LANGUAGE TEACHERS' NEED FOR LINGUISTICS

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Abstract

This paper argues that language teachers need to have knowledge of the linguistics of the language they are teaching. It explores the relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge of the target language and the consequences of this relationship for learners and teachers. Previous research has shown that a focus on form and the teaching of explicit knowledge about the target language are useful for some kinds of language learners. Modern language courses at university level form the content knowledge that future language teachers base their teaching on, yet they may not systematically cover the linguistics of the language in question. It is argued that a basic understanding of linguistics and some formal study of the structure of the target language will allow creative language teachers to better help the language learners they teach to see that the target language is organised in particular ways and make connections with their own language(s). This is a stipulated Achievement Objective for the first levels of the Learning Languages learning area in the New Zealand Curriculum. Language learners may not be served by being taught to talk about the sentence structure and phonology of their target language, but it is argued that their teachers need this knowledge to better identify and respond to the needs of the learners.

1. What does it mean to teach a language?

The target of contemporary foreign language teaching is to help learners to learn to communicate in their target language. Despite centuries of dedicated effort, language educators have been unable to come up with a really easy or even halfway effective approach to language teaching. This is all the more astonishing given the resounding success met by almost all who embark on the acquisition of their first language, sometimes with minimal support from their environment. Contemporary communicative language education in the language classroom is carried out primarily by inducing learners to perceive a need to actually communicate in the target language and by teaching them learning and communicative strategies to compensate for gaps in their knowledge.

This might seem obvious to the modern reader, but it is a total turnaround from the targets and teaching of just a decade ago, where learners who had studied a language for five-ten years were skilled in the completion of grammar tests and vocabulary tests, but unable to communicate spontaneously in the target language. Previously the target was for learners to learn about the target language and they were taught grammatical rules and drilled in their application and given lists of vocabulary to learn. Their knowledge of these rules and the vocabulary items they had been asked to learn were what was assessed. In large parts of the world, English language is still taught and assessed in this way (cf. e.g. Le, 2011). Learners from these contexts may not have been required to speak their target language before university level study, if then. Reading and listening comprehension, grammar and vocabulary were much more important to these learners and their teachers than speaking, writing and interaction.

Curriculum reform has changed this in many parts of the world. In New Zealand this began in 2007 when Learning Languages was introduced as a learning area for schools, and was refined in 2011 (New Zealand Curriculum, 2010) and earlier in most of Europe thanks to the introduction of the Common European Framework with functionally defined levels of proficiency (Council of Europe, 2001). The New Zealand Curriculum, which is heavily influenced by the Common European Framework (CEF), suggests that 'Learning a new language provides a means of communicating with people from another culture and exploring one's own personal world' (New Zealand Curriculum, 2010). This is all about using the language; there is no suggestion that a

competent speaker needs explicit language knowledge. The CEF's B1 level global scale puts it like this: a language user at level B1:

> ...can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans (Council of Europe, 2001).

The NZ Curriculum Level 7 corresponds to B1 on the CEF and will correspond to learners sitting for the NCEA Level 2 qualifications in e.g. French. The Achievement Objectives here are expressed separately for Communication, Language Knowledge and Cultural Knowledge, though only Communication is assessed.

Communication

Students can use language variably and effectively to express and justify their own ideas and opinions and support or challenge those of others. They are able to use and identify the linguistic and cultural forms that guide interpretation and enable them to respond critically to texts. (Adapted from *Common European Framework for Languages*, Global Scale Level B1: Independent User; Council of Europe, 2001.)

In selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will:

- ☐ Communicate information, ideas, and opinions through increasingly complex and varied texts.
- ☐ Explore the views of others, developing and sharing personal perspectives.
- ☐ Engage in sustained interaction and produce extended text.

Language knowledge

Students will:

- ☐ Analyse ways in which the target language is organised in different texts and for different purposes.
- ☐ Explore how linguistic meaning is conveyed across languages.

Cultural knowledge

Students will:

☐ Analyse ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised for different purposes and for different audiences.

☐ Analyse how the use of the target language expresses cultural meanings.

Note that there is no suggestion that a competent speaker of the target language needs explicit language knowledge in order to communicate in the target language, just that learners should notice differences between the target language and languages familiar to them. The role of 'noticing' in language learning will be discussed below..

2. Implicit and explicit language knowledge

Learning a language does not mean the same thing to everybody, and it does not mean the same thing now as it did in the past. As mentioned above, previously, and still in some contexts, explicit knowledge about the language is what is assessed, often in grammar tests, vocabulary tests or being asked to translate sentences into and out of the target language. Implicit language knowledge, being able to actually use the language, is, however, central to what we currently mean by learning a language. One question concerns whether explicit teaching about the language leads to implicit knowledge of the language and the ability to use it to communicate.

To be able to communicate in the target language with any kind of spontaneity, learners need to develop their ability to put together functional utterances in such a way that other speakers of the language understand what they mean. This is not to say that the learners need to have explicit knowledge of the structure of the language. They do not need to understand or be able to talk about sentence structure or collocations or the phonotactic constraints of the target language, although they will be required to use these reasonably well to express themselves adequately. Compare this to the competent driver who does not need to be able to explain how the engine works, with gears and pistons, just to skilfully use the foot pedals and other controls.

Depending on the expected learning outcomes, explicit language knowledge, that is metalinguistic competence, actually being able to talk

about the language structures, and compare them with the structures of known languages, may or may not be part of the syllabus. And even if explicit knowledge is part of the language-learning syllabus it may not be assessed, as is the case for the New Zealand Curriculum Learning Languages area:

> The achievement objectives in the Communication strand provide the basis for assessment. The two supporting strands, Language knowledge and Cultural knowledge, are only assessed indirectly through their contribution to the Communication strand. (Ministry of Education, 2014)

There are many ways to deliver explicit instruction to help learners develop explicit language knowledge. Several studies (e.g. Haight et al. 2007) compare the teaching of the structure of a language form deductively (rule explanation before use of the targeted grammar feature in exercises) and inductively (practice before rule presentation). Haight et al. found that college students learning French using an inductive approach had better grammatical knowledge of structures. This, of course, says nothing about their ability to actually use the language. The question they addressed was: 'What is the most effective approach to teaching grammar in a foreign language classroom?' (Haight et al. 2007: 289).

De Graaf & Housen (2011: 737) contrast implicit and explicit forms of form-focused instruction, and relate these to Long's (1991) distinction between *focus-on-form* instruction that 'overtly draws student's attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication' (Long 1991:45-6) rather than the *focus-on-forms* which are decontextualized, such as random sentences used to exemplify structures, or lists of vocabulary words in isolation to be memorised.

Teaching grammar is not, of course, the same as teaching language, and if it is actually the learners' grammar knowledge that is assessed, then both implicit and explicit teaching may well be useful. Given that implicit knowledge (that is the tacit knowledge that a language user has of the language being used) is the target, the important question is whether explicit teaching leads to implicit knowledge. N. Ellis (2005) attempts to answer the question of how explicit knowledge about language affects implicit language knowledge of language. He refers to, among others, Krashen (1985) who separated acquisition and learning and claimed that learned language could not be used 'on the fly', and Paradis (1994) who claimed that explicit knowledge does not become implicit knowledge, but states that explicit and implicit language knowledge do interact and that empirical research in the preceding 30 years showed that

'language acquisition can be speeded by explicit instruction' (Ellis 2005:307). In fact, results are quite mixed, but do suggest an effect from explicit form-focused instruction.

Other work strives to apply in language education insights gained from decades of research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Traditionally there has been limited communication between linguists involved in SLA and language educators. R. Ellis (2012) gives an excellent review of empirical classroom-based studies looking at the application of these ideas to real language teaching, demonstrating the very mixed outcomes of classroom-based studies in general. A recent issue of *Applied Linguistics* (R. Ellis, 2015) is entirely dedicated to narrative reviews and meta-analyses of the efficacy of language instruction. This includes papers on the acquisition of second language grammar (Dekeyeser & Prieto Botana, 2015; Shintani, 2015) and on the effectiveness of second language pronunciation instruction (Lee et al, 2015; Thomson & Derwing, 2015). The debate is clearly ongoing.

In a meta-analysis, Norris & Ortega (2000) found explicit instruction (where metalinguistic rules were explained to learners) to be more successful than implicit instruction (where learners were exposed to forms but their attention was not drawn to the forms and they were not explained). Ortega (2009) also asks if explicit teaching (grammar instruction) helps, and explores the relationship between implicit (subconscious) and explicit (conscious) learning in connection with implicit (inductive or indirect) and explicit (deductive or overt) instruction. She acknowledges that the body of evidence suggests that 'instructed learners progress at a faster rate, they are likely to develop more elaborate language repertoires and they typically become more accurate than uninstructed learners' (Ortega, 2009:139). She illustrates this claim with reference to studies of learners' mastery of the syntax and morphology of their target languages. She goes on to point out the problems inherent in SLA constructs such as *interlanguage* and *target language* since they assume a monolingual native speaker model (and target, cf. Cunningham, 2009).

There are a number of reasons why instruction might not work well. One is that discussed above, the uncertainty of learners being able to 'convert' explicit knowledge to implicit knowledge. Another is whether or not some parts of the target language are teachable at all to the learners at hand and whether they are learnable by them. This might be because the learners are not 'ready' for particular features in terms of having mastered preceding stages of learning (Peinemann, 1989) or because of specific phonotactic features or

phonological rules of the first language that are getting in the way of the target language features (Cunningham, 2013).

Interface/non-interface hypotheses posit that explicit knowledge can or cannot become implicit knowledge. De Graaff and Housen (2011) outline the three theoretical possibilities offered by the no-interface, weak-interface, and strong-interface hypotheses and their consequences for language teaching. They then relate these to current thinking on meaning-focused instruction, such as task-based language teaching, a strong form of meaning-focused instruction. Their conclusion is that research on accuracy suggests that instruction helps, but that studies of learner fluency are inconclusive, mostly because of the difficulty of studying extensive language use rather than controlled use.

3. Contemporary language education

The problem, and at the same time the solution to the problem, is that learners seem to need to actually use the language in order to learn it. The conundrum inherent in this is that learners need to have some target language vocabulary and structures to start producing utterances so that they can develop proficiency. Like infants acquiring their first language or languages, however, learners can begin honing their receptive skills before they venture to production. A difference is that while the infant spends months listening before needing to communicate through speech (though they give it their best shot), the older learner can easily move from getting input, that is hearing or reading target language items, to reproducing them with communicative intent within seconds of first exposure. The question examined here is how explicit learning applies to the learning of an additional language and how teachers can best help learners to achieve their goals. N.Ellis put this quite clearly:

> Some things we just come able to do, like walking, recognizing happiness in others, knowing that *th* is more common than *tg* in written English, or making simple utterances in our native language. We have little insight into the nature of the processing involved – we learn to do them implicitly like swallows learn to fly. Other of our abilities depend on knowing how to do them, like multiplication, playing chess, speaking pig Latin, or using a computer programming language. We learn these abilities explicitly like aircraft designers learn aerodynamics. (N. Ellis, 1994: 1)

As Long (2009) made clear, there are important differences between the conditions of first and second language acquisition and learning as well as important similarities. Older learners need to have exposure to input in the target language. Finding input for the learners is fairly easy in contexts where the target language is a main language, as in the case of migrants learning English in New Zealand, but more challenging in contexts where the target language is not the main language used, as is the case in the teaching of foreign languages in schools. The problem of appropriate input has been part of language teaching at least since the work of Comenius (1657). More recently these ideas were restated by e.g. Krashen who insisted on the importance of comprehensible input in his Input Hypothesis first published in 1977. He even went as far as to suggest that comprensible input is all you need in order to be able to learn a language, and that grammatical explanations were, at best, a waste of time.

While other aspects of Krashen's work have been criticised and later refined, debated and rejected by some (e.g. Cook, 2013), the notion that learners need input is not questioned. It is, however, generally held that input, even comprehensible or meaning-focused input is not enough, and that learners need opportunities for output, that is a chance to actually use the language in a meaning-focused way. Swain (1985) formulated this as the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis, and developments of this (e.g. Swain, 1995; Swain & Lapkin, 1995) have been extensively studied and put to the test in empirical classroom-based studies. Gass (2003) further examines the role of input and output, including modified input (such as might be used to address less proficient interlocutors) and the kind of positive and negative evidence about the nature of the target language the learner can glean from the available input, some of which is in response to the learner's own language production, such as requests for clarification or corrective feedback.

Gass (2003) goes on to consider the importance of interaction for language learning and traces the recognition of this from Wagner-Gough and Hatch (1975) via Long (1980) to full acknowledgement of the role of conversation in language learning as expressed in Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996). Long is also celebrated for his work on focus on form (Long, 1991) which distinguishes between teaching approaches where form is an organising principle of a language syllabus and meaning-focused or communicative approaches where focus on form happens on a just-in-time basis. This has been developed further, e.g. by R. Ellis et al (2002) and Loewen (2015).

Laviosa (2014) discusses the role of translation in the history of language

teaching. It has fallen in and out of favour as the priorities of language teaching have moved from using the grammar-translation method for gaining a reading knowledge of a language like Latin to developing oral proficiency in a living modern language where the learner can reasonably aspire to communication with monolingual and other speakers. Translation can be used in language learning with or without explanation of structural differences between the learner's first language and the target language. Laviosa, (2014: 28) points out the value of translation for developing metalinguistic competence, and translation is still fairly common in language classrooms where grammar translation still is set against teaching influenced by the Direct Method exemplified by Berlitz who banned translation in the language classroom (Laviosa, 2014: 141).

Gass (2003) also considers the importance of attention or noticing, tracing the debate on whether learning without awareness is possible through the nineties and beyond. Schmidt's work (e.g. Schmidt, 1990) on consciousness in language learning has been very influential, although strong claims were nuanced in later work, suggesting that noticing might not be entirely essential for learning to happen. Interest in the role of attention and consciousness continues. Truscott (2014) problematized the notion of noticing and the distinction between conscious and unconscious processes in language learning and pointed out that different views of the importance of consciousness have lain behind ideas about language teaching throughout its history.

Even since the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) with its focus on meaning-focused activities onto the stage, actual classroom practices have varied. Sometimes there is a zero-grammar approach, as inspired by Krashen (1985) and his thinking about the Natural Approach which aspired to emulate first language acquisition (e.g. as described in López Rama & Luque Agulló (2012: 181) where 'there is still a belief that the teaching of grammar might be harmful for communicative competence'. Communicative Language Teaching has become mainstream. The weak interpretation, of Communicative Language Teaching, Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) is sprung, as López Rama & Luque Agulló point out, from Structuralist-Generativist thinking about the nature of language. Cook (2008: 265) refers to it as 'the mainstream EFL style'. It is still organised by structures (the Present part) and grammar drills (Practice) and then, at least in theory, sets the learners free of the bonds of controlled language into a Produce phase. Unfortunately, it seems that the lesson is often over by then, and so the learners are never asked to actually use the language for non-controlled language

production (e.g. Le 2011). The strong version of CLT merges with Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), which includes a focus on form, often presented inductively, as and when the learners need it for their communicative purpose.

Nation's work (e.g. Nation, 1996, 2007) identifies four *strands* of language education: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. These cannot be directly mapped to R. Ellis' ten (later eleven) principles of instructed second language instruction, which he identified in his meta-analysis of studies of successful language teaching. R. Ellis's principles are reproduced verbatim in material from the New Zealand Ministry of Education for language teachers (R. Ellis, 2005). In 2002, R. Ellis held that Second Language Acquisition research has little concrete advice to offer to language teachers or to language teacher students:

> [T]here is no agreement as to whether instruction should be based on a traditional focus-on-forms approach, involving the systematic teaching of grammatical features in accordance with a structural syllabus, or a focus-on-form approach, involving attention to linguistic features in the context of communicative activities derived from a task-based syllabus or some kind of combination of the two. Nor is there agreement about the efficacy of teaching explicit knowledge or about what type of corrective feedback to provide or even when explicit grammar teaching should commence. (R. Ellis, 2002:209).

Nonetheless, just a few years later, R. Ellis (2005) introduced his ten principles for instructed language learning and these also appeared in an extended form in a report produced for the NZ Ministry of Education in 2005 (R. Ellis et al, 2005), which led to a summarized and accessible (to busy pre-service and in-service teachers) version of this meta-analysis (R. Ellis, 2008). These principles and Nation's Four strands have been seized eagerly by language teachers and teacher educators, as, at least ostensibly, giving some concrete research-informed advice to the classroom teacher that can be used to inform lesson planning. Both R. Ellis and Nation advocate a focus on meaning tempered with some focus on form.

4. Learner preferences

Sewell (2004) points out that translation activities can be more attractive to students as they give them assurance that they have fully understood how to use the target language structures. In a communicative approach to language

learning, on the other hand, the teacher may not correct all errors, and students may be unsure of whether or not they are using the correct forms. Sewell (2004: 153) lists the needs felt by many language learners for confidence and self-esteem, not to lose face, to be rewarded, for certainty, closure and autonomy as well as needs arising from introversion. She mentions the advantages that a 'closed-ended' activity like translation, with a verifiable outcome, the translated text, has over an open-ended communicative language task like carrying out a transaction in a role play of a chemist's shop. 'There is nothing concrete to measure your performance against, since you are not actually in a chemist's shop' (Sewell, 2004: 158).

The same can be said of the security offered by explicit grammatical explanations. Learners who are exposed to an inductive approach to focus on form where they are invited to find patterns in target language material, will be frustrated if they are left without a wrap-up deductive explanation, a key to the exercise they have been working through. This may not actually be important for their learning. Jean and Simard (2014) found that while the junior high students they studied expressed a preference for a deductive approach, their preference did not appear to be related to the success of their learning.

A good deal is now known about individual differences between language learners. While attempts to teach the strategies and practices of 'good language learners' to other learners have been disappointing (Rubin 1975), there are other insights that can be gained from such studies. De Graaff and Housen (2011) summarise this area with reference to studies of the effects of learning style, age, language-learning aptitude, proficiency level and other variables on the effectiveness of instruction. It seems likely that while explicit teaching helps for some learners, for others it is just confusing.

5. Teacher knowledge about the target language and learners' first language(s)

While language schools and education systems in many parts of the world try to recruit native speakers of English to teach the language to learners, most language teachers have learned the target language at some point. Teachers who are themselves first-language speakers of the target language are in a different position than these teachers. Regardless of whether or not the first-language speaker is a qualified language teacher, and regardless of whether or not they speak the language(s) of their learners, they will not have the same

experience as a teacher who has learned the target language as an additional language. They will have their native-speaker intuitions (implicit language knowledge), but be unequipped to justify or communicate them. If they have never themselves learned an additional language, they are unlikely to have ever considered the situation their students are in.

Phillipson (1992) is sceptical of the value of native speakers as teachers, even as models. He speaks of a 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson 1992:195) and argues that fluent, idiomatically appropriate language is not impossible for non-native teachers to learn, but that the insight teachers have into the processes of language learning and the structure and usage of a language must be learned. He goes on to say that the capacity to analyse and explain language definitely has to be learned, even though he suggests that it need not be taught. He writes: 'the untrained or unqualified native speaker is potentially a menace' (Phillipson, 1992: 195). He refers to a UNESCO report from 1953 warning that being a native speaker is not a qualification for teaching and suggests that the ideal language teacher is a successful language learner who has 'a detailed acquaintance with the language and culture of the learners they are responsible for' (Phillipson, 1992: 195).

Another complication that Phillipson points out in the case of English is the fact that English is far from homogenous. A local indigenized variety of English may exist alongside a standard language norm, and a native-speaking teacher will necessarily bring yet another English to the learners. Phillipson mentions the deep conflict at that time between proponents of an exonormative model, such as on the one hand Quirk (1990) who believed that the 'leading English-speaking countries' had a right of interpretation of how English should be taught and on the other hand, Kachru (1991) with his endonormative thinking, valuing established periphery varieties of English.

A teacher with little or no linguistic training will find it difficult to understand the challenges experienced by the learners. In the case of pronunciation, if the teacher has explicit knowledge of the phonotactics and phonological rules of the learners' first language(s) and how they differ from those of the target language, they will better understand why particular systematic features of the learners' pronunciation appear. The teacher is then in a position to point out to the learners the differences in form between the target language and the first language(s). If the teacher does not share the learners' language background, they will also benefit from explicit linguistic knowledge of their own language(s), so they will understand differences between their own speech and that of the learners. This is the case even if

the target language is the teacher's first language; linguistic knowledge of the teacher's own variety as well as of standard varieties of the languages concerned is very useful for the teacher's understanding of what is difficult for the learners and why. This is not, of course, to say that this needs to be taught to the learners.

A linguistically naïve teacher who has learned the target language will be better equipped in some ways to teach the language than a first language speaker of the target language, but still unable to talk about the language structure in a useful way. In a homogenous class where the learners share a first language, knowledge of the phonology, morphology and syntax of both the target language and the learners' first language makes it possible to use the learners' implicit knowledge of their language to notice similarities and differences between the languages.

I am certainly not advocating more focus on forms or the use of form as an organising principle for language teaching. I believe firmly that focus on meaning should be the rule with formal matters being discussed as they arise for the communicative purpose of the learners. However, for any focus on form to take place, even incidental focus on form at the point of need, the teacher will need to have some level of awareness of the syntactic and phonological organisation of the target language. If the teacher is a linguistically untrained native speaker, s/he is unprepared to help the learner become aware of structure. If the teacher is a fellow learner of the target language, with years of study of the target language and possibly its literature(s) and culture(s) behind them, but no actual explicit linguistic knowledge of the target language, as is the case for many Modern Language graduates in New Zealand and elsewhere, s/he will not be able to help the learners acquire explicit language knowledge. If the teacher does not have knowledge about the learners' language(s) as well as of the target language, there can be no contrastive analysis. While the strong form of Contrastive Analysis has been shelved as an approach to language teaching because of its failure to predict points of difficulty for learners other than in superficial ways (Ortega 2009), it is not without value. Knowing a little about articulatory phonetics and voice onset time, for example knowing that Spanish word-initial [t] in *te* is a voiceless unaspirated apico-dental stop and that this is other than the voiceless aspirated lamino-alveolar [t] in the English word *tea*, will be helpful for the person teaching English to Spanish learners as well as for the person teaching Spanish to English learners, regardless of the language(s) spoken by the teacher. The learners do not need this metalinguistic knowledge – for them it is enough to approximate a native place of articulation

for the Spanish teacher to say "put your tongue tip against your top teeth". The difference in VOT, the Spanish initial voiceless stops being unaspirated, seems to be much harder to teach to English speakers, and will often be acquired through exposure or can be taught using noticing strategies at a later stage. But if the teachers do not have this explicit knowledge they will not be able to give accurate and helpful instruction. In fact they may give explanations based on their own half-formed notions about the difference between the students' L1 and the target language.

6. Language teachers' need for linguistics

In conclusion, there is compelling evidence in the literature that many, but not all, language learners will be helped by various kinds of form-focused instruction, be it explicit explanation of metalinguistic rules or analytical teaching to help them develop explicit language knowledge, or implicit teaching by enhanced or unenhanced exposure to problematic target language forms. This is not to say that the learners should themselves learn the linguistics of the target language, rather that the teachers should have that knowledge. A linguistically untrained language teacher lacks the wherewithal to offer this kind of focus-on-form teaching. In addition, teachers who have not been linguistically schooled are susceptible to diverse fads and methods that they happen upon and may latch onto wholly or partially. In particular, there are problems in language teacher education associated with the move from traditional grammar-laden form-focused approaches to language teaching to communicative, meaning-focused approaches. While the latter may claim to assess only communicative competence unlike the former which taught and assessed only or mostly explicit knowledge of the language, this does not mean that learners do not need form-focussed instruction from time to time. Ellis, Nation, and others whose work informs contemporary language syllabi in many parts of the world have never suggested that. An overwhelming body of empirical research insists that form-focused instruction leads to faster, more direct routes to higher proficiency (de Graaff & Housen, 2011).

Even teachers who have themselves learned the target language with a traditional form-focused grammar-laden approach are not well equipped to offer this kind of teaching unless there has also been some linguistic element in their education. By this I mean that it is not enough for an English teacher (by which I mean an EFL/ESL/ESOL teacher) to have

studied English pronunciation as a language learner – some study of English phonetics and phonology is also necessary. Similarly, being able to excel in an English grammar test is no substitute for at least some knowledge of English morphology and syntax at a more abstract level. The *learners* do not need this knowledge, but to teach e.g. pronunciation efficiently, the *teacher* needs explicit knowledge of phonetics and phonology. To teach grammatical accuracy, the teacher needs some knowledge of morphology and syntax. The learner, however, can happily be spared learning this conceptually difficult material. It will not enhance their ability to *use* the target language, just to *talk about* it, which is not part of the curriculum. Language teachers need to have studied the structure of at least one language – if they have done that they will be empowered to learn about other languages their learners are dealing with, including the learners' first language. Only then are teachers prepared to carry out research-informed language teaching.

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