

try at all. The damning fact that he never once attempted to mouth a few words in Spanish at a press conference was less serious than the fact that he failed to learn a few Basque words of greeting. If you say so much as *kaixo* (hello) to a Basque, they will ask you to marry them. Moyes smiled a lot, but otherwise just didn't get it. He wasn't on a Manchester United-scale salary, but neither was he on £50 a week. If your salary has seven digits, you might be expected to do a wee bit of homework.

Moyes seemed puzzled by everything – the referees' behaviour, the times of the matches and the weird phonetic nightmare of Basque surnames. He never managed to get his tongue around "Illarramendi" and worse, did not seem to know who the player was after the president signed him back from Real Madrid. It also took him ten months to publicly say the name of Sociedad's main rivals, "Bilb-ay-o". Moyes knew that he had to adapt and learn (he said as much), but seemingly had not thought

the situation through. Both he and the club lacked the strategies necessary to effect the transition from one culture to another – a lesson for both perhaps.

It will probably do him little harm back in Britain, but his failure has only served to increase the general impression here that British coaches are not only behind the times, they are also disabled by a national system and culture that encourages them to think that everybody is actually out of step but them.

Export and import

There are plenty of British coaches currently working abroad, particularly in Asia and Africa, but they get little recognition or support from their home FAs

By STEVE MENARY

From early pioneer Jimmy Hogan, to Bobby Robson and current England coach Roy Hodgson, British coaches have a long history of success overseas. But those working abroad today are rarely household names, new Valencia head coach Gary Neville being a notable exception.

Graham Potter recently took Swedish side Ostersunds into next season's Allsvenskan. A former York City defender, Potter is also a rare recent British success in Europe. Paul Ashworth, who coached in Latvia from 2001 to 2009 and recently returned to guide Ventispils into next season's Europa League, says: "We've got a very low percentage of coaches on the continent now. The English outlook seems to be that the English league is the best, which makes people nervous to go abroad. Also, we have an island mentality and some people simply find it difficult to cope culturally."

A common language makes work easier for the likes of former Wales international Carl Robinson, who is head coach at Canadian



Above Carl Robinson of the Vancouver Whitecaps
Below left India coach Stephen Constantine

MLS franchise Vancouver Whitecaps. For less well-known ex-players with a sense of adventure, being British still carries some kudos, particularly in Asia and Africa. Steve Darby never made it as a goalkeeper in England but he is a household name in Asia after managing extensively at club level and working as a pundit on ESPN Star Sports. Now in charge of the Laos national team, Darby says: "Organisation is a skill much needed and valued in Asia, where football can be chaos at times. Also, players are often treated badly and British coaches usually stick up for players, which tends to mean that they are well liked."

There is some resistance, though. Previously on the coaching staff at Port Vale and Stoke City, Kevin Reeves recently returned from Myanmar, where he was head coach at Zwekapin United. He says: "Local coaches there are not keen on foreign coaches coming in to help out, as they think they know enough to get them through and win games. Unfortunately, I've found some will only help if you ask them to put some cones out or to translate to local players."

Reeves would like to return to Asia but British coaches looking for work overseas are up against rivals often supported by their national associations. Darby adds: "There is a need for the English FA to support British coaches abroad, as happens with Germany and Holland and more increasingly Japan and South Korea, all places that realise the political value of connections through coaching."

The League Managers Association helped Ashworth secure a job in Nigeria, but there is no organised FA assistance even though the

French, Italian and Spanish associations help qualified licence holders to find work. That situation prompted Stephen Constantine, one of England's most experienced overseas coaches, to set up the British Coaches Abroad Association (BCAA) in 2013. "Our members have credibility and the ability to endure and I am not talking about the glamour places either," says Constantine, who has worked in places as diverse as Nepal, Malawi and Sudan since 1999 and currently coaches India.

The BCAA has 145 members, many with experience worldwide, but few are well-known names. The association has a LinkedIn group and a tie-in with the *Football 365* news website but members typically find getting work back in the UK difficult as their experience goes unrecognised. "The FA and the League Managers Association could do so much more," Constantine says. "I'm not asking for money. I would like them to recognise that we have started something and helped British coaches."

The FA points out that English coaches working overseas can still access training courses, but adds: "Our current priority is to ensure we have enough high-quality coaches that meet the needs of the game in England." However, they plan to review the role of British coaching overseas, "to help determine what additional support we can offer". The FA says this will involve wide consultation and promises to get in touch with the BCAA. Stephen Constantine is waiting.

