li> <li>5 <i>Écoutez la cassette. (show, mime)</i></li> <li>6 <i>Écrivez les réponses dans votre cahier. (pick one up)</i></li> </ol>

### Keeping in contact

One of the problems of reducing the flow of language is that many of us have learned to express our classroom personalities through the style of our English. How does one convey the equivalent of 'Watch it!' in French...? If language is limited, contact can seem limited for both parties. It is therefore all the more important that the teacher does not 'disappear'. If the class is feeling insecure it is more likely to switch off. We have got to signal somehow that we are still with them. After a while this will cease to be a problem. Once we and they are used to working in the target language, our classroom personalities emerge as clearly as ever. Meanwhile, however:

- when there has to be a silence, perhaps because we need to give them time think -> it is even more important that we look at individuals round the class;
- when we need to turn our attention away from them -> it helps to use filler phrases to signal the pause is intended, eg. *attendez une minute...* and/or comment in the target language on what we are doing as we do it, eg.

(drawing a grid on the board) *bon voilà une ligne vertical ...et ouis encore une ...voilà la troisième ... et maintenant les horizontales ...une ...voilà ...deux ...et ...trois...Ça y est !*

### Provide stepping stones

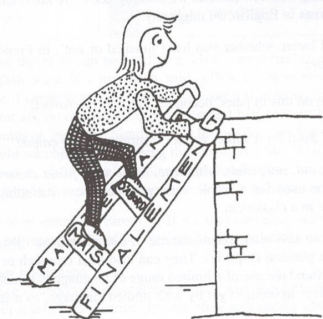


It will help the learner if we make key words stand out in some way. We can make them louder, more emphatic, or we can combine either of these with a pause. In this way we provide stepping stones of meaning through a flood of language. Equally importantly, by doing this we are also building up the learners' willingness and ability to predict and to work on the basis of partial understanding.

### Building on what they already know

Sometimes there is a word which **sounds** sufficiently similar to the English to help understanding, especially if accompanied by confirming mime or gesture, eg. *copiez ...on change ...*. Sometimes the cognate exists but would not be so readily used by a native speaker, eg. *stop!* ... In the latter case we can use the cognate initially and attach the less familiar word to it. Later we can leave the new word to stand on its own eg. *Also, jetzt kopieren ... nachschreiben ...ja, nachschreiben ...kopieren ...* If the cognate is clearer when written, we can provide the written word on the whiteboard **at the same time** as we speak it. Although this tactic can undo developing sound listening strategies, it can be used when it is really helpful and/or the message has to be clearly understood, such as when setting homework, etc.

### Providing a clearly structured framework to what is going on



Little words like *jetzt, also, aber, inzwischen* in German and *d'abord, finalement, deuxièmement, maintenant, mais* in French, have the same effect as paragraphs have in writing. They show beginnings, endings, changes of focus, relationships between sections. They can signal that what is about to come is important. They say to the class 'come back in even if you switched off

earlier' or 'make sure you don't miss this bit'. They refocus attention. They also give a comforting sense of shape and purposeful progress to the lesson. They also provide models of language which learners will begin to use for themselves, especially if encouraged, as familiarity and confidence increase. It can be very motivating to reward such use of the foreign language **publicly**. This may be done with a system of *Bons Points*, wall charts recording pupil use of this kind of language, class monitors

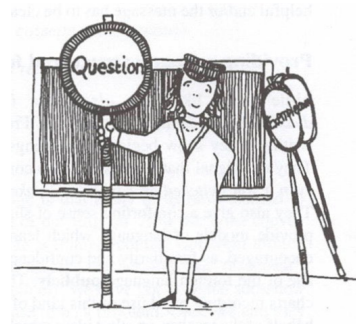
who record such events on behalf of the teacher, or other ideas which reflect a school's policy on rewarding achievement. (*Bons points* have been used for many years by David Williams, Head of Modern Languages, at the Neale Wade Community College, March. To whom we are indebted for the idea.)

### Signalling the general idea of the activity

Words like *écoutez, regardez, travaillez avec un(e) partenaire, test ... aufpassen, hinsetzen, hinschreiben, Partnerarbeit*, etc. provide something immediate and simple to respond to. They provide the first-line security of knowing roughly what is going on. The more the learners understand what is going on, the less likely they are to look for an excuse to misbehave.

### Indicating the nature of the language utterance that is about to come

We often know what an utterance must be (eg. question or answer) because we know what it means. But we have all seen classed sitting there wondering whether they have to repeat, answer or do something. So it will help them to know what sort of utterance is coming if we use cues like:



*écoutez.....question: ...*

*maintenant ... exemple:...*

### Using an initially small set of key phrases

It is worth remembering how few phrases we actually need. We are often very wordy in our mother tongue. Whereas in English we might say:

“Can you stop and listen, whether you have finished or not’. In French this can become simply, ‘*Bon, écoutez*’.

Or

‘Now I want you to do this in pairs’ becomes ‘*Jetzt, Partnerarbeit*’.

Or

‘Let’s have a bit of hush for a while, you lot’ shortens to ‘*Du calme!*’

Even more basically, *oui, non, mais, also bitte, na so was, faites comme ça, ne faites pas comme ça etc.* can be used for a whole variety of occasions including some of the less comfortable moments in a classroom.

Different intonation can also often extend the use of a single phrase. ‘*Was ist los?*’ or ‘*Tu as un problème?*’ can be genuine enquiries. They can also be a reproach or a reprimand. This use of intonation to extend the use of a limited range of language is something learners need to learn to do themselves in order to get by with limited language, so it is all to the good.

If this key language is, initially, kept both simple and consistent, it can be recorded by the teacher on an Overhead Projector Transparency(OHT) in the form of an ever-growing list. If learners have a problem with comprehension or recall, it can be referred to as the need arises. Such a list, if kept with lesson notes of each class taught, can help with revision, be used for spelling practice and, if appropriate, can show grammatical features already used with confidence **before** more formal grammatical teaching, analysis and explanation takes place.

### Using English indirectly

There will inevitably be moments when English does arise naturally. Textbooks may have passages of English by way of background or explanation of grammatical points. Without going into contortions, it is possible to use these but still to restrict the amount of English used.

For example: *Regardez la page xx. Lisez l’anglais en silence.* (later) *Bon...question numéro 1.* ( child answers in English) *Oui c’est ça... Quand le substantive est feminine on met un e.*

There are also occasions when we will want to be absolutely sure that no one has the excuse later of claiming that they did not understand, for example in the setting of homework. Even this is not a problem in the target language once the class is used to the system. Meanwhile, as an interim measure we can use the board to provide a simultaneous parallel, eg.

You say	You write on the board
<p> <i>Pour les devoirs ce soir:</i>  <i>Lisez la page xx</i>  <i>Regardez l’exemple B</i>  <i>Choisissez le vocabulaire</i>  <i>Faites un poster</i> </p>	<p>           homework!            page xx            e.g. B            choose some of the words in French            design a POSTER         </p>

Alternatively, one of the class can be used as a ‘class interpreter’ so that he or she has to summarise in English what has just been said. (This is interpreting for real, not just translating.) Finally, if single words in a text are providing a stumbling block, there is no point being fanatical. After all, no one is asking you to spend half an hour trying to demonstrate the word hippopotamus or ‘*ensuite!*’ Similarly, if a learner does not know

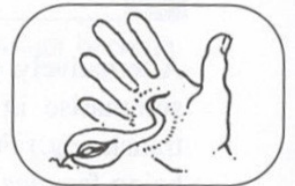
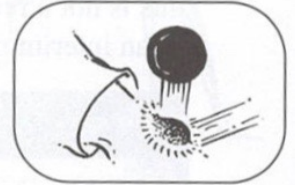
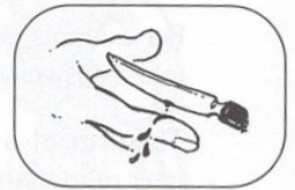
a word on the target language, why should we object to something that comes out like ‘*Je n’ai pas de felt tip*’? A reply ‘*Ah, tu n’as pas de stylo feutre*’ combined with handing one over will supply both the missing word and the pen in a combination which is likely to be remembered.

However, we need to monitor this carefully. If we find ourselves supplying English words frequently, it is the beginning of the slippery slope to defeat. It does **not** help at any stage to:

- keep asking if they understand  
(They are not going to understand everything so they will play safe and say no. This is very defeating for both teacher and learner. In fact, they will nearly always have understood enough and we can see if they understand by the way they react.)
- check constantly for exact meaning and translations  
( Again this implies that they have not understood unless they can reproduce it exactly in the mother tongue. We know from our own expectations that there are occasions when we have understood but cannot find the mother-tongue words.)
- keep switching in and out of the target language  
( If we do this, we easily destroy both the urge and the opportunity to deal with the foreign language. Learners will simply operate with the English.)

Here are two examples of all these ideas put together. The first example suggests what could be done to set up a pairwork activity using the textbook. This assumes that there has already been a lively introduction, using mime, objects and actions, to provide a clear explanation of the appropriate language below:

A	B
une coupure (pas trop grave)	lavez la blessure avec du coton passez une pommade antiseptique couvrez avec un pansement, ou un sparadrap
un bleu	trempez du coton dans de l'eau froide et propre mettez un pansement
un mal de tête	trouvez des cachets d'aspirine lisez l'étiquette donnez la dose correcte
une brûlure (pas trop grave)	mettez de l'eau très froide séchez avec soin couvrez avec un pansement sec
une piqûre d'insecte	mettez de l'eau froide passez une pommade antiseptique



Now we want to set up the pairwork.

#### 4 Etes-vous secouriste?

Travaillez avec un partenaire.

Votre partenaire couvre la colonne A. Vous couvrez la colonne B.

**Vous dites:**

Pour une coupure?

A tour de rôle!






**Votre partenaire dit:**

lavez la blessure

passez une pommade

couvrez avec un pansement, etc

From *Jeux de mots* by Barry Jones,  
Cambridge University Press, 1987

Colonne A	Colonne B
une coupure	
un bleu	
un mal de tête	
une brûlure	
une piqûre d'insecte	

Words	Actions
1 <i>Maintenant ... regardez ...</i>	Hold up your book.
2 <i>A la page 16.</i>	Open your own book at 16 and turn it so they can all see the page.
3 <i>Exemple.</i>	(You could write e.g. on the board to emphasise the cue.)
4 <i>(Attention, John.)</i>	Walk over to John. Make sure he has the right page open. Point to the section on the page you are about to use.
5 <i>Un(e) volontaire, s'il vous plaît.</i>	This is a cognate in French which works.
6 <i>Merci. Viens ici.</i>	Beckon the volunteer to the front.
7 <i>Moi, je couvre la colonne B.</i>	Cover column B in your book with your hand. Show your volunteer what you have done and then show the class.
8 <i>Toi, mon partenaire, tu couvres la colonne A.</i>	Point to the learner's book column A and mime covering it over.
9 <i>La classe, regardez bien ... Une démonstration!</i>	Write the word 'demonstration' on the whiteboard. Look round and make sure everyone is watching.
10 <i>Tu commences ... (whisper ... pour une coupure:)</i>	Point to your partner to begin. Prompt with a stage whisper if required.
11 <i>(learner) Pour une coupure?</i>	Your volunteer partner speaks.
12 <i>(teacher again) Alors ... pour une coupure ... lavez la blessure avec du coton ...</i>	Make it obvious that you are looking for the reply from the list in the book and hold the book up to show where you have found it.



You will probably need to do two more examples before ‘à vous maintenant!’. Example 2 (see note p.38) follows the same techniques, this time for a freestanding activity. Each pair of learners has an envelope containing sets of cards. One set has pictures of people. The other set has matching descriptions.

If we start with a skeletal framework of simple language like this then we can fill it out as their (and our!) confidence and competence grows. For example:

JETZT	PARTNERARBEIT
can become:	
1 Also <b>JETZT</b> machen wir was anderes. Nun sollt ihr das mit euren <b>PARTNERN</b> üben.	
2 Voilà des cartes.	Take out the cards.
3 Il y en a deux sortes.	Hold up one pile in each hand.
4 Voilà des images ...	Show the pile of picture cards.
5 ... et voilà des phrases.	Show sentence cards.
6 (Time for a 'Faites attention' here so they know it is the big moment of the explanation!) Mettez les images comme ça.	Show picture cards again and put them face down in a pile (worth repeating the action to stress that they should be face down).
7 ... et les phrases comme ça. (Counting as you do it usefully fills in the silence while completing the action.)	Deal out sentence cards into three rows of four, face down.
8 Je prends une carte ... Ah, c'est une fille qui porte ...	Take the top card from the picture pile and comment on it.
9 Je cherche ... je choisis ... voilà!	Choose (with a touch of drama) a picture card from the spread.
10 Elle porte un pantalon rouge.	Hold up the sentence card (word side towards the class) and read it.
11 C'est vrai – elle porte un pantalon? Oui. Rouge? Non. Alors, ce n'est pas vrai.	Hold the two up together, repeating the phrase, looking backwards and forwards from one to the other.
12 Alors je remets l'image SOUS les autres cartes ...	Replace the picture card UNDER the pile, making sure that UNDER is clear.
13 Puis je remets la phrase.	Replace the sentence card in its original position.

The phrase *Also JETZT machen wir was anderes* can be developed as time goes on and in a systematic way, to:

- *Also jetzt machen wir was Neues*
- *Also jetzt machen wir was Verschiedenes*
- *Also jetzt machen wir was Schönes*

thus showing how language can be manipulated to alter meaning. It is also a way of illustrating grammatical features in use, before any kind of analysis or explanation. The same can be done with *Nun sollt ihr das mit euren PARTNERN üben*. This can be developed as:

- *Nun sollt ihr das mit euren PARTNERN schreiben*
- *Nun sollt ihr das mit euren PARTNERN sprechen*
- *Nun sollt ihr mit euren PARTNERN die Aufgabe 2, auf Seite 101, machen*

This question of our confidence in the approach is crucial. There is nothing inherently difficult in teaching in the target language. However, if either the teacher or the class is not used to it, it is the changeover which is difficult. We need strategies for carrying us through the temporary insecurities of change. This brings us to the second section.

## 2 Strategies for implementation

We offer these ideas under three headings:

- strategies for the teacher
- strategies for the learners
- strategies for the department as a whole

### FOR THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER

We each have a choice between:        either the ‘slowly slowly’ approach;  
Or        the ‘it’s now or never’ approach.

If you prefer the ‘slowly slowly’ approach, we suggest the following.

### Build up a repertoire of words and phrases

**Instructions for  
classroom activities**

- *Bon, écoutez!*
- *Faites un poster ...*
- *Regardez!*
- *Mimez ...*
- *Trouvez la page xx*
- *Copiez ...*
- *Répétez!*
- *Jouez ...*
- *Lisez ...*
- *Parlez plus fort/moins fort/  
plus vite/moins vite*
- *Ecrivez ...*
- *Dessinez ...*
- *Remplissez la grille!*
- *Couvrez ...*
- *Cochez votre grille!*
- *Collez ...*
- *Vrai ou faux?*
- *Choisissez ...*
- *Testez votre mémoire!*
- *Faites l'exercice (b), à la  
page xx*

**Instructions for  
classroom  
organisation**

- *(Travaillez) avec un(e)  
partenaire*
- *Echangez votre cahier ...*
- *(Travaillez) en groupes de  
quatre*
- *Corrigez ...*
- *A tour de rôle*
- *Asseyez-vous! Assieds-toi!*
- *A vous maintenant*
- *Dépêchez-vous! Dépêche-  
toi!*

You could use the following headings as a guideline.

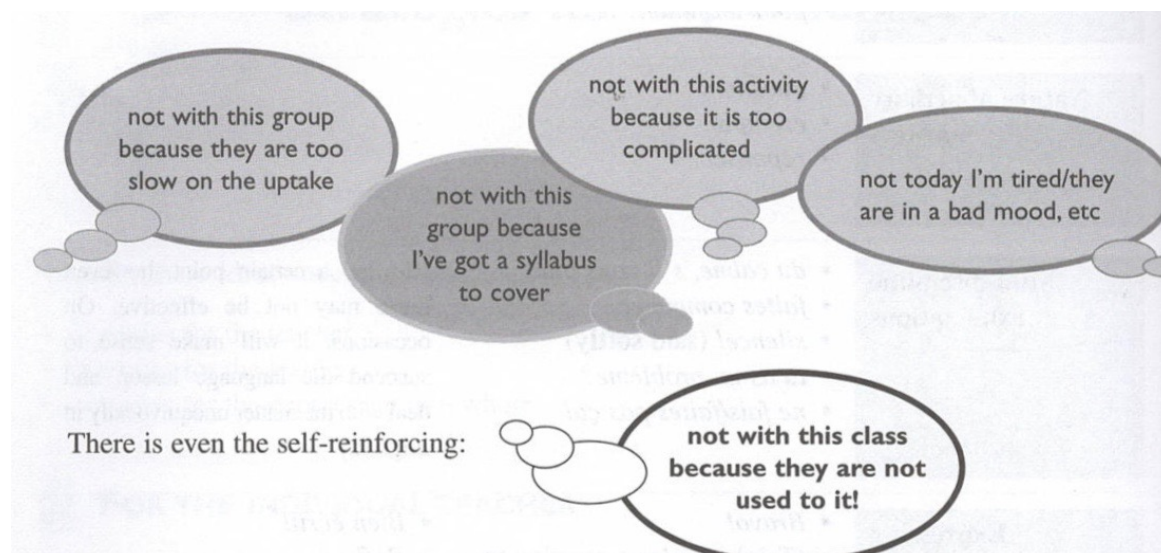
<b>Change of activity markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>d'abord ...</i></li> <li>• <i>alors ...</i></li> <li>• <i>maintenant ...</i></li> <li>• <i>pour terminer ...</i></li> </ul>
<b>Nature of activity markers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>question:</i></li> <li>• <i>exemple:</i></li> <li>• <i>réponse:</i></li> </ul>
<b>Mild discipline exhortations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>du calme, s'il vous plaît</i></li> <li>• <i>faites comme ça</i></li> <li>• <i>silence!</i> (said <b>softly</b>)</li> <li>• <i>tu as un problème?</i></li> <li>• <i>ne fais/faites pas ça!</i></li> </ul> <p>(Beyond a certain point, however, these may not be effective. On occasions, it will make sense to suspend the language lesson and deal with the matter unequivocally in English.)</p>
<b>Expressing emotional reactions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bravo!</i></li> <li>• <i>(Très) bien</i> (as a reaction to the <b>message</b> and <b>not</b> to grammatical accuracy! (<i>Très bien</i> is, after all, a strange response to a pupil who answers a question such as: <i>Tu as des frères ou des sœurs?</i> with <i>Oui, j'ai un frère</i> and the reply is: <i>Ah, très bien!</i> More appropriate would be, perhaps; <i>Il s'appelle comment?</i>))</li> <li>• <i>Bien dit!</i></li> <li>• <i>Bonne prononciation!</i></li> <li>• <i>Bien écrit!</i></li> <li>• <i>Bof!</i></li> <li>• <i>Je n'aime pas ça!</i></li> <li>• <i>Excellent!</i></li> <li>• <i>Affreux!</i> (but avoid these applying to grammatical accuracy; they should be a response to the content/message, as mentioned before)</li> <li>• <i>Parfait!</i></li> <li>• <i>Tu crois?</i> (example: learner says: <i>Il fait beau aujourd'hui</i>, you say: <i>Tu crois?</i>)</li> <li>• <i>Génial!</i></li> </ul>

### Experiment with distinct blocks of target language talk

Do this rather than constantly switching between languages in a lesson. This can be backed up by:

- asking the learners to share the experimental nature of the enterprise. (See how long we can keep going in Spanish'. I am going to do this bit all in Russian. If you get stuck, keep going and we will sort it out later'. A large egg timer can be useful here to count periods of three minutes.)
- explicitly practicing phrases with them as a warm-up to a block of target language teaching.

It is only fair to point out that there can be a very real problem with the 'slowly slowly' approach. It is rather like doing income tax returns. There is always a very good reason for not doing it today:



The danger here is that if we do not develop the strategies for the elements we find difficult, we will never do it. However, it is possible to combine some of the advantages of the two approaches. For example, it is feasible and sometimes more reassuring to :

- try it out with just one class first, preferably working with a colleague or with all members of the department. Choose the class you feel most comfortable with. But with that one class **go all out from Day One**.
- start with the new intake and build target language use up through the school as those classes move through it. In that sense it is 'slowly slowly'. But again with those classes go all out.

Finally, there is the question of grammar.

Here it may help in deciding what to do if we distinguish three main ways of teaching grammar. They are not mutually exclusive, Most of us use one or more of them. However, they each make slightly different demands on our use of the target language. By identifying which approach we are employing, we can identify the most sensible target language strategy for that approach. For example:

### **Approach 1**

Letting the grammar emerge implicitly through the work. -> In this case we simply teach in the target language as suggested in earlier sections of this book.

## Approach 2

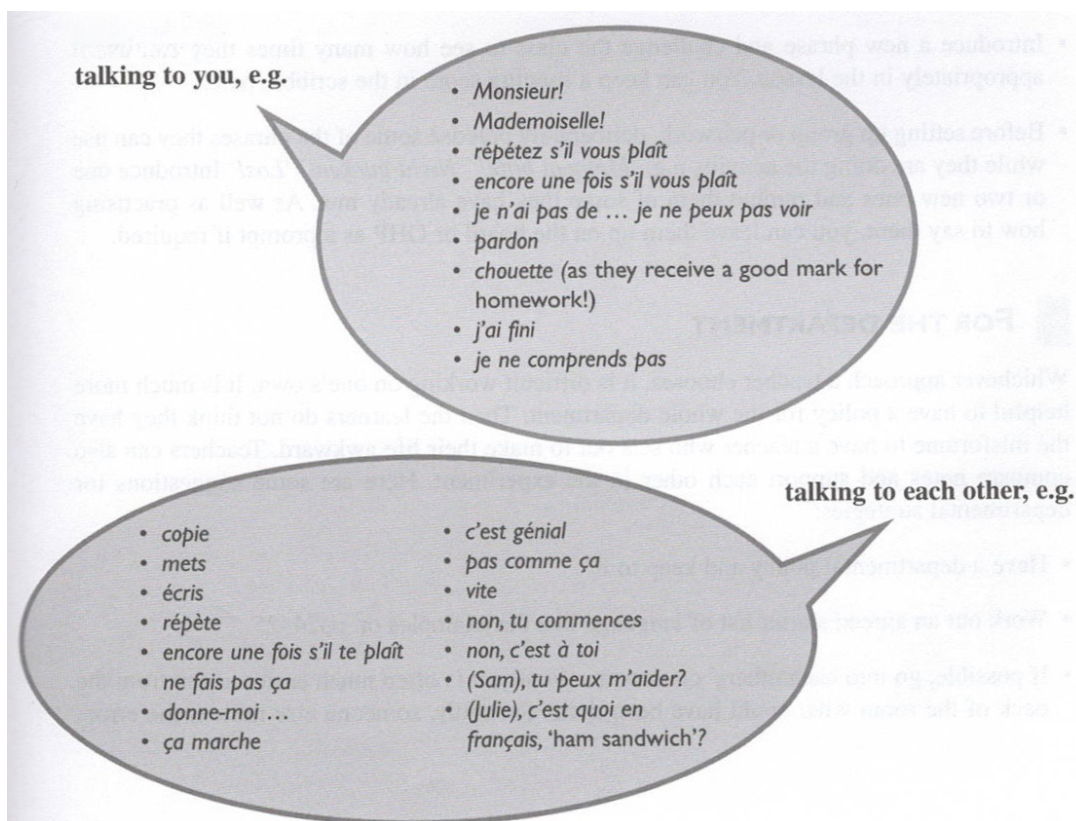
Making the grammar patterns visually and aurally explicit. -> In this case the board or the OHP is used to set out the pattern using different shapes, colours, blutack-ed endings etc. Even something as simple as grouping vocabulary or structures as we write them up can help. We can then use the target language to draw attention to the visual pattern with additional key phrases like: *regardez la difference....Ça change ... c'est important ...Problem: ...past auf. ...nicht vergessen, etc.*

## Approach 3

Discussing the grammar explicitly in grammatical terminology. -> In this case we can either teach limited terminology in the target language and use that, and/or we can provide consolidating blocks of grammar work in English which are kept clearly separate from the rest of the work, probably most appropriate at ends of lessons or after periods of practice. As a result of the National Literacy Strategy in primary schools (DfEE 1998) (for application to the teaching and learning of MFL see DfES 2002) pupils should come into the secondary sector with greater grammatical understanding and the vocabulary with which to express it. This is our chance to benefit from their competence and to use the target language equivalents to further learners' proficiency and even interest !

## FOR THE LEARNERS

If the learners are to be encouraged to use the target language in return, then there will have to be ways of providing them with what they need. This had got to be quite deliberate and must be **‘modelled’** by the teacher and built up systematically, preferably by all members of the Modern Languages department. For example, learners will need phrases in the target language for :



**talking to you, e.g.**

- Monsieur!
- Mademoiselle!
- répétez s'il vous plaît
- encore une fois s'il vous plaît
- je n'ai pas de ... je ne peux pas voir
- pardon
- chouette (as they receive a good mark for homework!)
- j'ai fini
- je ne comprends pas

**talking to each other, e.g.**

- copie
- mets
- écris
- répète
- encore une fois s'il te plaît
- ne fais pas ça
- donne-moi ...
- ça marche
- c'est génial
- pas comme ça
- vite
- non, tu commences
- non, c'est à toi
- (Sam), tu peux m'aider?
- (Julie), c'est quoi en français, 'ham sandwich'?

Just giving them a list to learn in unlikely to encourage them or to prove to be an easy task. Here are some other suggestions:

- As events occur in class ( such as people absent when you take the register, hands up to leave the room, or a late entry), supply the target language phrase for what is needed. For example:

*Er ist nicht da. Er ist krank.*  
*Puis-je quitter la salle ?*  
*Perdone me por llegar tarde.*

- Similarly, give the learners the words in the target language that they have just used to show pleasure or an emotional reaction.
- During the lesson, as these words and phrases occur, write them on the whiteboard in a list to one side of the board. (It helps to have a ‘scribble patch’ where you can write ‘extras’ like this without getting in the way of the main work you are doing.) The words are then there as a reminder during the lesson and as the basis for a useful filler at the end of the lesson if you have a few minutes to spare. As has been suggested before, a list can also be written on an OHP transparency which grows quickly in length – often to the learners’ surprise, because these are words they know and **use** all the time.
- Later, write these words and phrases on card. You can do this yourself or, better still, get some of the class to do so, perhaps in large print on the word processor in the ICT lesson. Pin the cards around the room (or even on the ceiling!). When needed they are then always there for reference.
- Introduce a new phrase and challenge the class to see how many times they can use it appropriately in the lesson. You can keep a running score in the scribble patch.
- Before setting up group or pairwork, deliberately practise some of the phrases they can use while they are doing the activity, eg. *‘Moment bitte!’* *‘Nicht gucken!’* *‘Los!’* Introduce one or two new ones and remind them of some they have already met. As well as practicing how to say them, you can leave them up on the board or OHP as a prompt if required.

### FOR THE DEPARTMENT

Whichever approach a teacher chooses, it is difficult working on one’s own. It is much more helpful to have a policy for the whole department. Then the learners do not think they have the misfortune to have a teacher who sets out to make their life awkward. Teachers can also compare notes and support each other in the experiment. Here are some suggestions for departmental strategies:

- Have a departmental policy and keep to it.
- Work out an agreed starter list of language like the examples on pp 24-25.
- If possible, go into each others’ classrooms. Firstly, it is often much easier to see from the back of the room what could have been done. Secondly, someone else notices the errors that we ourselves miss when we are in full flow. Thirdly, there is nothing quite like having a colleague in the room to encourage one to make a success of something and really try!
- Decide as a department how to share with the learners what you are doing, what it involves for them and how it will help them.



- Decide as a department how to convey to the parents the approach to target language use and the thinking behind it. For example, some departments run demonstration events with the parents themselves as the class, or at parents' evenings, so that they can get the feel of what is involved.
- Hold some departmental workshops on INSET days.

The next section offers some ideas for workshops.

### **3 Ideas for departmental workshops**

The activities suggested here are intended as starting points and as a stimulus to developing ideas which suit the needs of your particular department. Most of them can be practiced 'for real' on your own in the course of your daily teaching.

However, practicing teaching ideas on and with a small group of our colleagues has all kinds of advantages when we are working on improving existing techniques. Precisely because the event is not 'for real', we have the freedom to experiment and take risks without matters getting out of hand. We can laugh together over the things which do not quite work. We can stop and start again. We can produce an immediate revised version while the first attempt is still fresh in our minds. What is more, we have the advantage of having other people there who know what we are trying to do and can therefore give us explicit feedback of a kind which is missing from the classroom. We can also see in what others do a reflection of some of the things we ourselves do, both their advantages and disadvantages. We benefit from the additional ideas of other members of the department who may suggest things or spot problems we would never have thought of on our own. In turn, we can find ourselves stimulated to new ideas by what the others do. All too often we have little opportunity to learn from and with each other in this way once we leave our initial training. The ideas which follow offer a chance to do just that. They focus in different ways on:

- making the most of the non-language messages;
- learning to keep the language initially simple, but then planning a systematic grammatical development;
- setting up work in stages by showing and doing.

pack away everything  
off the desks

put your chairs up  
on the desk

work with  
a partner

write the date on  
a clean page in the front  
of your exercise books

<i>Fini!</i>	<i>J'ai fini! C'est fait! Ça y est!</i>
<i>Je n'ai pas de cahier</i>	<i>Mon cahier? Je l'ai oublié</i>
<i>Je n'ai pas de stylo</i>	<i>Mon stylo? Je l'ai oublié</i>
<i>J'ai oublié mon stylo</i>	<i>Désolé</i>
<i>Ah, non. Impossible!</i>	<i>Je ne peux pas!</i>
<i>Encore une fois, s'il vous plaît?</i>	<i>Vous pouvez répéter, encore une fois, s'il vous plaît?</i>

colleagues do not share, then all to the good.

**Suggestion 11 To practise discussing grammar in the target language**

You could jointly make a list of a few key grammatical terms in the target language and then repeat Suggestion 10 with these few terms added. The National Literacy Strategy provides helpful lists.

**Suggestion 12 To practise making unavoidable English as indirect as possible**

You could each choose a genuine homework task which perhaps you would normally have set in English; practise keeping your own target language going but giving essential clues in English (notes, keywords, summary, etc) on the whiteboard as you speak. Even if the clues are temporarily in English, the class will have heard them in the target language. Check by using a class interpreter that the instructions have really been understood.

**Suggestion 13 To explore how initially simple target language can be extended systematically**

You could, as a department, choose any of the language phrases you have listed under Suggestions 3 and 4. Explore how any of these can be extended systematically over time:

Examples – say **first** what is shown in Column 1 and **add** the extension shown in Column 2.

<b>Column One</b> <b>Original version</b>	<b>Column Two</b> <b>Extension added to the original</b>
<i>Je ne comprends pas</i>	<i>Je n'ai pas compris</i>
<i>Ecrivez!</i>	<i>Voulez-vous écrire, s'il vous plaît ...</i>
<i>Répétez!</i>	<i>Voulez-vous répéter, s'il vous plaît ...</i>
<i>Dessinez!</i>	<i>Voulez-vous dessiner s'il vous plaît ...</i>
<i>Parlez plus fort!</i>	<i>Voulez-vous parler plus fort, s'il vous plaît</i>

### SOME GENERAL POINTS

- If you can, bring in a native speaker to help with these activities. This helps the department linguistically, gives the assistant the boost of a key role to play and, equally important, shows the assistant strategies she or he will need for teaching in the native tongue.
- If you have a departmental video camera, why not video yourself doing some of these activities?
- If you are a very small department, some of the ideas as they appear above would be difficult to set up. Schools often have their INSET days on the same day. If you cannot find colleagues from other subjects willing to act as guinea pigs, why not see if you could join forces with language colleagues from another school for the day?
- If you have recent entrants to the profession in the department, or PGCE students placed in the school on teaching practice, it will be worth asking them for ideas, examples and demonstrations. All of them will have been encouraged to teach in the target language from the start. It will also help them to discover that they have expertise to offer as well as so much to learn.

## 4 TROUBLESHOOTING

### YES, BUT WHAT IF ...

#### **They reply in English to what we say in the target language**

This can happen for several reasons:

a They may want to annoy or provoke or try to be awkward by not ‘playing the game’. If so, it is probably best to ignore their reaction and continue, in a simple version of the target language.

b They can be genuinely lost. If this happens, rephrase what you have just been saying in the target language, eg.

you: *Jetzt macht ihr das mit eurem Partner oder mit eurer Partnerin, bis einer von euch gewonnen hat. Und dann umtauschen!*

them: You mean we swap over ...?

you: *Ja! Wenn einer gewonnen hat, tauscht ihr um. (+ mime).*

Or failing this you can ask one member of the group to be *Dolmetscher / interprète*: ‘Peter. Sag das bitte auf Englisch.’ At least here you stay in the foreign language, while someone else’s English reassures or clarifies.

c They are being lazy. You know your class. This might be a moment to insist .

#### **They produce a mixture of the target language and English**

If they are willing to do this, we are more than half way there, so continue to react as if it had all been in the foreign language. If you believe the English was only a momentary substitute for a lost or forgotten word or phrase, supply this as part of a natural response in the foreign language.

#### **They make mistakes**

They are bound to make mistakes and need to do so, if what they are doing is concentrating on conveying meaning, rather than being over-concerned with correct linguistic form. Again, in as natural a way as possible, rephrase their statement or response in an appropriately correct version of their original.

#### **They talk to each other in English**

Sometimes this is inevitable. However, it is always worth asking ourselves whether we have taught them the target language versions of what they come out with in English. If not, then the responsibility lies with us and not with them! If the reason seems to be a lack of motivation or willingness, try appointing one of the pupils in a

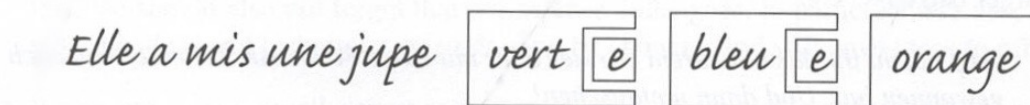
partner activity as *le juge linguistique* who says '*Répète en français, s'il te plaît*'/'*Sag das bitte auf Deutsch*', or who, in a class activity, says (using a set of agreed formulae), '*C'est quoi en français ?*'/'*Wie sagt man das auf Deutsch?*'

### You are in the middle of explaining and they become impatient and say 'What's all that in English?'

Try to add as many helpful visual explanations of the language as possible ( using coloured pens, chalks, different shapes, letters on card blutack-ed to the board), eg.



Then (after, in this example, changing the name before the verb) ask one of the class to come out and select the correct letter from a pile on the teacher's table, e.g.



Again, ask members of the class to come out and make up their jigsaw pieces into, say, appropriate captions for a series of magazine photos.

You can always encourage an interpreter to explain in English the pattern which you have been trying to illustrate. Sometimes an individual's version of what's going on can be clearer than anything that you have said in any language !

### You have made a mistake

Zut! C'est ( parapluie.

*J'écris ça pour vous aider: un parapluie.*

(cover 'un') *Toi, Georges, répète ...!*

Georges: *Un parapluie.*

*Georges est très intelligent n'est-ce pas?*

### They want to interrupt and translate

Say: '*Oui, c'est bien ça*' if they are correct. '*Non, c'est faux*' if they are incorrect.

Then give an appropriately rephrased version of what you were saying in the foreign language.

**You could save an awful lot of time by saying something in English**

Do so, if it is only one word. (Think how many times you do this in the foreign language when speaking English to a French or German native speaker.) Better to sustain your message with one word whispered in English than to spend five minutes swinging from the chandeliers trying to mime *'faire la culbute'* (to somersault).

If, however, you 'give in' for anything longer or more complex, then you are doing your class and yourself a disservice. Perhaps you have not been:

- a simplifying sufficiently;
- b backing up your oral instructions or explanations with numbered and staged instructions in the target language, written on the board as you speak;
- c using key words on the board which have English equivalent lookalikes or quick sketches to exemplify meaning.

**You have a new child in the class who does not understand**

- a Use the interpreter technique with someone from the class who has befriended the newcomer.
- b See if any of the class can explain something in the target language.
- c Spend time during the lesson, when the class is doing something independently of you, explaining how you give explanations or set activities in the target language and what sort of language you use to do this. If you have already written many of these on cards displayed around the room, ask one of the class to explain what is there.

**They just dismiss the whole process as stupid**

Do not give up! Try a timed *'x Minuten auf Deutsch!'* on the next occasion you see them. Set yourself, and them, limited targets. Congratulate them afterwards! *'Bien! 10 minutes en français'* – *'Schön, 10 Minuten auf Deutsch! Prima!'* See if, next lesson, they can beat their record.

Finally, in practicing these approaches we must not lose sight of why we are doing it, or they just become inflexible and even burdensome rituals. This brings us back to the starting point of Part 1.

We are teaching in the target language in order to give our learners a better chance of learning another language effectively. We are:

- making the language a real tool that they experience in use;
- giving them the confidence to get by when they emerge from the protection of the classroom;
- above all providing another very powerful channel of learning the language itself.

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Note: the extract on p.22 is from an article (under Susan Halliwell's former name of Susan MacLennan) in *NALA Journal 18*, July 1987.