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Casper C. de Jonge, Gijsbert Rutten (eds)
The History of Linguistics in the Context of Education
The Parental Teaching Model, Language Instruction, and Linguistic Innovation

ABSTRACT
This essay explains a conservative trend in ancient language teaching through the model of parental teaching used for teacher-student relationships. Parental and other transmission of knowledge, to the extent that they permit innovation at all, are examples of ‘anchored innovation’. The concept of ‘anchoring’ is a useful tool to understand how what is considered ‘new’ is connected to, anchored in, the familiar or traditional. The paper studies in particular the use of auctoritas as a criterion for linguistic correctness and the position of the auctor as simultaneously a model and an exception.

1. Introduction
Ancient and medieval language instruction has an oddly paradoxical flavor.\(^1\) On the one hand, it is aimed at enabling the student to produce new text independently, and do so not just correctly, but brilliantly. But on the other hand, it is a highly controlling way of teaching, with a sharp focus on correctness and discipline: it is normative and prescriptive and has little tolerance for originality, which is primarily construed as a form of deviance. ‘New’ language is easily marked as ‘wrong’. There may be all kinds of good reasons for this, partly commonsensical and to do with a wish to preserve communicative clarity, which is served by using what is familiar and traditional. I will argue that it is also partly understandable if we look at ancient representations of the relationship between teachers and students, which is to a large extent modeled on that between parents and children. Both relationships are aimed at transmission.

\(^1\) I would like to thank audiences at Leiden (conference of the Studienkreis ‘Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft’ 2014) and the Basel Classics Department (Tagung des Doktoratsprogramms on ‘Norm und Sonderfall’) for their helpful discussion of earlier versions of this paper. I would like to thank Casper de Jonge for his careful reading of an earlier version of this essay and his valuable suggestions.
2. Parental Teaching

As we have realized at least since Aristotle, human beings learn by nature. But, as Cicero adds, representing a Stoic view on human society, human beings also teach by nature. Sharing our knowledge with others is a form of prosocial behavior. Such teaching naturally takes place in the cultural transmission of information between generations, primarily from parent to child. Parents are the natural teachers of their children. Apart from our common experience as and with young children, we can also point to further-reaching and culturally embedded consequences of this state of affairs, e.g. the frequent phenomenon of the ‘family business’, where the same work and expertise is passed on from father to son. This is also true for the work of grammarians and rhetoricians: for example, father and son Apollinaris were famous for constructing a way to teach the forms of classical literature, even when they were forbidden by the emperor Julian the Apostate to actually teach Homer, Greek tragedy and Plato: together they rewrote parts of the Bible according to the conventions of classical genres.

Handing down knowledge to the next generation can also take the form of scholarly works dedicated to the sons of the authors, where these sons are to be considered the primary addressees of the book. This is true for well-known authors such as Cato the Elder, Cicero, Seneca the Elder, Macrobius, but also for language specialists like the grammarian Charisius, the Virgil commentator and rhetorician Claudius Donatus, and the author of metrical handbooks Terentianus Maurus.

The relationship between parents and children is in turn the most natural model for that between teachers and students, and this modeling is made explicit from our oldest sources onwards. In the Hippocratic oath, the future doctor is enjoined to take care of his patients in such a manner that he will not cause them to suffer...
The Parental Teaching Model, Language Instruction, and Linguistic Innovation

tor promises to hold his medical teachers in the same esteem as his parents. In later Greek, professional groups such as grammarians or doctors can be labeled 'the sons of the grammarians', or 'the sons of the doctors', which is basically a paraphrase for 'grammarians' or 'doctors' (παιδες γραμματικων / ἰατρων). If you betray your school by holding dissenting opinions, you can be called a 'father-beater', or patrólaios (πατρόλαιος). Some scholars even change their names into that of their teacher, which can be very misleading for us, present-day scholars, who are trying to keep apart, for instance, the work of Tyrannio the elder, and the unrelated scholar Diocles, who renamed himself Tyrannio — the younger. Quintilian is explicit about the fact that teachers are in loco parentis, and considers it a requirement of good student behavior that they honor their teachers as they would their parents.

3. High Hopes and Bad Outcomes

It is a natural thing for parents to have high hopes for their children, to the point where they hope their sons will surpass them. The oldest example from classical antiquity is to be found in Homer, with Hector praying for his son Astyanax (who unfortunately will be killed by the Greeks before any of his father's wishes comes true).

Similarly, a teacher may be happy when a student reaches a level of expertise indistinguishable from his own: Quintilian relays the story of the teacher of rhetoric who perversely promoted the use of obscure language in his students (he would yell at them 'skotison', 'make it obscure!') and whose highest praise was: 'well done, not even I could understand that!' However, Hector's dream of positive emulation is not the only possible outcome of the parent-child or teacher-student relationship. And examples of bad outcomes of too much originality may confirm the parents in their attempts to train their children to be as similar as possible to their models, and to define excellence as matching the model exactly. Emulation can go wrong, and the student's or child's achievements may come down to a perverse surpassing of those of their parents and teachers. After Odysseus' slaughter of the suitors, Telemachus is ordered by his father to execute by the sword the disobedient women servants. Instead, he refuses them such a 'clean death', and devises a needlessly creative and much crueler and humiliating mode of execution.

In the domain of rhetoric and argument there are several stories about students who apply what they have learnt in school by holding dissenting opinions, or teacher-student relations. And examples of 'eristics' that is Socratic rhetoric at its worst. 'What is a law?', he asks Pericles, who believes that he has the expertise to answer that question. But it turns out to be extremely difficult for him to distinguish a 'law' from a form of authoritarian violence. The whole discussion turns into a dangerous critique of democracy as, ultimately, a form of violence. When Pericles reacts in a resigned way and says, 'Ah, Alcibiades, these kinds of games I was also really good at when I was your age. No one could beat me at them', Alcibiades retorts: 'I wished I had been learning from you then, Pericles, when you were still at your best.' In this triangular constellation of two parental figures (teacher and guardian) and a student/child, we can see how the behavior of some of Socrates' students may have damaged his image with the general public.

Similarly, in Aristophanes' comedy Clouds (revised version ca. 420 BCE), the elderly Strepsiades is incapable of learning the sophisticated views expressed by Socrates in the Phrontistērion, the Thinkery. He sends his son Pheidippides to learn all those tricks in his stead, so that the son may deal with the fathers' creditors for him, but soon, the son turns against the father, beats him (thereby turning into a literal patrólaios, see above section 2) and argues by means of his newly acquired rhetorical expertise that this is actually an entirely justified way of behaving. The altercation is framed as a competition, and the son claims explicitly (vs. 1333) that he will defeat his father at speaking (victoria). Both in the case of Alcibiades and Pheidippides, the teacher is Socrates, and he spoils the relationship between his student and their regular father-figure.

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9) Hr. ἀνεξικαθίστατο μὲν τὸν διδάσκαλον με τὴν τέχνην ταύτην ίδια γενέτερον ἔμοι.
10) Quint. 2.2.4–8: ἡ δὲ ἐκ θεῶν δόθη· γεγονέναι πατρόλαιος ἰατροῖς; ὃς ὑπάρχει ἐν πατρίδιν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῃ πατρίδιν, ὁ καλῶς ἑξήκονται ἦσσαν τῶν ἀλλίων ἀνθρώπων, ἔκ τινος πατρόλαιου καὶ ἐκ πολλοῦ ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ πολλοῦ ἀνθρώπων... ('Zeus and other gods: maybe you give that he, too, my son, will be as outstanding among the Trojans as I am myself, valorous in strength, and that he may be a mighty ruler over Troy. And may one day someone say of him when he is returning from war, 'he is much better than his father').
11) Quintilian Inst. 8.2.18 negque id novum vitum est, cum iam apud Tum Livium inventam fuisse praecipuam quibus qui disciplas obscure quae dicentur, liberet. Graeco vero uenis skotion. Unde illa scilicet egregia laudatio: 'tanto melior: ne ego quidem intelle'.
12) A very pertinent formulation of this conservatism in teaching is to be found in Plut. De audenda 37e μονοὶ γὰρ ὁ δὲ βουλευτής μὴ διαφθοράζει, ὃς βουλευτής δεῖ ('for only those who have learned what they should want, live as they want to').
13) Odyssey 22.461–473. The poem bypasses this aberration in silence though, with the possible exception of the qualification ἀξιόστοικοι: the girls die 'most pitifully'.
My third example is not triangular, like the former ones, but it again involves rhetoric, even the alleged beginnings of that discipline. The inventor of rhetoric was supposed to have been the Sicilian Corax. Corax had agreed to teach Tisias and to defer claiming payment until his student had won his first case. Tisias, however, simply never went to court and hence never paid. Corax then proceeded to sue his student, and argued his case as follows: ‘whether I win or lose, Tisias must pay. If I win, the jury ruling in my favor entails he must pay; and if I lose, he will have won his first case and it will be our agreement that entails he must pay’. But Tisias countered by saying: ‘no, whether I win or lose, I do not have to pay: if I win, the jury ruling in my favor entails I won’t have to pay; and if I lose, I will have lost my first case, and it will be our agreement that entails I will not have to pay’. The argument in this case is identical on either side: ‘whether I win or lose, I win’. The jury throws the case out of court with the phrase that would later become proverbial, playing on the name of Corax (which is also the Greek word for crow): ‘a rotten egg from a rotten crow’! Notice that the egg may refer to two different things: the argument, which has been produced by Corax first and which is later more or less repeated to good effect by Tisias; or Tisias himself, the ‘egg’ (student or child) of Corax the crow.17 Parents and teachers are closely related. And competition between student and teacher is a fact of life.

4. Violence Between Teachers and Students

If we cast our net a little wider, and do not restrict ourselves to the language disciplines, it is easy to find more instances of teacher-student relationships which go astray in different ways, and in a worst-case scenario lead to murder — a scenario actually anchored in mythology.18 The teacher may be jealous of the accomplishments of his student, as in the myth about the great inventor Daedalus. He had a student (or nephew) called Perdix (or, in some versions, Talus), a grandson of Athena, who was so creative that he invented the saw just by watching the serrated-looking edges of some fish bones. Daedalus could not stand it, and threw the would-be high flyer off a tower (he was changed into a partridge right before hitting the ground, a bird with a now understandable permanent fear of heights).19

The jealous teacher, then, is one obstacle to an educative process leading to innovation. Obviously, the hotheaded student will hardly get to be an innovator either: the mythical example there is Heracles, who was taught to play the cither by a famous musician named Linus. The story of what happened next is found in several sources. Diodorus Siculus reports it with a number of relevant details.20 Heracles was learning to play the cither, but he was slow-witted and could not deal with what he had to learn. Linus punished him by beating him — actually one of the pedagogical practices most characteristic of ancient teaching. Heracles got mad and beat his teacher to death with the cither. The attribute belonging to the lesson becomes the murder weapon, and Heracles’ musical career ended right there.

This mythical story gave some later teachers food for thought: Aelian related how Alexander the Great also had to teach the cither by a famous musician named Linus. The story of what happened next is found in several sources. Diodorus Siculus reports it with a number of relevant details.21 Heracles was learning to play the cither, but he was slow-witted and could not deal with what he had to learn. Linus punished him by beating him — actually one of the pedagogical practices most characteristic of ancient teaching. Heracles got mad and beat his teacher to death with the cither. The attribute belonging to the lesson becomes the murder weapon, and Heracles’ musical career ended right there.

This mythical story gave some later teachers food for thought: Aelian related how Alexander the Great also had to learn how to play the cither. His
teacher told him to strike a certain string, but Alexander was not easily convinced. ‘What’s the difference’, he said indicating a different one, ‘if I strike that one’. The teacher remembered what had happened to Linus (who in this version had been killed by Heracles with the plectrum, the implement to strike the strings of the cither), and he said: ‘Well, it’s all the same if one is going to be a king — however, it does make a difference if one wishes to become a professional cither player!’ The distinction is important: Alexander is not learning to play the cither in order to become a professional cither player: it is just part of his education.

This story makes us realize that it can take real courage to stand one’s ground as a teacher and insist on one’s conservative standards. The grammarian M. Pomponius Marcellus had to tell the emperor Tiberius that he had used the wrong word in one of his speeches: ‘When Marcellus had criticized a word in one of Tiberius’ speeches, and Ateius Capito declared that it was good Latin, or if not, that it would surely be so from that time on, Marcellus answered: “Capito lies; for you, Caesar, can confer citizenship upon men, but not upon a word“’. Anyone familiar with grammatical and rhetorical terminology will recognize that Tiberius had committed a so-called ‘barbarism’, a mistake in one word. But ‘barbarism’ also connotes the non-Roman, non-Latin character of the word. Marcellus’ claim is that even the Caesar cannot create όνόματα πολιτικά, words with citizenship, words of normal usage in the community. His colleague Capito had implied, in a piece of nasty flattery, that the authority of the emperor would be enough to make his phraseology the new standard. Marcellus refuses this notion of instant authority, to which we will return in section 5. Teaching may require courage and the exercise of free speech, a tricky business when notoriously short-tempered emperors are involved. Marcellus survived as far as we know.

Fig. 3: Martyrdom of St Cassian, from Thieleman J. van Braght, ‘The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians’ (original in Dutch 1660). The Dutch caption reads: ‘Cassianus, a Christian schoolmaster, killed by his pagan students at the orders of the magistrate because of his bearing witness to Jesus Christ, in the year 302’; this illustration by Jan Luyken 1685.
5. Innovation and Breaking the Rules

At this point I would like to return to the issue of normativity and prescription and the problem of when and for whom it is acceptable to break the rules in the process of setting a new standard. Again we may start with a non-linguistic example, involving parent and son: T. Manlius Torquatus, consul of 347 BCE, had given orders not to engage the enemy. When in spite of this his son allowed himself to be drawn into a duel, which he won in the most prestigious and honorable way, the father felt he could not tolerate the rule-breaking, however spectacular and downright ‘good’ the outcome: he had his son put to death.29

Things are unlikely to get this dramatic in issues of language, although people may feel passionately about its correct use. In M. Pomponius Marcellus (see above section 4) we encountered a grammarian who stuck to the rules: a barbarism is a barbarism and not even an emperor gets to commit it without reproach. Yet, when grammarians have to discuss issues of correctness, they appeal not just to rules or to ordinary or educated usage, but as, I mentioned at the outset of this essay, also to the criterion of auctoritas, authority — which in principle does entail the possibility that an emperor will carry the

27) For other incidents, cf. Suetonius (1988: 54f.); Juvenal 7.210ff. claims that while Achilles was still impressed by his teacher (in spite of the fact that that teacher the Centaur Chiron) had a horse’s tail, modern students will even hit their teachers; Plautus Bacch. 109–162 features a recalcitrant young man threatening his old paedagogue (‘I shall become a Hercules and you a Linus’; vs. 155). Plutarch Alcaeus 7.1 reports how Alcrais who at Falerii who had literally tried to betray his students to the Roman Camillus (4th cent. BCE): he too was killed by his students because the honorable Camillus did not accept his offer (Plutarch, Camillus 10).
28) For these Manliana imperia, see Livius Ab urbe condita 8.7.
29) For these Manliana imperia, see Livius Ab urbe condita 8.7.
30) For this criterion, see Siebenborn (1976) ch. 4; Copeland-Shute (2009; 208f.), w. n. 53. Note that auctor itself can be used for creator, author or innovator, but also to indicate a parent (father), e.g. Cic. Tusculanae Disputationes 4.1.2: L. Brutus… praelatus auctorum nobilitatis tuae (i.e. father of the Brutus to whom the work is dedicated); Vergil, Aenid 4.365: nec ibi diva parens genesit nec Durknas auctor... sed... genti te... (father), e.g. Cic. Or. 10: Plautus, non intelligenti solum sed etiam decadentia auctor et magister. The dictionary by Lewis & Short s.v. also claims a use for ‘teacher’: a possible example is Cic. Or. 10: Plautus, non intelligendi solum sed etiam decadentia auctor et magister.

day and that his expression is taken over by others.30 But there seems to be virtually no ‘instant authority’. Authority is bestowed with hindsight. In that sense, the criterion of auctoritas carries the paradox of teaching within itself. Grammarians teach students to abide by a certain norm, and yet, true excellence will judiciously ignore the rules and create its own norms. But these potential future norms will initially look like deviance. An example is the unheard-of form ens for something ‘that is’, an ‘entity’, a term invented by Caesar as an analogically formed participle of the verb esse: Quinittian and Priscian approved, and its use was widespread in medieval logic.31 However, Quintilian lived in the first cent. CE, and Priscian’s floruit is around 500 CE. Acceptance was not instantaneous even in the case of Caesar, or, for that matter, Vergil.

In Suetonius’ Life of Vergil there is a whole list of the criticisms levied at the new star: as Suetonius says, this is not strange, for Homer too had his detractors, even his (lack of) acceptance. Vergil follows the Homeric example. The Bucolics were parodied, and were found pretentious (V. Vergili 43); a phrase like cuium pecus (Ecl. 3.1) was not considered good Latin, but oddly rustic; Vergil was accused of cultivating cacozelia, affected language, but of a new kind: not bombastic or affecting simplicity, but through the use of ordinary words, so the affectation would escape easy detection (ibid. 44). He was also accused of plagiarism. Although Vergil got close, even this auctor par excellence did not win the day instantly or without discussion.

The importance of the auctores in grammar teaching can hardly be overestimated. They are the great literary examples, and that is important because
all grammar teaching is a combination of explaining the linguistic system and studying and interpreting literature. Grammarians are just as much guardians of language and linguistic correctness, as they are guardians of literature, in charge of explaining the literary works of, especially, the great poets.35

The criterion of authority does two things at the same time: it offers certain modes of speech as exemplary, while simultaneously presenting them as exceptional.34 If Cicero or Virgil use a certain phrase, its correctness cannot be called into question: it is exemplary. However, since virtually all language instruction in antiquity was aimed at supporting the production of new text, an important question is whether or not the speech-phenomena that are studied are re-usable, not just as a quotation but in the production of new text. And this is not the case for every instance of authoritative speech: it may be correct in the sense that it cannot be criticized as wrong, but it must often not be reused. It is unsuitable for imitation. Its original use, however, can always be defended, for instance, by poetica licentia, and that phrase in itself signals that what is permitted to a Vergil, may not be permitted to us.35

This means that the grammatical tradition, which aims to train its students to produce correct and attractive Greek or Latin, must pay careful attention to the relationship between norm and imitatio, since norm and exception may refer to the same thing. The Latin grammars, with their third part consisting of discussions of the viti and virtutes of language,36 are particularly explicit about this. Deviations from normative speech may be what earns the poets special praise, but when reproduced in new text by ‘us’ they constitute linguistic faults. They are exceptions that cannot be ignored or written of as faults, and thus they require special measures to be integrated and controlled, ‘disciplined’ into setting somehow into the system that they defy. If students feel challenged to ignore the warning against imitation in an attempt to produce excellence by themselves, they run the risk of falling into the trap of turgid and frigid speech: the diagnosis if someone else than an auctor becomes too adventurous.

6. Don’t Try This at Home

This is the background that must be kept in mind when reading, for instance, Servius (end 4th—beginning 5th cent. CE). His explanations of Vergil’s poetic language are often explicit about the status of his text as a model for new text production, but in other cases we have to be aware that this is the non-explicit subtext.

For example, when discussing the opening of the Aeneid Servius points out that arma virumque, ‘weapons and the man’, is an announcement of the content of the poem (which has an Iliadic part about war and an Odyssey part about the travels of Aeneas): but the first six books are actually about ‘the man’, and the last six about ‘weapons’. The announcement of content, the propositio, is therefore in reverse order. The note declares that this is quite a common figure, and then continues to say: ‘we use this figure also in prose’ (adding an example from Cicero): it is this last phrase that constitutes express permission for the students to follow Vergil in this respect.37 The use of the plural ‘we’ may carry significance here: it includes Servius and his students.

In another note on the same verse, though, Servius comments that the preposition in the phrase ab oris is unusual: ex oris, Servius suggests, would have been better. Virgil has substituted one preposition for another. Such substitutions are common in all parts of speech, but the last remark of Servius’ note warns the students against imitation: don’t try this at home.38

My third example is a note pointing out grammatical phenomena that seem to signify through their opposites: for instance, a passive-looking verb may have active meaning. The phenomenon can be paralleled in several parts of speech, not just in verbs, and Aeneid 1.4 also features an example: in the phrase memorem Iunonis ob iram it is not Juno who has a good memory for things that made her angry, but the anger itself is called memorem: not ‘remembering’, says Servius, but ‘remembered’, quae in memoria erat. However, it is the phrase that caps the note that is crucial to our topic: ‘of these cases, we just cite the ones we have read, but we do not form new ones based on those examples’. The figure of speech is not productive anymore. Note the didactic and inclusive plural, normative and prescriptive. The regularity was broken once: we will point at that text and cite it. However, the figure should not become productive: do not try to replicate in different circumstances.39

This way of handling the great examples from literature will have a long tradition, of which I just offer one example, from the Doctrinale by Alexander

36) See Baratin and Desbordes (1986).
37) Servius in Vergil Aeneid 1.1 arma virumque: figura sita est ut non eo ordine respondeamus quo propterasum; nam pietas erit divitiis necesse est post della; hic auctus figura etiam in prosa utinam [with example from Cicero’s Verrine orations].
38) Servius in Vergil Aeneid 1.1 ab oris [Servius auctus]: sane propositionem mutavit, nam ‘ex oris’ melius posuit decere.
39) Servius in Vergil Aeneid 1.4 memorem Iunonis ob iram: constat multa in auctoris inventis per contrarium significata: pro activis passiva, ut ‘pietas belcantur Amazones armis’; pro passivis activa, ut ‘populataque gentem farcis aeternam’, et haec varietas vel potius contrantea inventa etiam in aliis paribus orationibus, ut si adversum pro adverso ... et in participe ... et in nomine, ut ‘memorem Iunonis ob iram’ non quaemunam, sed quae in memoria erat, de his auctem haec tantum quae lecta sunt ponimus nec ad eorum exemplum alma formam.
de Villa Dei (1199 CE), one of the most authoritative textbooks of grammar, in use for over 300 years. He finishes his work with the remark that he has offered sound doctrine, that he noted what was remarkable, and that he also pointed out which of those things must not be imitated. The gloss commenting on his work equates these three parts with the 

\textit{pars praeceptiva, permissiva} (meaning that the things observed there were actually permitted to the poets who produced them), and the \textit{pars prohibitiva}, with clear instruction of what not to imitate.\footnote{Alexander de Villa Dei, \textit{Doctrinale} 2640–1 (right before the end of the work) Nil reor asserat, quod non quaeat esse tenendum, / plurique signavi, quae non debes imitari ('I think nothing has been asserted that cannot be maintained, / and I have signaled many things that you should not imitate'). Gloss: \textit{qua triple est grammatica, sc. praeceptiva, permissiva et prohibitiva, ideo conclusiones se excusat auctor praeceptivam praecepisse, permissivam permittisse et prohibitivam prohibuisse.}

7. Conclusion

What we have seen is a grammatical tradition trying to contain excesses of creativity by absorbing and accommodating the exceptional within its system and thereby domesticating it. Grammarians imposed strict norms for text production, while at the same time acknowledging that the \textit{auctores} deserved praise for doing what they had done. This double-edged nature of teaching, describing brilliance while at the same time trying to control and discipline the efforts of a new generation may be more understandable against the background, which I have tried to provide, of all those mythical and historical parents teaching their children, and teachers instructing their students, without being quite ready to admire whatever they might unleash. Theoretically, when teaching we wish to be surpassed — but we are not prepared to be killed, and neither do we believe that any attempt at newness should be awarded \textit{auras} straightaway. In order to be 'anchored', some linguistic innovations need to be connected to an \textit{auctor}, but that status only comes into being with tradition itself. And the movement of innovation ends right there.

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