

Is that really appropriate? Trainer's notes

Aims	To identify the factors which make teachers' language more or less appropriate in different classroom contexts To encourage teachers to reflect on their own choice of exponents in class
Syllabus area	The functions commonly used by the teacher in the classroom
Timetable fit	For use as input on appropriacy of teacher language
Interaction pattern	Individual or pair work
Timing	20 minutes
Materials needed	One copy of the worksheet (3.2A) for each trainee

In Module 3, when exponents are revisited in a classroom context, the term appropriacy broadens in scope beyond register (formality or informality of exponents) to include the ideas of grading language and sequencing instructions, as well as sensitivity to age and culture.

Instructions

- Spend two to three minutes leading the development of a mind map on the board to introduce the topic. Write the words **APPROPRIACY OF TEACHERS' LANGUAGE** in the middle and elicit what factors affect a trainee's choice of language in the classroom, prompting where necessary. Include some of the following list, but don't worry about mentioning all factors at this stage.
 - Students' language level
 - The need to sequence instructions
 - Sensitivity to age and maturity
 - Culture
 - Clarity and precision of instructions
- Divide the class into pairs. Display the worksheet and explain that the left-hand column shows the context and the right-hand one shows the teachers' language.
- Explain that only three of the ten examples illustrate appropriate teachers' language. Ask the trainees to identify the three appropriate examples. For the other examples, the trainees should decide why they are inappropriate and rephrase them to make them appropriate. Hand out one worksheet per pair.
- Monitor, answering vocabulary questions and ensuring that trainees are focusing on the teaching situation described in the left-hand column.
- Have each pair compare answers with another pair.
- Conduct feedback. Elicit any further factors trainees have noticed from the worksheet to complete the mind map.

Answer key

- ✗ Too vague. This sounds as if the teacher is not really preparing their students well. The teacher needs to work in some report-writing skills lessons before setting this kind of homework.
- ✗ Language not graded, too technical for basic level. Teacher could model the target word, or introduce the phonemic script in class little by little.
- ✗ Maturity of students might make this question insulting and childish. Try: 'Does your mother work, Pablo? What does she do?'
- ✓ Clear and well supported with body language.
- ✓ Clear and appropriate.
- ✗ Too technical a concept for this age group. Young learners can often produce a structure before understanding / needing to understand it. Respond to the content instead, for example: 'Do you enjoy cooking, Raj? Me too. I love cooking breakfast for my kids on Sundays.'
- ✓ Clear and appropriate (though dependent on appropriate intonation).
- ✗ Too familiar and failing to show respect, unless previously invited to use first names. Stick to surnames and a more formal register: 'Good morning, Mrs Schwartz. Would you please work with Mr Huber?'
- ✗ Confusing. The sequencing of this instruction is muddled and unclear – do the students work in pairs to solve the crossword or create their own? Try: 'First solve the crossword on page 48. When you finish, check your answers with a partner. Then, make a similar crossword with that partner.'
- ✗ May embarrass the student and make her feel stupid in front of her classmates. Try: 'Can anyone remember how to spell *beautiful*?' or: (quietly, in the student's ear) 'Check the spelling here, Marian.' (pointing)

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Three of these examples of teacher language are perfectly appropriate for the classroom context described. The others could be improved. Find them, say why they are inappropriate and suggest how the teacher could rephrase the exponent without changing the classroom function.

1	Level: Intermediate (B1–B2) Age: Young adult – Adult Group: Academic English exam preparation course	‘In the exam you have to write a report, so I’d like you to practise this for homework tonight. Report writing is quite a technical skill, so think carefully and do some research before you begin.’
2	Level: Elementary (A2) Age: Adults Group: KET preparation	‘The phonemic script next to each headword in the dictionary provides plenty of clues about accurate pronunciation.’
3	Level: Elementary (A2) Age: Young adults Group: University students	‘Pablo, what’s your Mummy’s job?’
4	Level: Elementary (A2) Age: Adult Group: One-to-one business	‘Look at the box at the bottom of the page.’ (points) ‘How many words contain this sound?’ (models /ð /)
5	Level: Intermediate (B1–B2) Age: Pre-teens Group: First year at secondary school	‘Next I’d like you to compare your answers in groups. Listen for your letter.’ (Indicates each student around the room.) ‘A, B, C, D, A, B ... Now find your new group and compare your answers, please.’
6	Level: Intermediate (B1) Age: Primary school Group: Bilingual programme	‘The verb pattern after <i>like</i> is often <i>-ing</i> . I know you understand that, because I’ve heard you use it.’
7	Level: Pre-intermediate (A2–B1) Age: Pre-teens Group: After-school club	‘Excellent. I’m very happy with that. Well done, boys.’ (looking at the finished product of a group project)
8	Level: Upper-intermediate (B2) Age: Adult Group: Legal English course	(To a senior partner in a law firm, in a culture where titles and surnames are used to show respect) ‘Hi, Patty. We’re just checking homework – work with Marcus, please.’
9	Level: Upper-intermediate (B2) Age: Adult Group: English teachers’ language improvement course	‘Make a similar crossword after you’ve solved the one in the book. It’s on page 48. Don’t forget to check your answers! Work in pairs for the second task.’
10	Level: Intermediate (B1–B2) Age: Young adult Group: Refresher course	(In open class) ‘Do I really need to tell you how to spell <i>beautiful</i> again, Marian?’