

# Insights into Teacher Language Awareness with Reference to the Concept of Self-Marginalization and Empowerment in the Use of a Foreign Language

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**ABSTRACT:** The concept of self-marginalization and empowerment in applied linguistics can be derived from the so-called critical school, whose sociolinguistic findings pertain to power (Fairclough 1989, 1992) and hegemony (Gramsci, 1971/1991). It offers new perspectives for the perception of a second/foreign language acquisition process. Thereby, with reference to the notions of multicompetence (Cook, 1991), plurilingualism and multilingualism (Kramersch, 2008), metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; Pennycook, 2010), the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (Jenkins, 2007), translanguaging practice (Canagajarah, 2013), and particularly the ecological metaphor in language acquisition (Kramersch, 2002a) and learning (van Lier, 2004), which demystify linguistic normativity, we offer a survey study into the teacher language awareness pertaining to their self-perception as language users. The article concludes with implications for foreign language teacher education in the era of globalization and autonomization of the language learning process.

**Keywords:** teacher language awareness, marginalization, empowerment, linguistic normativity, autonomization

**Nuevas perspectivas sobre la concienciación del profesorado de lenguas en relación a los conceptos de automarginalización y empoderamiento en el uso de una lengua extranjera**

**RESUMEN:** Los conceptos de automarginalización y empoderamiento en la lingüística aplicada pueden extraerse de las corrientes críticas así denominadas y cuyos resultados sociolingüísticos se refieren al poder (Fairclough, 1989, 1992) y la hegemonía (Gramsci, 1971/1991). Ofrecen nuevas perspectivas para la percepción del proceso de adquisición de una lengua extranjera. Así, asumiendo las ideas de multicompetencia (Cook, 1991), plurilingüismo y multilingüismo (Kramersch, 2008), metrolingüismo (Otsuji y Pennycook, 2010; Pennycook, 2010), el concepto de lingua franca (Jenkins, 2007), la práctica translingüística (Canagajarah, 2013), y en particular, la metáfora ecológica en adquisición (Kramersch, 2002a) y aprendizaje de una lengua (van Lier, 2004), que desmitifica la normatividad lingüística, este trabajo ofrece un estudio evaluativo sobre la sensibilización/concienciación lingüística del profesorado en cuanto a su autopercepción como usuarios de una lengua. El artículo con-

cluye con las implicaciones en la educación del profesorado de lengua extranjera en la era de la globalización y de la autonomización del proceso de aprendizaje de lenguas.

**Palabras clave:** concienciación/sensibilización lingüística del profesorado, marginalización, empoderamiento, normatividad lingüística, autonomización.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher language awareness, which might be defined as “sensitivity to the nature of language and its significance in everyday life” (Danilewicz, 2011:16), received attention only in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the notion underwent re-conceptualization in the wake of changing fashions in foreign language teaching. The idea of language awareness as such is very elusive and difficult to define. Largely, it can be classified as a psycholinguistic phenomenon, yet its strong cognitive substrate pertaining to the subject-matter knowledge about the language (mostly grammar) has been considered helpful for language users to become more sensitive to the way linguistic means are utilized in communication. Hence, the notion has always had a teaching dimension aimed at linguistic consciousness-raising (James, 1992; 1996). In the field of foreign language teaching, language awareness may be seen as a remedy for the shortcomings of CLT (communicative language teaching) methodologies.

Developments in the perception of the nature of language and its learning have helped redefine language awareness (e.g. Carter, 1994; 2003) beyond its narrow association with grammar knowledge. Previous approaches assumed linguistic normativity, which was accentuated in the pedagogical objective of linguistic consciousness-raising to “put a deficiency right” (James, 1996:223, cited in Andrews, 2007:17). In this perspective awareness boiled down mostly to knowing standard grammar aspects, with “standard” being vaguely defined (Brand *et al.*, 2010:3). Consequently, the pedagogical norm of FLT, which Bardovi-Harlig and Gass (2002:3) define as “a combination of language systems and forms selected by linguists and pedagogues to serve as immediate language target, or targets, that learners seek to acquire during their language study”, is not only difficult to attain (Sieloff Magnan & Walz, 2002:15) but also unrealistic in terms of communication needs of non-native speakers, who many a time communicate in an international arena rather than in the target culture context (Wąsikiewicz-Firlej, 2013). A direct corollary of this is the question whether native speaker standards should inform pedagogical norms for pluricentral or widely used languages such as English, for example.

Valdman’s (1989; 1992) pedagogical variable norm, Fairclough’s (1992) critical strain in developing language awareness accentuating the ideological burden of language use as well as developments in the conceptualization of language (Harris, 1981) and second/foreign language acquisition beyond the sociolinguistic paradigm of the native speaker (cf. Firth & Wagner, 1997) have activated a more dialogical approach to the pedagogical normativity, highlighting linguistic creativity and the phenomenon of translanguaging practices as representative of multilinguals of the globalization era (Canagarajah, 2013). Therefore, the application of “a variable norm” seems to be necessitated by *signum temporis* and calls for the need to develop a new type of language awareness on the part of the teacher reaching far beyond normative grammaticality. It is to allow for the processes of language meshing (Canagarajah, 2013) and human linguistic activity taking place in a particular sociopolitical context which Lankiewicz (2015) dubs as critical ecological language awareness. In turn, it

necessitates “sensitizing learners to the multiple and shifting meaning potential of language and to the increasing demands of the global economy to move in and out of various codes and modes of meaning” (Kramersch, 2002b:75). However, in the first place, this kind of language awareness requires from the foreign teacher to discard the deeply engrained image of being incompetent as a second/foreign language user. Thereby, the goal of this article is to delve into the self-image of the foreign language teacher as indicative of their language awareness. This is to see whether they portray themselves as legitimized and fully empowered language users or, alternatively, whether they self-marginalize themselves for not having an authoritative voice in the target language.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The two basic concepts in focus (marginalization and empowerment) derive from the so-called critical school within the humanities and social studies inspired by Marxist and post-Marxist thinkers. In the educational context this stance puts “emphasis on the social context and constrains within which the process of learning takes place” (Benson, 1997:22). The critical thought in education, as manifested, among others, by Paulo Freire (1972/1996), Henry Giroux (1983; 1996) or Peter McLaren (2010; 2013), emphasizes the issue of power and control.

McLaren believes that the transformation of school rituals cannot go very far since they are “embedded in capitalist social relations and the law of value” (Sardoč, 2001:424). This claim echoes Audery Lorde’s (1990:287) words regarding the structures of oppression that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”. In this sense, Lorde accentuates human differences reified by the use of tools in capitalist society, “where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need” (ibid.:281). She points to the existence of a mythical norm, a social trap for society, which is sanctified by the historical process. One of such “neutralized” tools is language (cf. Fairclough, 1989; 1992), without which, as van Lier (2004:1) asserts, schools could not exist. Any critical approach necessitates a degree of critical language awareness for both teachers and learners to handle this fundamental tool with care, so as not to allow thinking to be done by powerful words, “labels of primary potency” (Allport, 1986, after Andrews, 1998:279). In other words, teachers need to confront their unconscious schemata, which they acquired in the processes of acculturation, stimulated to a considerable degree by schools (Szczepaniak-Kozak, 2013:79).

In recent years the ecological metaphor in the study of language (Haugen, 2001) and second/foreign language acquisition (e.g. Kramersch, 2002a) offers an additional critical approach to educational practices, calling for the need of educational linguistics (van Lier, 1994). Its critical dimension is defined as a “moral and ethical stance” which “must be intervention and change oriented” (ibid.:168). Van Lier’s (2004) concept of critical ecological linguistics found its elaboration in the ideas of critical ecological language awareness (Lankiewicz, 2015) and in educating foreign language teachers as transformative intellectuals (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). An important aspect of this sort of education is going beyond the normative vision of the target language community and suggesting that multicompetence and multilingualism are more suitable concepts for the era of globalization, which entails facilitated communication and an inevitable contact of languages. Issues of empowerment and self-marginalization have become crucial in such a perspective.

Worshipping native language normativity in teaching a foreign language may be construed as a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1979/1984), with the target language community being an indispensable frame of reference, allowing for no “alternative conceptualization of the world” (Jones, 2006:37). Interestingly, teachers seem to excel in propagating this view more than any other professional groups. Nativeness as a tenet of disempowering practices (Fairclough, 1992) has dominated second and foreign language teaching (Kramsch, 2002b). Such a situation is indicative of little awareness regarding sociocultural reality of the pluricentric nature of English and the position of non-native versions of English, as embodied in the processes of *nativization* or *decolonization* of English (Kachru, 1985), the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (Jenkins, 2007), or more accurately the concept of Lingua Franca English (Canagarajah, 2007). Consequently, Wallace (1992:62) dubs EFL learners the most “marginalized” and “patronized” group with the reason being that both learners and instructors treat textbooks only as a source of learning grammar structures accompanied by vocabulary, not as an aid stimulating authentic communication. Briefly, in this context, empowerment pertains to emancipation practices allowing for a very constructive use of a foreign language, which recognizes the principles of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1972/1996; 1974) and debunks the “domesticating” function of schooling as gravitating towards hegemonic practices in an indiscriminate or naturalized application of normative language use. Alternatively, self-marginalization stands for uncritical and indiscriminate use of a foreign language based on passive and unreflective conforming to the norm and thus demonstrating little critical language awareness or political autonomy in language use and its learning. In the teaching profession it may pertain to a blind, if not slavish, imposition of a particular language model, rejection of student generated materials (Lankiewicz, 2010) or identity issues, and, most of all, disregard for the sociolinguistic reality of language acquisition.

The era of globalization, facilitated communication and intensified mobility make people operate various linguistic and cultural semiotic systems in a very creative way. In this vein, sociolinguistic studies in language acquisition inspired by Wagner and Firth (1997), who in their seminal article debunked some basic myths in the perception of bilingualism, and supported by the conception of multicompetence put forth by Cook (1991; 1999) have helped to re-conceptualize bilingualism laying solid foundations for the study of multi- and plurilingualism (Kramsch, 2008), metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; Pennycook, 2010), as well as offered theoretical underpinnings for the concept of English as a Lingua Franca (Jenkins, 2007), or the sociocultural approach (Lantolf, 2000). Ultimately, this strain of language study substantially informs ecological thinking about language learning and teaching (van Lier, 2004) and perceives SLA as a complex multi-layered and a very dynamic phenomenon so, as it follows, language learning needs to allow for variability rather than stability.

### 3. RESEARCH

#### 3.1. Goal of the study, main hypothesis and research questions

The present research is a quantitative survey study pertaining to the field of second language acquisition (Brown, 2001; Dörnyei, 2003), based on a questionnaire (see Appendix). Additionally, respondents, viz. teachers of foreign languages, were asked three open-ended questions in order to verify the main hypothesis that teachers of foreign languages are

strongly guided by normative perception of linguistic events and celebrate nativeness. This way they marginalize themselves as faulty language users. The problem is delved into with recourse to four differential subscales (Dörnyei, 2003) referring respectively to: perception of language as such (questions 1-5), the myth of nativeness in language learning (questions 6-11), the place of normativity in language learning and classroom behavior (questions 12-15), and the use of materials (questions 16-21). Despite the assumed anonymity, the respondents were asked for their personal data relating to the type of education they were engaged in, their professional careers, the length of teaching experience and the kind of language(s) they instructed. The answers to these questions, cross-analyzed with reference to the scales, allowed us to formulate four basic research questions:

1. How much is normative perception of language rooted in teachers' perception of language and its teaching?
2. Is teachers' language awareness conditioned by their teaching experience or the institutional level of education on which the language instruction is delivered?
3. Is language normativity predicted by the number of language systems the teachers are acquainted with?
4. Do teachers perceive themselves as legitimate and empowered language users?

In most general terms, the analytical measures to obtain answers to these questions offer insights into teacher language awareness, more importantly indicating how much languages are perceived as dissected and isolated entities guided by prescriptive grammar rules, imposed by educational contexts of their acquisition. This, in turn, has got a dramatic effect on teacher linguistic behavior in the classroom.

### 3.2. Context and participants

The questionnaire was primarily carried out among 38 teachers of foreign languages participating in a session of an in-service teacher training organized by a local circle of the Modern Language Association of Poland which is affiliated with the University of Gdańsk. Our pilot study basically confirmed the reliability figures for "Internal Consistency" (Anderson, 1985) within subscales, as measured by Cronbach Alfa coefficient calculated by means of IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 22. It was done "to compute correlation coefficients for each potential item with the total scale score and to retain the items with the highest correlations" (Dörnyei, 2003:69). Since the lowest coefficient within the subscale in the pilot study was 0.57, the questionnaire was assumed to be reliable enough to proceed with the study proper.

The pilot study also helped us define research questions within the presupposed general hypothesis. Resorting to convenience sampling, the questionnaire was distributed among other language teachers. Thereby, the original sample size was enlarged and the respondents represented not only the northern region of Poland, but also Wielkopolska, a centrally located province resided by the co-authors of this article. To randomize the selection of teachers, snowball sampling was applied in the study and befriended language teachers were asked "to identify further members of the population" (Dörnyei, 2003:72). The ultimate number of respondents, including the ones for the pilot study, amounted to 137. According to Dörnyei (2003:74), in L2 studies such a sample is large enough to be of statistical significance.

### 3.3. Findings and discussion

The general hypothesis was built on the claim that language awareness is shaped by the existence of a linguistic norm, which, as Harris (1981) assumes, is a well-engrained myth of language as a fixed code. Jenkins (2007:9) also considers the status of English as a Lingua Franca in the era of globalization inadequate. Since the native speaker norms seem to have particularly pervaded the teaching profession (Kramsch, 2002b), it is essential to verify the commonsensical belief that foreign language teachers are guided by this normative perception of linguistic reality of the target language community.

Answers to research question one within the four subscales are presented in Table 1. The aggregate figures include, in the first place, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for each subscale for the whole sample. The coefficient figures lend themselves to infer that the questions within each subscale constitute a cohesive group and may produce a reliable image of the problem manifested by a particular subscale. The numerical rating scale was organized in such a way that the higher the figure, the more normative point of view upon language it represented. The arithmetic mean for each subscale allows us to claim that teacher language awareness is strongly dominated by the assumption of linguistic normativity. A slightly lower figure for pedagogical reality (5.6) may be construed as the existence of moderators between teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practice, such as, for example, classroom context, student capacities, etc. Nonetheless, a slant towards the normative pole may indicate the existence of a strong overlap between teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practice, both with regard to their awareness of grammar (Tsui, 2003; Borg, 2003), vocabulary (McNeill, 2005), and pronunciation (Derwing & Munro, 2005) or with reference to a larger perspective beyond "linguistic provincialities" (Lankiewicz, 2015) also well documented in professional literature.

*Table 1. Normative perception of linguistic reality*

Scale	Reliability Cronbach Alpha	Arithmetic Mean N=137	SD
Theory of language	0.68	7.9	1.2
Myth of nativeness and language teaching/learning	0.56	6.8	1.0
Correctness (normativeness) and language teaching/learning	0.71	6.9	1.4
Class behavior (pedagogical reality) in the classroom	0.67	5.6	1.2.

In the broadest sense, the left-hand side of the rating scale in the questionnaire, with low figures, is indicative of a high critical language awareness displaying the level of consciousness that language normativity may be perceived as a manifestation of ideologies and power relations embedded in discursive practices (e.g. Fairclough, 1989; 1992; Gramsci,

1971/1991; Foucault, 1982; Bourdieu, 1991). Alternatively, the opposite end of the rating continuum, with high figures, may be inferred as indicating language awareness shaped by linguistic prescriptiveness and thus little informed by sociocultural and sociopragmatic reality of language use, as it is the case in the present study.

Pursuing research question two, we tried to delve into the issue of whether teacher language awareness is conditioned by such factors as the length of teaching experience or the educational level on which language instruction is delivered. In the initial questions the respondents were asked to identify both the kinds of institutions they offered their services for and their teaching experience (see Appendix). The comparison of the arithmetic means (the lower it is, the less normative attitudes it represents) for the whole sample with the ones representing educational levels is presented in Table 2. The commonsensical presumption that the higher the educational level of teaching, the more aware the teacher is regarding critical issues pertaining to linguistic normativity was not corroborated by the data. This prediction was also generated by the age of the participants of the study and their assumed command of the target language. The uneven distribution of the respondents within each professional group, some minor differences in the arithmetic means within some groups, as well as the fact that quite a number of the respondents taught on more than one level (in such a case the highest level was taken as a group affiliation marker) do not allow us to draw unanimous conclusions. The odd one out seemed to be university teachers, yet the standard deviation in this group was so high (2.4) that critical language awareness seems to be a personal predisposition rather than a general characteristic of this subsample. One possible explanation for the little variation between the professional groups may be the fact that they most probably followed similar educational paths and neither professional selection, nor the teaching level is conditioned by the command of language or linguistic sensitivity.

*Table 2. Normative perception of linguistic reality with regard to the educational level*

Scale	Arithmetic Mean N= 137	Kindergarten N=27	Junior High School N= 42	High School N= 33	College N=12	University N= 23
Theory of language	7.9	8.1	7.6	7.8	7.4	6.2
Myth of nativeness and language teaching/learning	6.8	7.2	6.8	6.9	6.4	5.6
Correctness (normativeness) and language teaching/learning	6.9	7.4	7.1	7.2	6.9	5.4
Class behavior (pedagogical reality) in the classroom	5.6	6.1	6.1	5.5	5.4	6.1

Posing research question three, we expected that a normatively driven approach to L2 education may be predicted by the number of language systems the teacher is acquainted

with. To put it alternatively, the knowledge of more languages (including the practice of teaching more than one foreign language) was expected to result in a more critical approach to linguistic normativity due to raised linguistic awareness. Initially, it was also expected that the critical approach to normativity may be mostly characteristic of teachers of English. The premise was derived from the status of this language in international communication. However, this line of thinking had to be discarded since, contrary to the pilot study, the new data showed that many respondents instructed English alongside other languages. The languages taught by our respondents included English, German, Spanish, Russian, French, Italian, out of which 34 teachers instructed more than one language in various combinations. Table 3 presents the arithmetic means standing for the perception of linguistic normativity with regard to plurilingualism. The figures are slightly lower (indicating a more critical approach) for people teaching two foreign languages, yet the value difference is so insignificant that it would be too risky and far-fetched to draw decisive conclusions. It is more probable to claim that a critical attitude to linguistic normativity is not predicted by the knowledge of an additional foreign language. Instead, it lies elsewhere, in, for example, personality features.

*Table 3. Aggregate figures presenting attitudes towards normativity with reference to plurilingualism*

Scale	One foreign language taught	SD	Two foreign languages taught	SD
Theory of language	7.9	1.2	6.7	1.8
Myth of nativeness and language teaching/learning	6.8	1.4	6.5	1.2
Correctness (normativeness) and language teaching/learning	6.9	1.6	6.6	1.4
Class behavior (pedagogical reality) in the classroom	5.6	1.4	5.4	1.2

The arithmetical means presented for the scales assumed in the foregoing research provided an ample proof that the respondents' linguistic beliefs and concomitant teaching practices are strongly guided by the existence of linguistic normativity dictated by nativeness model and target language communities. The teachers seem to forget that bi- and multilingualism cannot be commensurable with monolingualism, as highlighted by the concept of *comparative fallacy* (Cook, 1999).

Research on language awareness indicates that non-nativeness has its advantages over nativeness in the field of L2 teaching (Andrews, 2007). Nonetheless, the illusive and unattainable desire to be like a native (Cook, 1999) seems to be the dream of both teachers and learners and needs to be construed as a manifestation of the "paradigm of marginality" standing for the dominant monolingualistic tenet in ESL/EFL teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2003:542). Consequently, the answer to the last research question whether the



foreign language teachers perceive themselves as legitimate and empowered language users has to be negative. The respondents' voices to the three open-ended questions concluding the questionnaire (see Appendix) leave little doubt about it. They easily indicate their lack of competence in the field of grammar, voice a limited range of vocabulary, especially "restricted knowledge of idiomatic expressions", and unfamiliarity with the target language cultural context. In spite of the recognition of the sociolinguistic diversity in speech habits and a parallel recognition of little importance of accent in evaluating language competence and fuelling language pedagogy, the mention of accent as a serious deficiency preoccupies the majority of respondents (mentioned 78 times).

Articulating their assets as non-native speakers, the respondents are very laconic and ironically underscore issues which deprive them of the status of legitimate language users. They frequently mention the fact that they are acquainted with the standard and take proper care of it as well as they stress their ability of differentiating between American and British versions of the language. Significant is a recurrent lack of the answer to this question or a straightforward admission that, being non-native speakers, they are no way better language users. The only area of superiority over the native teacher may be found in the didactic domain. The respondents point to the fact that their knowledge of the mother tongue of the learners helps them sensitize students do unwelcome linguistic interference (mentioned 55 times). Similarly, they declare that they are able to explain a grammar problem in a better way (mentioned 47 times) since they are familiar with students' potential difficulties; hence, they underscore their metalinguistic capital. At the same time numerous respondents, as the answer to the last question implies, offer grumbles about their inability to meet students' expectations, e.g. being unable to answer all questions posed by students. Furthermore, not to our surprise, a significant number of respondents expresses a wish of being a native speaker (39 times), which would be of much help while teaching B1 or B2 language students.

In sum, the answers to the three open-ended questions, in a sense, confirm the subscale arithmetical averages gravitating towards the celebration of normativity. Thus, non-nativeness is seen as a significant obstacle in the teaching career. Admitting it, teachers marginalize themselves as incompetent language users. Nativeness is perceived as an exemplar to follow with little chances of attainment since very few non-natives pass as natives.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Teachers and teacher-students have always lamented that academic foreign language education neither prepares for dealing with school practicalities, nor with the linguistic reality of the contemporary world. A strong normative drive in foreign language teacher education, excused by the fact that a foreign language teacher should be a model provider of the target language, places the candidate to the language teaching profession in the position of a disempowered and marginalized language user, who doubtfully will be able to meet the native speaker standards. In this way, foreign language teacher education seems to be little informed by the study of the actual use of language(s) that questions "foundational notions in the field of second language acquisition" (Kramsch, 2012) and underscores the fact that the competence of the L2 user cannot be a pluralized monolingualism.

This normative model of teacher education fosters language awareness pertaining mostly to lexicogrammar issues, giving little regard to the aspects of empowerment and legitimacy of the second language user. No wonder prospective language teachers and well-established professionals value native-like versions of language showing little awareness of the fact that foreign language learning is a political issue (Lankiewicz *et al.*, 2014; Wąsikiewicz-Firlej, 2013). Therefore, inspired by the ecological approach to language learning and compatible concepts, as articulated above, we resolved to hit the niche of developing teacher language awareness, as it pertains to power relations marked by normativity.

To conclude our considerations, we offer certain suggestions for teacher education. Firstly, if language teachers are to be transformative pedagogues (Kumaravadivelu, 2012), not mere instructors of ready-made and practically applicable language chunks to perform linguistic functions, as promoted by the communicative approach, they need to be more critical language users themselves. Communication is an active process and requires a reflective application of the semiotic budget since language use is rarely impersonal. Quite contrary, it is tinted with identity levels, even if in the subliminal way. Sheer adherence to the notion of contextual appropriateness, *viz.* imposing native speaker norms and silencing “the other”, constitutes, in the opinion of Kramsch (2002b:60), the shortcomings of the communicative approach. Secondly, in the era of globalization, a second/foreign language may perform a colonizing function, hence the teacher should be able to see beyond the ideological levels of language use so that it ceases to be exploited as an unconscious instrument for facilitating hegemonic forces. Last but not least, the teacher should realize that language teaching is a political act, just like any other teaching (Giroux, 2010). Hence, it is not enough to be familiar with the tool (command of a foreign language) but it is also vital to recognize one’s own legitimacy as a target language user. David Gurteen (2003) makes a pertinent observation, though expressed in the context of management, that knowledge is not power but rather the ability to act upon knowledge is power.

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## Appendix

### *Questionnaire<sup>1</sup>*

*The following questionnaire does not test your linguistic or methodological knowledge. It rather aims at getting to know your attitudes and beliefs regarding some selected issues. Please mark you answers sincerely since they will be processed in an academic study.*

On which educational level do you teach a foreign language (*you can circle more than one answer*)?

- |                 |                   |                       |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| a) kindergarten | b) primary school | c) junior high school |
| d) high school  | e) college        | e) university         |
| f) other        |                   |                       |

How long have you been working as a foreign language teacher (in years)? .....

What language(s) do you teach? .....

*How much do you agree with the following statements. Circle the figure which most closely expresses you views. 0 means "I totally disagree", 9 stands for "I cannot agree more".*

1. Language consists of culturally shaped grammar rules and words, hence we all use the same grammar and designate things with the same words.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2. The existence of a linguistic standard is a sociocultural necessity.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
3. We communicate because words have firmly established meanings.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
4. Speakers understand each other because they interpret the linguistic signs in a similar way.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
5. Language would not be able to function without socially accepted grammar rules; they function in a similar way as a road code, i.e. without them there would be communication chaos.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
6. Teachers of a foreign language should identify themselves with the culture the particular language represents.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
7. When you are in a linguistic doubt, the best solution is to ask the native speaker.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
8. The foreign language teacher should use one chosen standard, e.g. British, American, Canadian in the case of English or a national standard of the target language, in the classroom.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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<sup>1</sup> \*During the study the questionnaire was submitted in Polish.

9. When speaking the target language, the teacher should not have a strong accent (e.g. due to his mother tongue interference).  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  10. The use of Polish in the foreign language classroom should be forbidden because it deprives students of opportunities to communicate.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  11. More advanced language learners (B2, C1) should be instructed by native speakers.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  12. Teaching simplified (International English) or dialectal versions of the foreign language is a waste of time.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  13. One cannot learn a language without knowing the culture of the target language.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  14. The top attainment in a foreign language is when you can pass as a native speaker.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  15. Grammar and words should be used only in the way they function in the target culture.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  16. Playing with language in a language class is a waste of time.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  17. I prefer when my students stick to the foreign language even if they do not express their real feelings or desires (e.g. when describing their breakfast, they mention pizza and milk despite the fact that it is not true).  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  18. The teacher should explain grammar in the target language to increase the amount of language input in the classroom.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  19. Authentic material is the material used for educational purposes that has been created in the context of the target language culture and originally addressed at native speakers.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  20. The use of materials prepared by students in the language classroom poses a danger of learning mistakes.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
  21. Texts recorded by non-native speakers have lower educational value than the ones which present authentic national language use.  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- What are your weak points as a non-native user/teacher?  
In what way are you better than a native speaker in the use of a foreign language?  
In what way are you better as a teacher than the native speaker?

*Thank you very much for you answers. If you wish to see the results of this survey study, please leave your email address to which we may send you a synopsis of the results or the information about the availability of the text after its publication.*