

TEACHING FRENCH: OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES¹

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THE teaching of French occupies a very special place in the history of education in this country, since French was the first modern language to be taught systematically and so the first to raise problems of methodology and content. As early as 1250 or thereabouts we have, in the *Tretiz de Langage* of Walter of Bibbesworth,² the first textual evidence of French being systematically taught, but we have no indication that the French language was at that time accorded the dignity of inclusion in the university curriculum—the real subject of this lecture. In the mid-thirteenth century French was not considered to be in a different category from any of the other vernaculars of Western Europe, all of which were grouped together in their common inferiority to Latin, the language of Imperial and Christian Rome, and hence the key to secular and spiritual knowledge.

The very fact, however, that French, in contrast to German, Spanish or Italian, has been taught in England for some seven hundred years might prompt us to consider whether we have anything to learn from all these centuries of effort. At first sight it might seem that the teachers of French in medieval England have little to offer us in the way of enlightenment, since their efforts to promote the widespread use of French so obviously ended in failure. Many factors, social, linguistic and political contributed to this outcome and favoured the predominance of English. In Plantagenet England the tide was running strongly against the use of French. With the loss of Normandy after the beginning of the thirteenth century, French was more or less cut off from its source, and only the social and political standing of those who spoke it in the upper and mercantile classes could account for its continuing extensive use in this country. Even so, it became increasingly an acquired language, subsidiary to

¹ A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 13th of March 1968.

² Ed. A. Owen (Paris, 1929).

English, which had probably always been the tongue of the majority of the people.¹

Although there is a considerable amount of extant material in Anglo-Norman—literary, historical, legal, didactic and so on—extending into later periods in our history, this proves only that French retained its status as a literary and official language for some time, not that French was the normal tongue of Englishmen right up to the fifteenth century, as historians have claimed. Therefore it comes as no surprise to find as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century this kind of “French”, even in a written document :

Thomas Lanford : .j. bag de peper, valor .xl. s.²

The subsequent decline in the standard of French used in England from even this modest level is too well known to need further illustration.

But what have the teachers of French in this period to show which might be relevant today? For instance, what type of material did they use? How did they inculcate grammar? The teaching of French to boys and girls of the upper classes in England was usually done in their own homes and was based very largely on the imparting of vocabulary covering a range of agricultural and domestic pursuits. The names of trees, plants and flowers are given in French, as are those of animals, birds and some insects. Implements are listed, a certain number of agricultural tools, some terms used in house-building and so on. In short, the content of these attempts, as shown in *Bibbesworth*, the later *Nominale*³ and *Femina*,⁴ is utilitarian. At a later date than *Bibbesworth* a working knowledge of current French for the traveller is imparted by the various *Manieres de Langage*⁵ which were produced from the late fourteenth century onwards.

¹ For a fuller discussion of these points see “The Teaching of French in Medieval England”, *Modern Language Review*, lxiii (1968), 37-46.

² *Port Books of Southampton*, ed. P. Studer (Southampton, 1913), p. 33.

³ Ed. W. W. Skeat, *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1906), pp. 1*-50*.

⁴ Ed. W. A. Wright, for the Roxburghe Club, 1909.

⁵ E.g. edited by E. M. Stengel, *Z.F.S.L.*, 1 (1879) or J. Gessler (Brussels, 1934).

Mostly short manuals of conversation, these too are purely utilitarian in approach.

All the above texts attempt to teach little more than basic vocabulary and they assume in the user a sufficient knowledge of grammar. Those grammars of the period which we still possess are, on the other hand, primarily intended as guides to spelling and pronunciation. They are all written in Latin—the language of the intellect—and would appear to have been used by the Schoolmen. Even when they concern the Latin tongue, grammatical rules in Latin are not always models of clarity, but when they pertain to medieval French usage they are the ultimate in obscurity. Even today many of them still await satisfactory elucidation by linguistic scholars. One can only guess at the chaotic interpretations to which they must have given rise in medieval England.

Perhaps it seems a far cry from the works I have just been mentioning to our own problems as language teachers, but we find in much of our own work the same underlying dichotomy between the practical, utilitarian approach and the scholarly, academic tradition. At the present time university departments of French, like the schools, find themselves involved in a fundamental re-appraisal of their aims and methods in an attempt to resolve this dichotomy. Whilst the two great medieval universities of England appear to be pursuing the even tenor of their ways more or less undisturbed, all the rest—established “red-brick”, “new” universities and the former technical colleges—are having to react in one way or another to the stimulus of new ideas and new techniques. These originate very largely in the modern disciplines of the linguistic sciences, many of which come to us in the first instance from across the Atlantic. As a result of the penetration of these new ideas into French departments in this country we see a growing volume of experimentation undertaken in an effort to make more efficient use of a student's time at university and to avoid the charge of being old-fashioned and hidebound. Yet these new efforts have not always removed, and may sometimes even have increased, the dichotomy which we saw in medieval times between the utilitarian and the academic approach to the teaching of French. On the one hand there is

a growing demand for students to be better equipped to handle the contemporary spoken language ; on the other this demand is often met with a reluctance to abandon what is termed the intellectual content of French.

Such a dichotomy, I would suggest, is not only unnecessary, it is also false. It is due mainly to the fact that modern language teaching in the English universities has been closely linked with that of the Classics and has been to a considerable extent modelled on the teaching of that subject and influenced by the attendant myth of superiority which attaches to a classical training. This myth has been assiduously cultivated by public schools and older universities alike and has been allowed to hold in thrall whole generations of senior public administrators. It has so bemused the majority of modern language teachers that they have, until comparatively recently, based the defence of their discipline very largely on its similarity to the study of the Classics. Nowadays, and partly as a result of the experiments in the linguistic sciences, this attitude is being challenged and, indeed, repudiated—often, or so it seems to me, without adequate examination of the myth which is being rejected.

It has long been argued that the turning of a piece of (preferably) archaic English into something resembling Ciceronian Latin is a most severe and exacting test of intellectual capacity and that, consequently, the turning of a piece of fairly modern English into modern French, whilst by definition on a lower level, is nonetheless also an exacting test of the same kind. This argument has been advanced over the years to justify the length of time spent at university on the teaching of prose composition and the often preponderant place given in Final Examinations to the results of the translation paper into French. A moment's reflection, however, ought to be enough to show that the assumptions behind this analogy are so blatantly false as to make the argument quite untenable.

An old cowboy dictum is supposed to have asserted that the only good Indians were dead Indians : similarly one might say that the only good languages are dead ones, in the sense that only a dead language can be neatly codified and labelled, parcelled up and delivered to the learner in a nice, neat box with no untidy

ends poking out. In translating into Latin, for example, it can be argued—falsely perhaps—that we know sufficiently well, from the Classical texts that have come down to us, the morphological and syntactical structure of educated written Latin at a given period for the teacher of Classics to be able to pronounce with good authority upon the correctness or otherwise of a student's prose composition. The norm, it is argued, is known and the student's performance can be set against it with a fair degree of confidence. In this exercise the classicist is helped by two factors which apply only to a dead language. In the first place, the extant material upon which his norm is based is strictly limited and unlikely to be added to. This not only gives the norm a finite character, but also gives the learner confidence in the limited nature of his labours. Secondly, the classicist pronouncing upon the correctness of his students' Latin need have no fear of a latter-day Cicero peering over his shoulder and jabbing with critical finger at his cherished "correct" rendering. The classicist's translation of a piece of English into Latin is subject only to the critical assessment of other "foreigners" just as far removed from the Latin that lived and breathed as he is himself. The teacher of French who attempts to render into good contemporary French a piece of contemporary English enjoys neither of these advantages. The material in modern French—setting aside the whole of the medieval, Renaissance and Classical output in the language—is both enormous and continually being added to. The norm is completely open-ended, that is, incapable of being defined once and for all; it is in a constant state of change. Again, the existence of many millions of living speakers of French means that any rendering into that language is exposed to the most searching linguistic criticism.

These two points are so vital and yet often either overlooked or insufficiently grasped that it may not be a waste of time to set them out rather more fully. What I have called the open-endedness of the norm in French (its continual, if slow, rate of change) stems both from the vastness of the output in modern French—spoken as well as written—and also from its wide variety. Anyone translating into French is immediately faced with the problem not of a choice between Gold and Silver Age,

but of a far more real, more subtle choice between synchronically existing levels of a living language that tend to merge imperceptibly the one into the other. The person who is not a specialist in French may understand this problem more clearly if it is put into an English context, for the difficulty is the same in any modern European language. The mass media of radio and television now bring regularly into our homes the voices and faces of foreign statesmen, journalists, public men of all kinds. Many of these people handle English with a competence that makes us blush, but, even so, the Englishman sitting at home listening to them or watching them is constantly reminded that they are not English. Sometimes a word badly pronounced jars on the ear ; sometimes it is an Americanism or a slang expression that clashes with the rest of the context ; at other times it is no more than a question of intonation or of the order of words in a sentence. However slight the imperfections may be, they are sufficient to signal to the linguistic consciousness of the native English speaker that he is listening to someone who, despite all the positive evidence of his good use of English, is fundamentally non-English. The other side of the coin is, of course, that the Englishman using French is subject to the same kind of automatic and instinctive assessment by the native speaker of French. This is the basic day-to-day reality that puts French teaching in a totally different category from the handling of Greek and Latin where this type of experience is quite unknown.

The purpose of the foregoing comparison of French and Classics from the point of view of translation is not to question the validity of Latin prose composition as one element in the training of a classicist, but to show that any defence of *French* prose composition as an integral part of a university French course must always be based on its own intrinsic merits and not on any false analogy with the Classics. Largely as a result of the failure on the part of many people to see the composition class in French as a valid discipline in its own right and not merely as a derivative exercise, those in the French departments of modern universities who cling to translation exercises are apt to be labelled as reactionaries—or worse—by those who would sweep the traditional composition class into the dustbin and replace it by various kinds

of comprehension and expression exercises. It is the composition class more than any other aspect of language teaching which brings us to a fundamental parting of the ways.

There are those for whom a university French course means primarily the attainment of intellectual knowledge about the language and literature of France and those for whom a university course implies and involves a rather more instinctive acquisition of myriad patterns of contemporary French, both spoken and written. Both these attitudes may be seen in varying degrees in the French departments of our universities. At one end of the scale a student may find himself having virtually no contact with the French spoken in France today, but absorbing and reacting to a great deal of highly intelligent and stimulating teaching (given in English) on the literature, language and history of France. At the other end of the scale a student may spend most of his time practising simultaneous translation, doing pattern drills in the language laboratory or drafting business letters on technical subjects without ever gaining any real insight into the role played by the language and culture of France in the development of European civilization. Here again is the dichotomy we found already in the Middle Ages.

To complicate the issue even further there is another factor which must be taken into account. At no time is the classicist expected to act as interpreter for, let us say, a group of aviation experts speaking Latin. Nor is he ever asked to supply for insertion in a learned technical journal a translation into Latin of an account of some new process in chemical engineering, a process using apparatus for which no names exist in Latin since it has been invented for the purposes of his experiment by the writer of the article. Yet one of the crosses that many university teachers of French today have to bear at some time or other is the difficult task of explaining to a colleague in science or technology that this kind of demand is hardly reasonable. The classicist may, if he so wishes, amuse himself by translating into Latin the adventures of Winnie the Pooh, but otherwise he generally uses his Latin as a key giving access to the civilization of the Ancient World. The teacher of today who prefers to use his French in the same way, mainly as a cultural tool, is inviting the charge that he is ignoring

the contemporary world of business and commerce, science and technology. Indeed, in some universities it is considered necessary to give a vocational slant to modern language courses and to provide some kind of professional and technical training in French.

To return for a moment to the Middle Ages : the utilitarian and the dryly academic approaches to the teaching of French current at that time do not appear to have been accompanied by any more humanistic trend, such as might have been associated with a study of the seven liberal arts. This was left to the Schoolmen who, though their stock of knowledge may have been second-hand, did at least use their Latin as a key to the unlocking of many classical treasures. However, there is one instance, in the thirteenth century, of a Florentine, Brunetto Latini, who deliberately chose to write his encyclopedic *Tresor*¹ in French, since he considered it the most delightful of languages. In addition, the extensive literature translated or adapted from the Latin into Anglo-Norman proves that the French used in England at this time was well able to express all kinds of intellectual ideas in the realms of medicine, botany, geography, military history and the like. Nevertheless it remains true that at this period no noteworthy attempt seems to have been made in England to use French as a medium through which to extend the Englishman's culture : its use was almost entirely confined to the utilitarian. The teaching of Thomas Sampson in the fourteenth century in Oxford is a case in point. Although he taught French for the purpose of writing letters—business letters, letters to help students wheedle more money out of their parents, letters soliciting office in Church or State—his French remained on this level and was not allowed to enter into the domain of his university teaching as such. French was allowed in colleges as a possible medium of conversation, but for formal instruction in an academic discipline Latin was required. Though one of the manuals of French conversation written at the end of the fourteenth century describes French as the finest, most elegant, most noble speech on earth,² it is quick to add “ après latin d'escole ”. Latin remained not only a vocational tool (in medicine, the law,

¹ Ed. F. J. Carmody (Berkeley, 1948).

² Gessler, *op. cit.* p. 44.

etc.) but also the language *par excellence* for the acquisition or transmission of an international culture.

This cultural aspect of a language is a vital one. However interesting a vocational training may be, whether in the language laboratory or elsewhere, it will not for long satisfy the intellectual curiosity of a good student. In the last analysis it does not and cannot teach him anything about himself in relation to the world of men. In the mid-twentieth century, it seems to me, the ultimate justification for any university arts course must lie in its intellectual content; it must touch the individual student and bring him into contact with the great spiritual achievements of man.

Those in our universities who have subscribed to this view in the past have sought the intellectual content of their teaching mainly in literature, with an admixture of background history, geography and other elements of *civilisation*. The literature chosen has usually been that of periods sufficiently removed in time for a great deal of authoritative criticism to have been written about it. This criticism was readily available for transmission to students and the teacher of French did not, therefore, have to confront material that was fundamentally new and ideas that were unfamiliar. Nowadays, however, an increasing number of university French departments have extended their coverage of literature and civilization right up into the middle of the present century, thus involving teachers and taught in great intellectual adventures.

This has an immediate bearing on the prose composition class. So long as the study of literature stopped around 1870 there could be little connection between the exercise of translation into French and the study of literature. Translation was an independent exercise, a ritual performed largely in a vacuum, a wrestling with *words*; literature concerned a writer's *ideas*. In the modern context of contemporary literature, on the other hand, there is no valid reason for separating the two and making a prose translation a dull, mechanical task. Nor, in my view, is there any valid reason for rejecting out of hand the writing of prose composition. Properly handled, the composition class (or, as I would prefer to call it, the language class) can make a unique

contribution to the all-round competence of the student of French.

In view of the controversy that has so often raged about it, I propose to develop this point at greater length. Substitutes for the composition class—free composition, *précis*, comprehension exercises of various kinds—have each their own special place in the training of a student, yet none of these activities can truly act as a replacement for the exercise of translating a piece of contemporary English into good contemporary French. But, as I have already indicated, the title “ composition class ” is perhaps a misnomer ; language class would be better. Very often the point of departure for one of these classes would be not a passage of English, but perhaps a piece of French, or even a parallel passage in the two languages. Instead of starting from the English and translating *à coups de dictionnaire*, learning some correct and quite a lot of incorrect French on the way, the student might start from a piece of idiomatic, contemporary French, absorbing the material as a preliminary exercise and then translating it first into English and then, at a later date, back into French. Or he might be required to translate into French a very similar passage of English containing much of the relevant material—vocabulary, syntax, idiom. In this way patterns of correct French would be imprinted on his memory with less incorrect French being absorbed at the same time. The principle is not new and has been admirably set out in detail by Professor Hinton Thomas of the German Department at Birmingham University in a paper read to the Conference of French Studies a year or two ago at Oxford.

I have given only one example of this type of method, but the area of experiment can be extended far beyond this point. Fruitful comparisons can be made between parallel passages in, say, a French novel in its original form and its published English version. Or the language class might develop into a “ vocabulary ” class, not in the old way, with the teacher handing out a few random observations on words and phrases which happen to have turned up in the passage being dealt with, but in a new way. The class might settle down to a systematic study of the semantic content of the passage, using modern research tools such as the

Dictionnaire du français contemporain, the *Petit Robert* and the *Dictionnaire des Synonymes* in order to build up for themselves a whole network of patterns of correct, idiomatic contemporary French. On occasion this good French might be taken from a current magazine article or even from one of the more sophisticated full-page advertisements to be found in *Paris Match* or periodicals of similar type. On another occasion the material might come to the students through the ear rather than through the eye: they might be asked to listen to a speech, a discussion or an interview on tape and then given the task of summarizing what they have heard, using the vocabulary and idiom of the speakers. Nor would grammatical patterns—the use of tense and mood, word-order, prepositions and so on—together with stylistic devices be omitted from this kind of study. But the point of departure for all this work would usually be a passage of good French, not a miscellaneous collection of “mistakes” made by the students themselves in their awkward attempts at translation. Whatever the material used, the result of such methods should be a feeling of active participation by the student in his language classes; an increase in linguistic and also literary awareness; a realization that learning a language is not merely a question of “translation into” and “translation out of”, but a living, creative process; a realization, moreover, that literature is ultimately language at its best and that language attains its heights in literature.

In case it may be imagined that the kind of varied attack upon language problems I have just outlined is merely conforming to the modern trend in education towards variety and interest, sometimes at the expense of learning, I must hasten to add that the programme I have in mind envisages far more learning, far more handling of dictionaries and grammars than did the old mechanical method of prose composition. Once a student has grown accustomed to handling the tools of his trade—grammars, dictionaries, reference works of various kinds—it is hoped that he will approach all his reading in French with a more critical, a more enquiring mind, compiling for himself over the years the kind of notebook of grammar and vocabulary which in professional hands has led to Professor Harmer's remarkable book

The French Language Today, compiled from thousands of jottings culled from books, periodicals, broadcasts and the like. Nor would I abolish the writing of straight traditional prose composition from time to time, since students like to measure their ability against a good English text ; indeed, this is a necessity as a preparation for the very worth-while translation paper in examinations.

The first important point then is that language work in a university French department should be considered as a unity. In the past a student may have been taught "prose" by one man, "translation" by another, essay writing by a third and *explication de textes* (where taught) by yet another. When literature lectures and tutorials were added to this (excluding for the moment philological studies) a student may have found himself in the hands of six or seven different people in any one week for the one subject of French. Each will have been teaching him in complete independence—not to say ignorance—of the work of the others. Under the system I should like to see established, and with which we are experimenting in the first year course at Manchester, much better liaison would be maintained. One man would teach "prose", "translation", "essay", *explication de textes* and so forth as part of a corpus. He would teach a small group of students and he would be in continuous contact with colleagues working with other language groups in the same year. In addition, he would have frequent contact with those colleagues giving literature lectures in the first year course. This literary course would deal very largely with contemporary works so as to avoid the kind of linguistic confusion that so often arises from students reproducing as modern French the vocabulary and syntax of past centuries as a result of studying earlier periods of literature and absorbing uncritically their linguistic form.

The ultimate result of all this should be a blurring of boundaries : a merging not only of the various branches of language work but also of language and literature teaching. In an age when stylistics (however broadly or narrowly we define its field and whatever school we may favour) has produced an imposing volume of work, it would seem most unintelligent to continue

to teach literature as though the ideas contained in it were alone of importance and the language in which it is written of only passing interest. In this connection one may mention the recent article of a former Manchester colleague, Professor Fitch, entitled "Participe présent et Procédés narratifs chez Claude Simon".¹ Professor Fitch is a literary specialist, yet in this article he is deliberately crossing the frontier, as it were, into linguistic research in order to analyse the literary qualities of Simon's writing.

The real difficulty in all this, of course, is that it implies not only radical change in the structure of most university French courses (with subsequent complications in practical matters like time-tables) but also radical change in the outlook of those teaching the courses. Students would come up to university to be guided not by a collection of specialists—some of them very individualistic—each transmitting to a very large number of students the quintessence of his learning in his particular limited field of research, but rather, at least in the first year, to be put into the specific charge of a very few *teachers*, who would be responsible for small groups of students and who would cover the ground I have described. These teachers would work as a team, exchanging ideas and notes on progress—or lack of it. Each teacher would have at his disposal the services of at least one native French speaker, whose role in the department would not be limited to dispensing French conversation. This *assistant* would help in any or all of the aspects of teaching mentioned above and would be a kind of *conscience linguistique*. In addition, teachers and taught would have frequent access to the language laboratory.

May I here give a few examples of what I have in mind? A group reading Camus for its literary course would in its language classes be brought into contact with the work done by Professor Weinrich on the use of tenses in *L'Etranger*² and might well call on the *assistant* to give his assessment of this work from the French point of view; the group would then perhaps proceed to a study of the decline of the Past Historic tense in modern French. What began as a literary study might develop into a linguistic

¹ *Revue des Lettres modernes*, 1964.

² *Tempus*, pp. 262 ff.

one. On the other hand, a philologist, setting out to give his students some idea of the characteristic features of that most difficult of languages, sixteenth-century French, might illustrate his remarks by contrasting the language used by Clement Marot in his fable about the lion and the rat with that used by Marie de France in her twelfth-century version of the same story and with the better-known La Fontaine account in the seventeenth century. After the work of Spitzer and Auerbach it would be extremely difficult for any competent modern philologist to remain within the strict confines of mere language teaching in dealing with these fables ; he would end up by treating the three versions as both language and literature.

By the time a student reached the third year, having usually spent a year abroad, his linguistic consciousness would be fully developed. He would then be ready for what would amount to an advanced seminar in French linguistics. Instead of having, as in the traditional system, one teacher for prose composition, who would give a final, more or less definitive rendering into French of a passage of English, he would have two teachers, one English, one French. They would all, teachers and taught, settle down for two hours instead of one to a discussion of the text before them, following any avenues of approach into the realm of language. This kind of prose composition would not be an archaic, hidebound discipline, but a linguistic adventure, a highly stimulating and enlightening exercise for Englishman and Frenchman alike. To give a good rendering of some of the four-star passages to be found in modern manuals of French Prose Composition is in these circumstances the reverse of a hack task : it demands a knowledge of both languages in breadth and depth and tests to the full every aspect of a person's linguistic capacity. Understood in this way, prose composition is emphatically not a waste of time, and I am convinced that it would be a serious mistake to jettison it from our university courses.

Until now I have made no mention of the teaching medium—French or English—to be used in university courses. On the one hand it is argued that students should be exposed to as much living French as possible and that French should be the medium for most instruction : on the other it is held that a teacher can

only do justice to a work of art when using his native language. In theory, both points of view are valid : in practice, however, the second view seems to me to be exaggerated. It assumes that a university teacher is communicating to his class thoughts of such delicacy and subtlety as to be beyond his power of expression in any but his native tongue. In my university teaching experience this is seldom true, even for the third year of studies, let alone for the first and second. In my own undergraduate experience it was certainly not this kind of rarefied communication which I normally received. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that it is more difficult for an Englishman to handle his subject in French ; more effort is needed to make sure that the students are following all the time ; technical and unfamiliar words have to be patiently explained ; the pace is usually slower. Yet, all in all, the gain is considerable as students become accustomed to hearing French in widely differing contexts, to taking notes in French, and, at least to a certain extent, to thinking and expressing their thoughts in French. The English teacher will not be perfect in his command of the language ; he will not always express himself in the most elegant French ; he may well make mistakes of a stylistic or even grammatical nature. Yet it would be a bold man who would affirm that he never made this kind of mistake in his own tongue. The pages of Harmer's *The French Language Today*, of Grevisse's *Le Bon Usage*, of Frei,¹ Bauche,² Guiraud³ and many others abound in examples of errors (or infractions of the norm, as some grammarians would call them) which are committed daily by Frenchmen of all sorts and conditions. A few more made by Englishmen would make little difference. Where, as in Manchester, there are a number of French people on the staff, it seems sensible that they should use their native tongue even in first-year teaching, and desirable that the rest of the staff should make an effort to maintain the atmosphere of French, unless their material is particularly recalcitrant.

It is a far cry from the *Tretiz de Langage* of Walter of Bibbesworth to the kind of scheme I have been trying to outline. The basic aim is today much as it was seven hundred years ago : to

¹ *La Grammaire des Fautes* (Paris, 1929).

² *Le Langage populaire* (Paris, 1920).

³ *Le français populaire* (Paris, 1965).

spread a knowledge of French throughout this country. But the experience of centuries and the growing improvement in techniques should enable us to achieve far more satisfactory results. From our present experiments in Manchester it is hoped that there will come some advancement and yet more experiment in the field of language teaching and language learning. Our aim—whatever our method—will always be the same: “apprendre une langue, c’est apprendre comment l’on pense dans cette langue.”¹

¹ R. Barthes, *Critique et Vérité* (Paris, 1966). I am indebted to Mr. D. Secrétan for drawing my attention to this book.