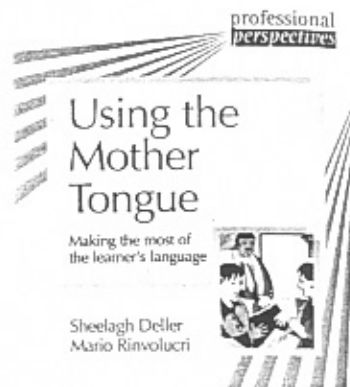


Using the Mother Tongue

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For many years, teaching English crosslingually, i.e. using the students' mother tongue (in monolingual classes) as a learning aid, was discredited in favour of an "English through English" (intra-lingual) approach. However, there seems to have been a recent swing of the pendulum towards a more flexible proposal which still admits that the more English is used in the classroom, the better, but considers L1 as an important teaching/learning tool. A good example of this is one of the co-authors of this book, Mario Rinvolucri, who, as he states in his personal preface to the book, used to be an advocate of the Direct Method but now thinks that the students' mother tongue has an important role to play in foreign language instruction.

More and more ELT professionals believe that adults process the *input* they receive and the *output* they produce, through their L1, at least in many stages of their learning process. Therefore, the contrast between both languages and occasional translations can be of great assistance. However, Deller and Rinvolucri go much further as they propose, in their book, a more complete strategy, what Clandfield and Fuord (2002) call to be *proactive*. They present up to 115 activities which exploit the

students' L1, and provide us with practical ideas on how to maximise students' "bad" habits.

This well organised book is divided into Part A and Part B. Part A, titled *Classroom Management*, consists of three sections: *Advocating and Avoiding Mother Tongue*; *Starting New Groups*; and *Getting On-going Feedback*. Part B, whose title is *Living Language*, comprises the following five sections: *Grammar*; *Vocabulary*; *Input*; *Output* (these two latter include the four skills); and *Using Translation*. The content map is a helpful guide to the activities and it also indicates the level for each one. They are varied and inviting. Some important aspects of the teaching/learning process such as *error correction*, *contrastive analysis*, *loan words*, *word associations*, or *collocations*, are touched on. I find Part A particularly interesting because the different activities help students contrast certain features of their mother tongue with the target language and raise their awareness of the importance of L1 in the L2 learning process. Perhaps more importantly, it also helps students see that on many occasions they can do without their mother tongue. As the authors mention in the introduction, the book is based on the principle that precisely by using the L1 in the classroom, the students' dependence on it can be reduced progressively.

Some titles of the activities are self-explanatory (*Miming Introductions*; *Contrastive Grammar Recognition*; *Understand the Question from the Answer*; *Students Choose Songs/Poems to Translate*; etc). For each one we find a box indicating the level of the students' mother tongue required of the teacher (the book is aimed at both, native and non-native teachers and some activities require zero knowledge or just working knowledge); whether it is applicable to a monolingual, to a multilingual class or both; the group level required; the purpose of the activity; and materials needed. In addition, clear step-by-step, instructions are provided for each activity along with possible variations. We are also given examples of parts of some activities.

Deller's and Rinvolucri's personal prefaces; Prodromou's prologue ("The Liberating Role of the Mother Tongue"); the Introduction; and Guy Cook's ("Is there Direct Method in our Madness?") and Morris's articles ("Judicious Use of the Students' Mother Tongue") reproduced in the epilogue, set up some of the theoretical foundations supporting a timely, selective use of L1 in ELT and its advantages

for both students and teachers. All these sections provide food for thought on this important but still controversial issue.

If you believe that the students' mother tongue is a resource which makes them "feel safe and grounded in the English classroom" (10) and that the juxtaposition of L1 and L2 is of great pedagogical value, this is a highly recommended book. But if up to now, you have thought that the use of L1 can be counterproductive, why not flick through this book and put into practice some of the activities as warmers or fillers, or as the central activity of the teaching session. Doing so will give you the chance to see that a modern crosslingual approach is very different from the classic, discarded *grammar-translation* method.

This book is proof that the foreign language teaching field is alive and dynamic and that the mother tongue can be a useful instrument in the communicative foreign language classroom. It fills a gap in the ELT book market and I consider it a must for all teachers who wish to keep up with new trends in the profession.

HOMAGE TO GEORGE ORWELL IN CATALONIA



Viatge a una guerra. George Orwell a Catalunya i al front d'Aragó is a major exhibition that commemorates Orwell's works and political commitment with Catalonia and its influence in the author's future works. The exhibition pays tribute to the writer's experience on the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War. Through photographs of the period, newspaper headlines, audiovisuals, objects, quotations from Orwell's books and a number of key documents which were kept secret at the time, The Casa de Cultura in Girona commemorates the centenary of his birth since 22nd October.

This exhibition, which will be open till 14th December, is a journey to the past and also to the ideological battles fought during the war in the Republican camp. The exhibition opens in Sant Cugat del Vallés Monastery in

January and will visit other cities in Catalonia. The opening in Barcelona is scheduled for September 2004.

On the opening day of the exhibition, the writer and professor Miquel Berga, curator of the exhibition, underlined the importance of the photographs taken by Agustí Centelles who had kept them hidden for 32 years as a historical treasure. Among these photos Orwell can be seen standing with the POUM militia in the Lenin headquarters in Barcelona. The Leika camera used by Centelles is also displayed.

Viatge a una guerra covers Orwell's stay in Catalonia giving support to the Republicans. The writer was seriously wounded but survived to tell his story in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). At long last, Catalonia seems to be paying back its homage to Orwell.