

# DfE & University of Reading CPD in MFL

## Primary MFL Session 1: Speaking Articulation, phonology, intonation, accent

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015

4.30-6.30 pm

Institute of Education, University of Reading

# Speech: Developing Foundations

## PDC Principles:

- Principle 5: Reading and Listening

Target-like sounds will form the foundations for developing sound/spelling links in the new language.

Ability to discriminate sounds will assist listening comprehension – linking to familiar words

- Principle 6: Feedback

Build self-confident learners by developing links between strategies and effectiveness.

- Principle 8: Core Principle

Develop language skills and knowledge which underpins skills development i.e. effective, intelligible oral communication.

# Supporting Practice with Research

- To develop an understanding of the importance of articulation, phonology, intonation and accent as part of a holistic language teaching programme.
- PDC principles are grounded in language teaching and learning research.
- Principled practice is easy to adapt to your own contexts – you know your learners best!!

# Speaking: developing foundations

## Lower level processes:

- Articulation: the physical process of making sounds.
- Phonology: the sound system of a language.  
the ability to produce sounds.  
the ability to discriminate sounds.

## Higher level processes:

- Intonation: the “music” of language.  
varying pitch in connected speech.
- Accent: a way of speaking a language.  
everyone’s got one!!

# Importance of Teaching Sounds

- Unless explicitly instructed development of sounds will reflect first language - L1 (Genesee et al., 2008).
- Aptitude: some children and adults struggle with perceiving and producing sounds (Nikbakht, 2011).
- Explicit instruction in phonetic production and perception helps (Kouti, 2013).
- Present sounds in a multi-modal method (visuals, enactment, tactile, some explanation) (Maniruzzaman, 2008; Nikbakht, 2011).
- Emphasise self-correction and self-monitoring – learner autonomy (Nikbakht, 2011).
- Learners must receive pertinent, corrective feedback (Eskenazi, 1999).
- Attitude/Identity: relating speaking in a new language to “self” (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006).

# Why teach lower level speaking skills?

## 1. Articulation

- Sound Perception and Production
- Exploring the physical properties of new sounds could help to create and store these in memory.
- Certain sounds are distinctive to their languages:
  - French nasals and vowel sounds
  - Spanish 'r' sounds
  - German "front" vowels with umlauts (in writing).

## 2. Phonology

- Connecting sounds with meaning.
- Understanding individual sounds can change meaning.
- Discriminating and producing sounds within words.
- Practising segmenting words into component parts (helps with reading).

# Teaching Articulation



## 1. Multimodal Presentation:

- Visuals/gestures as articulatory cues – associative memory.

## 2. Explicit Information to aid Discrimination/Production & Error Correction

- Describing how new sounds are formed could be useful (learners may struggle to differentiate new from existing sounds).
  - Rounded, tense lips (French) versus lazy (English) lips!

## 3. Practise and Self Correction

- Practise making and listening to discrete sounds.
  - Use talk tins or voice recorders so learners can hear their own sounds and experiment with pronunciation.
  - Tongue twisters: La robe rouge de Rosalie est ravissante!

# Teaching Phonology

## 1. Self and Peer Correction

- Practise making and listening to words/sentences.
  - Use talk tins or voice recorders so learners can hear their own spoken words.

## 2. Practising Sounds in Communicative (Meaning-Based) Activities

- Practise saying and hearing different but close sounds within words (minimal pairs).
  - French – bon versus bain
  - Spanish – pero versus perro
  - German minimal pairs – Land – langt

- Discuss the meaning of particular sounds:

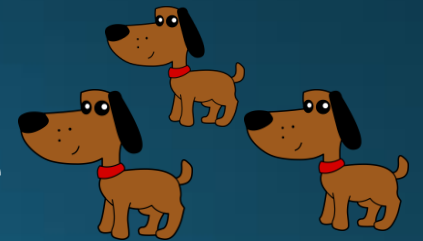
Hund



versus

- Practise identifying sounds in words, songs and poems.

Hunde



## 3. Practise Sound Discrimination

- Identify the number of syllables in a word (onset/rime).



# Why teach higher level speaking skills?

- The “music” of language is linked to both pitch and stress. Teaching these concepts is challenging in beginner classrooms but can be usefully contrasted with English for children to develop an understanding of how sounds at word level and above can contribute to meaning and communication (solve some communicative breakdowns, potentially!)

## 1. Stress

- Stress (word) can be really important for meaning in some languages (produce/produce).
- Stress (sentence) can vary between languages e.g. stress in French words generally falls on last syllable but moves in English words.
  - Syllable-timed languages: the time it takes to say a sentence depends on the syllables in the sentence.
  - Stress-timed languages: certain words are stressed and others are shortened to fit the rhythm, so the time it takes to say a sentence depends on how many stresses there are in it.

## 2. Pitch

- Pitch (rising) can be used to make questions without question forms.

## 3. Intonation

- Intonation (sentence) is important for “communicative competence” – politeness, social acceptability.

# Teaching Stress, Pitch and Intonation

## 1. Practise identifying stress in words and sentences:

- Marking stress in words with gestures, enhanced print.
- Marking stress in sentences by conducting.

## 2. Practising Pitch and Intonation in Communicative (Meaning-Based) Activities

- Practise polite requests and demands.
- Listening to short extracts of spoken French (and even contrasting with other languages) to hear the “music”.
- Difficult to develop speaking at sentence level – use “formulaic utterances” to encourage intonation above word level e.g. Ça va bien, et toi? ¿Como se llama? Ich spiele gern Fußball.

## 3. Language Learner Identity

- Use puppets if children feel anxious or self-conscious about speaking differently.
- Explore ideas of multilingualism in the classroom – your EAL children are a great resource!

# Considerations for Teaching Pronunciation

- An already established first language sound system (Nikbakht, 2011).
- Age: despite popular perception, the age advantage might well be linked more to exposure to language than innate abilities (Muñoz, 2006).
- Motivation: not all children enjoy language learning and some find it particularly challenging – sensitive correction (Courtney, 2014; Graham et al., 2014).
- Exposure to the target language: quality and quantity (Fraser, 2000).
- Is the speech intelligible to a sympathetic speaker?

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