Language Learning & Language Teaching

Pedagogical Norms for Second and Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

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Studies in Honour of Albert Valdman

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The *LL&LT* monograph series publishes monographs as well as edited volumes on applied and methodological issues in the field of language pedagogy. The focus of the series is on subjects such as classroom discourse and interaction; language diversity in educational settings; bilingual education; language testing and language assessment; teaching methods and teaching performance; learning trajectories in second language acquisition; and written language learning in educational settings.

Volume 5

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Introduction

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The concept of *pedagogical norm* has been in existence since the 1960s. Grounded in both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic principles, pedagogical norms guide the selection and sequencing of target language features for language teaching and learning. Such selection principles are more important than ever today as language teachers and material developers strive to incorporate an increasing number of varied aspects of language into the curriculum and to deliver it to a widening range of students. This book both situates and expands on this concept highlighting the interaction of research and pedagogy. Pedagogical norms involve research into the norms of actual language use and the implementation of those norms for pedagogical purposes, from designing textbook materials to creating daily classroom activities. The intended audience of this volume reflects the diversity of interests represented by the intersection of research and pedagogy. It is aimed at researchers researching the norms of language use and at practioners, including teachers, teacher-educators, and materials developers, who ultimately use research findings in a pedagogical context.

In the 1950s, the years leading up to the development of the concept of pedagogical norm, the language teaching field was firmly grounded in structural linguistics and the teaching of grammatical structures was paramount. The emphasis was on teaching grammar, with structures often being sequenced on the basis of a contrastive analysis between the target language and the native language of the students. The goal of language teaching was to develop new language habits in the students. To this end, there was little use of creative language and error-free utterances were the goal. Further, the targeted grammatical structures to be taught were those of the "standard" language and little thought was given to what the actual standard was.

The entire research climate concerning language, language learning, and language teaching began to change in the late 1950s and 1960s with Chomsky's writings (e.g., 1957, 1965). Language was viewed as a cognitive system (as opposed to a system that relied heavily on the concept of stimulus-response theory) that is part of the mental structure of all human beings. With regard to language learning, there was a concomitant, profound change in the view of how languages (first and second) were learned. The change emphasized the innate system that, it was claimed, all human beings have from birth and which allows language to develop on the basis of language-specific input. With regard to second language acquisition, the related debate focused on the extent to which this system is still available for post-pubescent language learners.

At the same time that Chomsky was introducing his concept of language, work in sociolinguistics was beginning to take hold. Variation was recognized as a significant part of languages that depended on such concepts as social status of interactants, the relationship between interactants, and the context of an interaction (see, in particular, work by Fasold and Shuy 1970; Labov 1966, 1967, 1970; Shuy 1967; Shuy, Wolfram, and Riley 1968; Wolfram 1969). The notion that all dialects are equally grammatical and that the standard language is the norm for reasons other than linguistic ones (e.g., social, economic, political) became commonplace and widely-accepted.

From a pedagogical perspective, standard languages typically have written materials as well as a codified system of pronunciation and spelling. Because non-standard languages have not been developed in this way, it is difficult to base pedagogical materials on them. Therefore, it is clear that for social and pedagogical purposes, the standard language was preferred as a teaching target. But, given the recognition of the important phenomenon of variation and dialects, the selection was not always clear cut, as is evidenced by some of the issues surrounding World Englishes, discussed in the journal with the same title (*World Englishes: Journal of English as an International and Intranational Language*).

As a cognitive approach to language was beginning to emerge and as the richness of language variation was being explored, the field of language learning was coming into existence. In early pedagogical and learning models (e.g., Lado 1957; Fries 1945, 1957), language learning was seen as a process by which new habits were instilled in learners with an emphasis on the need to eradicate errors because errors represented incorrect habits. However, the conceptualization and significance of errors took on a different role with the publication of Corder's (1967) article "The Significance of Learners' Errors". Unlike the typical view held at the time by teachers, errors, in Corder's view, are not just to be

seen as something to be eradicated, but rather can be considered important in and of themselves. Rather than being red flags, errors provide evidence of a system — that is, evidence of the state of a learner's knowledge of the second language. Similar to research on child language acquisition, second language errors were no longer seen as a reflection of faulty imitation. Rather, they represented indications of a learner's attempt to figure out some system, that is, to impose regularity on the language the learner is exposed to. As such, they are evidence of an underlying rule-governed system.

As the notion of a second-language system (Interlanguage) grew, researchers began to look at stages of development. It became clear that second and foreign language learners typically passed through natural stages as they learned another language. Many of the stages are ungrammatical (e.g., "no go") and learners were even found to "regress" from apparent correct forms to incorrect forms. This phenomenon is known as "U-shaped learning" (cf. Lightbown 1983).

The preceding discussion represents a brief synopsis of the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and psycholinguistic backdrop against which Valdman developed the concept of pedagogical norm. Briefly, a pedagogical norm is a combination of language systems and forms selected by linguists and pedagogues to serve as the immediate language target, or targets, that learners seek to acquire during their language study. In other words, pedagogical norms represent a mid-point, or series of mid-points, for learners as they progress toward acquiring native language norms. In the professional literature, they have been applied to teaching grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, sociolinguistic differences, and notions of communicative competence.

Valdman (1989:21) identifies four principles that guide the elaboration of pedagogical norms:

- They should reflect the actual speech of target language speakers in authentic communicative situations.
- They should conform to native speakers' idealised view of their speech use.
- They should conform to expectations of both native speakers and foreign learners concerning the type of linguistic behaviour appropriate for foreign learners.
- They should take into account processing and learning factors.

Pedagogical norms are simple in concept: select and teach a form of language that is acceptable to native speakers but easier to learn than the full native language system. Putting that apparently simple concept into practice, however, is quite complex, because, as Valdman explains "pedagogical norms are not static"

(Valdman 1989: 16); they shift as languages evolve, as international expectations for learner speech mature, and as learners progress in their second language development.

This volume revisits the notion of pedagogical norms and their various manifestations for different languages and different aspects of language in order to inform current professional discussion about expectations for native and for non-native speech and the match or mismatch between them, and also about learning processes and the students who use them. In addition to issues discussed above, norms for language teaching are becoming even more important given the increasing number of heritage language learners. They present specific needs and demand that questions of the target language and structures be addressed from a new perspective. These learners have needs unlike those of the traditional language classroom learners with whom many teachers and materials developers are familiar. For example, heritage learners come from backgrounds in which the target language is quite familiar to them from the context of their home life. This variety is very often a non-standard dialect, but nonotheless a dialect that they control reasonably well.

The volume addresses the following questions: What are appropriate goals for foreign language learning? What norms serve these goals? How might instruction help learners appreciate, understand, and eventually use language in its varied forms? What data do we need to make informed pedagogical decisions? In what directions do current studies point us? The book is divided into three sections: Defining pedagogical norms, Applying pedagogical norms, and Extending pedagogical norms. Taken together, the articles offer the most recent thought on the notion of pedagogical norm.

The first section, Defining pedagogical norms, opens with an introductory chapter by Magnan and Walz ("Pedagogical norms: Development of the concept and illustrations from French"), in which a detailed analysis of the development of the concept of pedagogical norm is provided. In the second chapter "Norms, native speakers, and reversing language shift", Spolsky provides a discussion of general issues related to norms, both linguistic norms and pedagogical norms. Spolsky provides historical context on this topic reminding us that language teaching has its origins in the teaching of sacred texts and that the norm for the language in question was the sacred language. The idea of a norm continued in secular education with some languages establishing regulatory agencies and others taking a more relaxed attitude. Not only was there concern with the establishment of language norms, norms were also of concern within the context of foreign language teaching where decisions

had to be made as to which variety of a language to teach, in most cases the prestige dialect of the educated population. Spolsky's chapter deals with the myriad issues facing those who are concerned with establishing appropriate pedagogical norms. Among the issues he confronts are those of social and local dialects, bilingual speakers, threatened languages, extinct languages, and minority languages. The language areas that he deals with span the globe. Remarkably, despite different languages and different settings (e.g., Africa, New Zealand, North America, Israel, the Caribbean), problems of establishing norms remain constant. Spolsky concludes by stating the need for norms while at the same time recognizing the diversity that exists among languages. As he states with regard to Valdman's work, we need to have a "sociolinguistically informed language pedagogy".

In "Standard, norm, and variability in language learning: A view from foreign language research", Kramsch also takes a historical perspective on norms, looking at the recent history of second and foreign language research and considering in particular the distinction between a "literate standard", most often used in foreign language teaching and "native speaker norm", the language variety used in second language teaching. She examines some basic principles of language learning and compares those with the norms of foreign language teaching in the United States, France, and Germany, noting a large discrepancy between the two. She argues for a variable pedagogical norm that will allow learners to become aware of the many variants available to speakers and reasons why one might be more appropriate than another in a given context. As she notes, the main question would then be "How much choice do learners have in selecting one grammatical or lexical form over the other and how aware are they of the meaning potential of each choice?" She extends the notion of variability away from traditional grammatical variation to include language use, levels of meaning, input modality, and context of use. Kramsch argues that we need to look at both second language and foreign language practices. Second language pedagogies turned away from the "speaking about" the language to an emphasis on communicative language use. It might be time to look at some practices in foreign language pedagogy, namely also giving the learners tools to reflect upon the language in addition to tools needed to speak it.

Auger's paper "French immersion in Montréal: Pedagogical norm and functional competence", dealing with French immersion programs in Canada, closes this section on creating linguistic and pedagogical norms. Similar to earlier work in the context of French immersion programs, Auger's interest begins with the observation that students who go through immersion programs

are not fully functional in French. Their performance in academic settings is very good and often comparable to that of native speakers of French, but one common complaint from immersion program graduates is that the many years spent learning French do not enable them to communicate with local native speakers in real-life settings such as the workplace. This is a serious problem, as functional competence in French is one of the key objectives of French-language immersion programs. She asks the questions: What can be done to remedy this deficiency? How can French-immersion programs design a curriculum that satisfies both the expectation that these graduates be able to speak *good* French and their need to communicate in naturalistic settings? Auger's paper explores how the notion of a pedagogical norm can help us design a curriculum that will make English speakers in a French-Canadian context functionally bilingual. She suggests that such a curriculum include the study of francophone Québécois literature and particularly literature that uses local language varieties.

The chapters in the second section "Applying Pedagogical Norms" apply the concept of pedagogical norm to pedagogical practices as well as to specific linguistic features. The first two chapters focus on *how* foreign language is taught, expanding the domain of the norm that has traditionally identified *what* is taught. Interpreting Valdman's fourth principle that pedagogical norms should take into account processing and learning factors, VanPatten and Lee both propose pedagogical practices that are consistent with research in input processing and findings from second language acquisition research. In "Communicative classrooms, processing instruction, and pedagogical norms", VanPatten demonstrates the importance of processing and learning factors in communicative language teaching. Surveying the basic tenets of communicative language teaching and generally accepted findings in second language acquisition research, he identifies areas of practice in communicative language teaching that are at odds with research about how foreign or second language learners acquire a language. A review of processing instruction attempts to reconcile pedagogical practice with research on second language acquisition and offers processing instruction as an option for any communication-oriented approach to language that might want to incorporate some type of focus on form. VanPatten thus brings the fourth principle of the pedagogical norm, sensitivity to processing and language learning factors, to bear on approaches to language instruction. Because processing instruction depends on the identification of the processing problems of second language learners, it too offers a perspective on *what* to teach within the approach of processing instruction, which provides one perspective on *how* to teach.

Lee challenges the pedagogical practice of withholding input until after formal presentation. In "The initial impact of reading as input for the acquisition of future tense morphology in Spanish", he demonstrates that second language learners can benefit from exposure to verbal morphology even when it has not been explicitly introduced prior to exposure. Previous first and second language reading research has demonstrated that readers can acquire new vocabulary as a result of reading. Lee extends this research to include the incidental acquisition of Spanish future tense morphology through reading in a second language. The students who participated in his study had no previous knowledge of future tense morphology so that as they read the passage used in the study they encountered the target forms for the first time. Several independent variables were manipulated: the frequency with which the target form occurred in the passages, learner-readers' orientation to the task, and cues to meaning. The effects of these variables were measured on both comprehension, using a free written recall and a multiple-choice comprehension test, and input processing, with half the subjects performing a multiple-choice recognition test and the other half a modified-cloze production test. The results indicated that all three independent variables have some effect on comprehension and input processing as measured using the form recognition test. This study underscores the importance of taking into account processing and learning when developing pedagogical practice.

The chapters that follow focus on areas of instruction, identifying the *what* of language instruction. In "Treating French intonation: Observed variation and suggestions for a pedagogical norm", Ramsey develops the rationale for the teaching of intonation using the concept of the pedagogical norm. She observes that although the pronunciation of vowels and consonants has been addressed in terms of a pedagogical norm, suprasegmental or prosodic elements have generally played a minor role in the foreign-language curriculum. This is the case even despite the fact that intonation contributes significantly to good pronunciation and can actually facilitate accurate production of second language segments. She describes the variation in French intonation observed in the speech of native speakers, as well as the intonation patterns of classroom learners of French at two levels. Using native-speaker and developmental data, she develops a pedagogical norm for French intonation. The norm is sequenced in three stages, sensitive to learners' level of linguistic competence. For example, in the medial position of declarative sentences, native speakers produce a simple rise or a complex contour ending in a rise. In contrast, beginning students do not consistently produce rising contours in the middle of sentences. At the

initial stage Ramsey suggests that teachers present two possible types of rises for this context; as the level of language learning advances, the suggestions for an appropriate pedagogical norm for medial contours become more complex and more complete.

Ossipov and Kerr close this section on applying pedagogical norms with treatments of variant word orders in French. Ossipov's concern is with left dislocation while Kerr's is somewhat broader, including left dislocation and other pragmatically based word orders in French. They both argue against the nearly exclusive attention in French classrooms to canonical word order of subject–verb–object. In "Dislocated subjects in French: A pedagogical norm", Ossipov examines three French corpora (two from France and one from Québec) to determine what the preferred dislocated constituent is (generally an NP or a tonic pronoun), what they are co-referent with (subject clitics), what the clitic pronoun is (*ce/ça*), and the extent to which left dislocation is pragmatically motivated. She outlines contexts within which it would be appropriate to encourage learners to use left dislocated sentences and presents learner data that show how left dislocated structures might cause less confusion than their attempts at canonical structures.

Kerr's work "Variant word-order constructions: To teach or not to teach? Evidence from learner narratives" deals with pragmatically based constructions, such as left dislocation and *c'est*-clefts (*C'est Marie qui aime Pierre* [It's Marie who loves Pierre]) and *ya*-clefts (*il y a Pierre qui arrive* [there is Pierre who is coming]). Like many others in this volume, Kerr acknowledges the disconnect between what is taught in textbooks and what is reality vis-à-vis the spoken language. This notwithstanding, she advocates that the initial presentations to learners be in the form of canonical word order. She bases this argument on Valdman's work on pedagogical norms, particularly the principle that processing and learning factors should be taken into account. Hers is an empirical study in which learners of French provided narrative data. Her results show that the pragmatic mode is rarely used. She rephrases the question of pedagogical practice with regard to pragmatically-based constructions to a question of *when*. Based on evidence from learning, she advocates delaying the presentation of discourse-based features until learners have greater competence in the second/foreign language.

In the chapters in the final section of this volume "Extending Pedagogical Norms" the concept of pedagogical norm is expanded beyond its traditional areas of focus. Adding to the work on pedagogical norms in the areas of phonology, morphology, and syntax, Jourdain and Scullen, Fox, and Blyth offer

convincing arguments for and demonstrations of pedagogical norms for communication strategies, comprehension, and narrative structure. Jourdain and Scullen demonstrate the viability of developing pedagogical norms for communication strategies in "A pedagogical norm for circumlocution in French". Circumlocution, the act of compensating for gaps in the linguistic repertoire, is used by both learners and native speakers to sustain or enhance communication. Although some learners develop such strategies on their own (and some do not), they may all benefit from instructional input that provides evidence of how the act of compensation is realized in the colloquial speech of native speakers. Because little work exists that documents the circumlocution strategies of native-speakers of French, Jourdain and Scullen report the results of a study of native-speaker circumlocution. The report serves two functions: to show that not all categories of circumlocution that have been identified in the communication strategy literature are realized in the French data and to provide models of those categories that are represented. Drawing on the native-speaker corpus, on learner examples from the same task that was completed by the native speakers, and on established proficiency levels of learners of French, the authors develop two sequenced pedagogical norms, one for lexical choice and one for syntactic structure. They also offer examples of classroom activities that engage learners in circumlocution.

In "Incorporating variation in the French classroom: A pedagogical norm", Fox is concerned not with the traditional area of language production, but rather with reception. She argues that the standard language, which she calls Standard Metropolitan French, may be sufficient for production, but students will not have developed sufficient knowledge of French in its international dimension unless they are familiar, at least receptively, with other varieties. She uses Standard Québec French as an example to show usefulness of using another standard variety (that spoken in Québec) even in instances when the target of instruction is standard French as spoken in France. This recognition of multiple standards, she argues, provides an additional richness to the language classroom and in the case of phonetics, another dataset that can be used to make students aware of differences between their native language and French. She therefore extends the notion of pedagogical norm to incorporate instruction in the comprehension of language varieties other than standard French, as spoken in France.

In "Between orality and literacy: Developing a pedagogical norm for narrative discourse", Blyth samples the range of variation in the common genre known as the narrative. Narrative discourse varies along many different parameters

including modality (oral vs. written), formality (formal vs. informal), narrative tone (detached vs. involved), narrative person (first person vs. third person), syntax (fragmented vs. integrated), genre (fiction vs. non-fiction), and subgenre (such as newspaper article, nursery rhyme, novel, or campfire story). He applies the principles for identifying a pedagogical norm to develop a norm for narrative discourse that is sensitive to both native-speaker variation and second language acquisition research on the discourse and grammatical development of second language narrative. He observes that unlike the grammatical features for which pedagogical norms have been developed previously, the speech act of narrative is made up of many grammatical and rhetorical components that are themselves highly variable (e.g., tense–aspect morphology). He proposes that narrative discourse may be arranged along a continuum of complexity: The easiest narratives to produce and comprehend for second language learners would (a) refer to specific singulative past experiences; (b) contain a foreground but no background; (c) follow the chronological order of events; and (d) require no narrator evaluation. At the other end of the continuum, the most complex narratives would (a) refer to generic experiences that are difficult to individuate; (b) contain a mutually contextualizing foreground and background with multiple episodes; (c) include flashbacks and flash forwards; and (d) require extensive evaluation by the narrator. Blyth proposes a pedagogical sequence in which learners would progress from routines, reports, fairy tales or folk tales, and finally to conversational stories or short stories. Such a progression would span several semesters, illustrating the importance of pedagogical norms in curricular development.

Taken together, the chapters in this volume illustrate how the concept of pedagogical norm mediates the close relationship among descriptions of the target language, second language acquisition research, language teaching methods, and pedagogical materials. As the chapters show, the development of instructional materials based on pedagogical norms can begin either in research or in practice. Descriptions of processes that drive second language acquisition may provide information to practioners who then develop materials or pedagogical approaches. Practioners may identify areas where authentic input or materials are not readily available or where learners have difficulty, which, in turn, will lead, respectively, to research on language use and second language acquisition and processing.

The chapters collectively illustrate how the concept of pedagogical norm applies to all components of language, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse. Research that describes native-speaker use in all these