**Question:** What standards would you set in your classroom? If as the teacher, you are not setting native like standards, what are you expectations of the students?

**Answer:** It is important that we don’t put pressure on our students to attain a level they are not capable of attaining. Most of our students will never attain native like competency so we should make it clear that this is okay.

**Main themes:**

- **Native speakers:**
  - Learned in childhood, someone who did not learn a language in childhood cannot be a native speaker of the language.
  - ‘Individuals cannot change their native language any more than they can change who brought them up.’ Cook p.186

- **L2 user:** someone who uses the second language.

- **L2 learner:** still in the process of learning the language.

- Native-speakers used as a model all the time as an unattainable goal in the L2 classroom.
  - Texts books only have native speaker dialogue p. 189

- Indirect evidence for the importance of the role of the native speaker in English language teaching is seen through to debate about which groups of native speakers should be the model for L2 learners.
  - Example: do we model British English, Australian English ...
  - “This discussion assumes that the choice lies between different types or aspects of native speakers, not in whether to use them as models at all.” Cook p.188

- “Traditional methodologies based on the native speaker usually define language learners in terms of what they are not...” Cook p.189

- Because of the prominence of native speakers in the language teaching classroom we have failed to recognise that L2 users are speakers in their own right, not just speakers who have failed to attain native-like ability.

- Grammatically judgements and error and analysis, involve comparison of the L2 learner with a native speaker. After this comparison we make a judgement of whether the L2 learner has failed or succeeded in comparison to the native speaker.

- **Multi-competence** is different from an inter-language:
  - Inter-language referrers to the knowledge of the L2 in the speakers mind.
  - This L2 inter-language exists in the same mind as the L1 does.
  - Because no word existed to describe the knowledge of both the L1 and the L2 the term multi-competence was coined./ knowledge of more than one language.
  - Multi-competence: L2 users indisputably have a mind with two languages.
- These two languages cannot be separate from each other. Not only does the first language affect the second, but the second language affects how the first is understood.
- **Examples**
- Code switching shows the intricate links between the two language systems in multi-competent minds.
- L1 speakers have similar competences but L2 users end up with widely differing knowledge.

- Language teaching should be concerned with developing an L2 in a mind that already contains an L1.
- Multi-competent minds, which know two languages, differ from the monolingual mind;
  - “In short, multi-competent L2 users do not have the same knowledge of the L1 monolinguals do; for some this may indeed amount to partial loss of their L1.
  - L2 users are faster and more accurate in language switching tasks. Can engage in code switching, and are therefore able to use both languages at the same time (something that monolingual native speakers cannot duplicate)
  - Translations of idioms into the L2 are understood by L1 users of the original language quicker than monolinguals of the L2.

- Thus it makes our traditional comparison of the L2 learner with the target native speaker goal seem completely ridiculous. An L2 learner should not be judged as having “failed” or “succeeded” in language learning based on the attainment of native speakers competence. The ultimate attainment of L2 learning should be defined in terms of knowledge of the L2. “There is no reason why the L2 component of multi-competence should be identical to the monolinguals L1.”

**Difference or Deficit:**

- “People cannot be expected to conform to the norm of a group to which they do not belong, whether groups are defined by race, class, sex, or any other feature. Today almost all teachers and researchers would agree that a comparison between groups yields differences not deficits.”
- That being said, people think that language learning is an exception and that it is okay to judge and compare L2 learners abilities in comparison to native speakers. L2 learners are an acceptable ‘special case’ in the mind of the general public in which to expect ‘conformity’ from instead of being categorized separately from a group to which they could never belong – they were not born speakers of this language!
- “L2 users are not monolingual native speakers and never will be; they are incapable of changing places as are most women and men.”
- To some people asking L2 learners to speak like native speakers is like saying that black children should earn to speak like white children. This is a very ‘charged’ statement, however it supports Cooks claim that the L2 group is another form of identity that cannot just conform to the standard norm. “L2 learners have to be look at in their own right, not as imitation native speakers.”
“L2 learners should not be treated as an exception to the rule or commonly held belief that one group should not be measured against another.”
“Comparing the characteristics of native speakers and of L2 users is like comparing tomatoes and apples.” – Powerpoint Visual

**Question:** If someone has an accent indicating which part of the world they are from does this mean they are an L2 failure? Or fail to integrate into a society because it will be obvious they are not a part of that culture?

- A French Vinegrower: “My English is not good, but my French accent is perfect”
- This example demonstrates that L2 speakers are critical of themselves and that an individual’s accent may be the factor on which someone judges whether they are ‘good’ or ‘bad’ at their second language. An individual’s pressure on themselves to attain native like competency in a language reflects the pressure that society puts of L2 speakers.

**Consequences for Language Teaching:**

- “Logical consequence= language teaching should place more emphasis on the student as a potential and actual L2 user and be less concerned with the monolingual native speaker.
- “Abandoning the native speaker totally may be unrealistic because this model is so entrenched in teachers’ and students’ minds. Yet steps in the right direction can be taken.”

**Suggestions:**

- Set appropriate goals for L2 Users
  - A syllabus that relates not to native speakers or even L2 users as a general group, but to the wishes of the students’ in that specific classroom
  - Students should shape the process and goals in the classrooms
  - A balance of ‘real world tasks’ (useful outside the classroom) and ‘pedagogic tasks’ (in class, grammatical practice exercises).
  - When using examples in the classroom: L2 users speaking to L2 users, instead of native speakers to native speakers.
  - Instead of focusing on ONE form of a native English speaking Standard such as British, Australian, etc. Bring in an ‘international variety’ of English.
    - English language newspapers from many parts of the world can be accessed on the internet to provide examples of good L2 user English as well as native produced articles.
    - The Straits Times from Malaysia: [http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com/](http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com/)
    - The Santiago Times from Chile: [http://santiagotimes.cl/](http://santiagotimes.cl/)
- Include L2 user Situations and Roles
  - In virtually all communicative or audio-lingual material is always ‘the foreigner asking the way of the native speaker.’
- Ex) Situations involving low levels L2 users may be relevant, provided that they do not fall into the ‘funny foreigner stereotype of Manuel’ like the comic Spanish Waiter in Fawlty Towers who perpetually misunderstands everything addressed to him in English. – Video: “I know nothing”
- An interesting type of L2 user role is the non-native-speaker teachers- students may feel overwhelmed by native-speaker teachers who have achieved a perfection that is out of the students’ reach. The non-native speaker teacher presents a more achievable model.
  - Use Teaching Methods that Acknowledge the Students’ L1
    - The use of L1 in the classroom encourages the developed of multicompetence in which both language are in the same sphere of the brain (and do not reside two separate compartments)
    - Allow students to code-switch when it is natural- an English only classroom is restricting to students who share a common L1- they are expected to use the L2 even in activities in which they would naturally code switch with fellow students who share the L1.
    - “Every activity the student carries out visibly in the L2 also involves the invisible L1.”
    - See the L1 as a positive factor in the class rather than as a negative factor – doing so may simply put a more positive light on what already happens in many classrooms.
    - Second suggestion: to introduce activities that deliberately involve both languages
    - These activities all see the student as an intercultural speaker not an imitation L1 user- to develop the student as a multicompetent speaker rather than than an imitation native speaker.

Conclusion:
- L2 Learners’ battle to become native speakers is lost before it has begun
- L2 learners should be encouraged to recognize their unique status as standing between two worlds and two cultures

Transition:
- Changing the attitude towards L2 users and brining the L1 more in teaching can be beneficial for L2 learners in embracing their unique identity as L2 users and not imitation native speakers.