

PHYLOGENY COMMANDS PSYCHOGENESIS

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ABSTRACT. *Phylogeny Commands Psychogenesis.* To learn a foreign language necessarily remaps the learning of the first languages in children. I will first study the necessary stages in the learning of the first language. The mind's development contributes to the mastering of the first language, which, in turn, is also beneficial to the mind. To teach a second language to a monolingual child challenges the mental construction of his first language and forces the child to restructure his mind, constructed, to this point, by and for the first language. Some pedagogical shortcuts can produce mistakes. To learn a second language is to reactivate the phylogeny of language, particularly of the first and second languages concerned, and this reactivated phylogeny must be invested into the psychogenesis of language, particularly of the first and second languages concerned.

Keywords: *communicational situation, vowel-consonant rotation, transfer verbs.*

REZUMAT. *Filogenia activează psihogeneza.* Învățarea unei limbi străine redesenează harta învățării limbii materne de către copii. Voi aborda în primul rând etapele necesare în procesul de învățare a limbii materne. Dezvoltarea gândirii contribuie la achiziția limbii materne și reciproc. Procesul de a învăța un copil monolingv o a doua limbă repune în discuție construcția mentală a limbii sale materne și obligă copilul să-și restructureze gândirea constituită, până atunci, prin și pentru limba maternă. Unele metode pedagogice prea rapide se pot solda cu eșecuri. A învăța o a doua limbă înseamnă a reactiva filogenia unei limbi, în special a celei primare și a celei secundare în cauză, iar această filogenie reactivată trebuie investită în psihogeneza limbii, în special a celei primare și a celei secundare pe care le implică procesul de învățare.²

Cuvinte cheie: *situație comunicatională, serializare vocală-consoană, verbe de transfer.*

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1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language – at any age, though it is easier at a younger age, or if you have been exposed to a bilingual situation early in your life, or if you have total or partial command of a quality that many autistic, particularly Asperger autistic people have, the ability to learn a language (oral competence, and/or written competence, and/or systemic competence) in a question of days or at best a couple of weeks when in total immersion – is a repeat process of the learning of your first language, which is a repeat process too of how language as a system of systems has phylogenetically developed and evolved during the emergence of Homo Sapiens.

Of course, there are differences particularly differences attached to the particular characteristics of the first and second languages that are necessarily more or less different, but different nevertheless. And then the learning process is only particular and individual depending on the personality of the learner and the particularities of his/her first and second languages.

In my line of approach, linguistic phylogeny is reproduced in the psychogenesis of any individual learning a first language (starting around the 24th week of his/her mother's pregnancy), or a second language, or any language at all. I am speaking of natural languages of course because learning machine code, no matter how elaborate, is a purely rational, logical, even scientific learning process since everything in machine code has been devised artificially and logically, as some say, from simple to complex, but always with a sequential logic from one operation to the next. Machine code is Boolean in nature: each operation operates on the results of the previous operation. Changing the order of operations may change the result of the process. For the machine code user, there is little freedom, except to invent new operations. This is in full contradiction with natural languages.

For a natural language learner there are some "phylogenetic" elements that cannot be avoided, that are necessary to just reach linguistic competence in general, for any language, and then there are phylogenetic elements that are attached to the system of systems one particular language is and whose order is functionally unavoidable. But there are also some ordering and some logical dynamic that can be negated, taken upside down in a psychogenetic procedure as compared to the phylogenetic order of language in general and one particular language specifically. Can such pedagogical reversal of phylogeny be accepted?

I will thus start with phylogeny to move to psychogenetic. The main objective is to show crucial choices have to be done and that they depend on the first language as reciprocally compared to the second language. Teaching English cannot be the same for an Indo-European or Indo-Aryan language speaker, or for an agglutinative language speaker, or for an isolating language speaker, or for a root language speaker. If you want your teaching to be effective the second language has to find links and connections in an already acquired

first language, hence in language competence as a whole. The links can be unconscious or unwanted by the teacher, but they will be effective and essential for the learner, consciously or unconsciously, and unluckily the most common reaction is plain translation, answering the question (in the head of the learner, and at times in the learner's class practice) "What does it mean?"

2. Phylogenetic Fundamental Operations

These operations are absolutely universal and they were the conquests of Homo Sapiens starting around 300,000 years BCE, in his own development and in his developing the phonological and semantic competence of the mostly call-languages he inherited from his hominin ancestors (Homo Ergaster and older relatives).

The very first step is integrating the **communicational situation** into the learning of communication, and the linguistic tool necessary for it. The communicational situation is the **matrix of all languages** because it is the matrix of linguistic communication in general. It is a vital requirement for simple survival of the new-born who is not yet able to speak and who will be totally dependent for four to six years, according to the various autonomous competences a child is supposed to acquire to just become an autonomous individual. It can be shown in a simple figure (Figure 1).

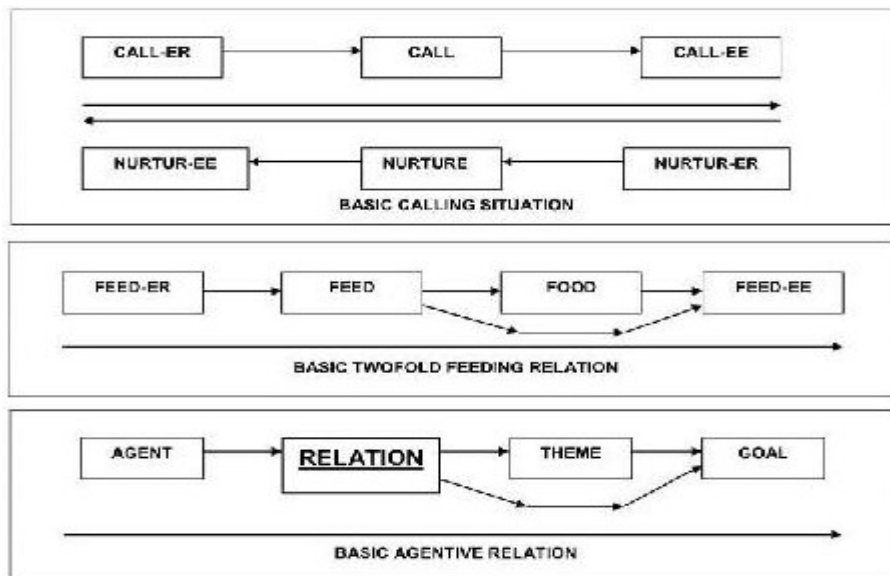


Figure 1. From Calling Communication to the Agentive Relation³

³ COULARDEAU 2018: 32-47

I have retained the “agentive relation” but it could be ergative or passive or whatever in any language, but there will always be, linguistically realized in a way or another, a relation that will imply an agent who is the source of the relation (true in this example but the source can also be different from the agent), a theme (central since it is the element to which the relation is applied) and a goal.

(1) The parent feeds mashed-carrot to the baby.
[Agent/source – RELATION – theme – goal]

(2) The firefighter moved the burning chair from the living room to the terrace.
[Agent – RELATION – theme – source – goal]

The logic is that something (theme) has been moved from one point (source) to another (goal) by some agent who can control the action (human agent) or that does not control the action (simple causal element).

(3) The wind blew the paper from the table to the ground.
[Causal non-control agent – RELATION – theme – source – goal]

A newborn learns that little by little though existentially he/she has to learn it from the very first hours of his/her life, and the newborn can do this because of the development in Homo Sapiens of **mirror neurons** that enable the newborn to empathetically receive and imitate the communication from other people at an existential level. This is realized very fast in a newborn that learns through communication to differentiate him/herself from other people with the crucial moment of the **mirror stage** of Jacques Lacan.⁴ At this stage the newborn recognizes him/herself in a mirror, that is to say, differentiates him/herself from all others and this triggers the capture of an essential dimension of language and communication: person. The matrix of language contains this category of person as a founding element in the simple consciousness of CALLER-CALLEE or NURTURER-NURTUREE. Mirror neurons are the vectors of this personal category and the mirror stage is the revealing moment of it. Note here this stage is difficult for autistic children with questions that are not answered: do autistic children have mirror neurons? Do autistic children go through the mirror stage properly, meaning do they differentiate themselves from others or do they only capture others as extensions of themselves? Do autistic children experience empathy the same way as non-autistic children do? So far studies are not answering these questions except by saying autistic children encounter difficulties in their relationship to others. That is not enough.

⁴ LACAN 1966/2002-2006.

When dealing with a second language every single element of the linguistic matrix will have to be acquired in an autonomous procedure to make the learner clearly distinguish the source from the goal and what is the theme moved from the one to the other. And what's more, languages vary as for the means used to express every element. Some languages use particular casual declensions, some others use prepositions, some others use both prepositions and casual declensions, some others use only order and position in the spoken chain. And there can be many other solutions. But the source, the goal, and the theme will always be expressed, be it only because it is the basic human relation from even before the emergence of Homo Sapiens: the fundamental "commercial" relationship:

[TRANSFER – A – FROM B – TO C].

And the oldest "commercial" relationship we can imagine, bartering, implies a second transfer in exchange and "payment" of the first one:

[TRANSFER BACK – D – FROM C – TO B].

This transfer relation is the result of the communicational situation being integrated into the mind of newborns by their own needs that have to be satisfied from the outside. The newborn has to learn later that he/she can also give something to others and thus build a new exchange relationship with others. In the case of a second language, this exchange relationship is already acquired and it just has to find its embodiment in the second language. The difference between Homo Sapiens (and some other Hominins) is that they can use language to express this transfer.

3. Rotation of vowels and consonants

But Homo Sapiens – and a newborn – used a new ability they had and that resulted from their long distance fast bipedal running status as a species (lowering of the larynx, articulatory and respiratory apparatuses, Broca area for coordination of sensory-motor activities connected to running, essentially). Language is the collateral side-effect of such mutations selected naturally for something that has little to do with language. They could articulate a lot of vowels and a lot of consonants and incidentally, they developed human articulated language with the first articulation: vowels and consonants. Other Hominins may have controlled this competence, partially, hence more or less. Homo Sapiens brought it very far. Monkeys who are not Hominins have a language of calls but with 3-4 vowels and 4-5 consonants, they produce six or seven calls (man could

produce with the same means from 81 to 1024 autonomous lexical items because of their ability **to rotate vowels and consonants**.

Let's consider a simple example of such rotation that is NEVER IN ONE SINGLE LANGUAGE used at the maximum of its possibilities. Let's take monosyllables in English using the letters "C" and "A," hence the cluster "CA" at the initial of the words and then rotating one consonant sound (that may cover two consonant letters) at the end. I accepted three different pronunciations of the vowel (/æ/ - /a:/ - /ei/) and only one orally uttered consonant at the end, even when written as a double consonant or two consonants with the first one not pronounced (one case: calm). I listed the various cases of some with the numbers used in the Webster's dictionary I relied on. I found thirty-five lexical items. I did not consider formative elements that only make sense in expanded lexical use.

English:	cake –	came2 –	cap2 –	cash1 –	cate –
cab –	CAL –	can1 –	cape1 –	cash2 –	cave1 –
cad –	call –	can2 –	cape2 –	cash3 –	cave2 –
cuff –	calm –	cane1 –	car –	cash4 –	cave3 –
cage –	cam –	cane2 –	case1 –	cat1 –	caw –
Cain –	camel –	cap1 –	case2 –	cat2 –	cay –

In French, the situation is slightly different because the vowel can only have one pronunciation by itself, but it may be associated with another vowel and produce another vocalic sound (caisse, cause) or produce a semi-consonant with the following consonant (caille). I overlooked, of course, the particular spellings of the final consonant sound that can associate a double consonant, and also the cases when a mute /e/ is added behind the final consonant for it to be pronounceable. We get thus thirty-nine lexical units including those various cases in the Larousse dictionary I used.

French:	caille –	came1 –	car1 –	cash –	cause –
cab –	caisse –	came2 –	car2 –	casse1 –	cave1 –
CAC –	cake –	cane –	carre –	casse2 –	cave2 –
cache1 –	call –	canne –	cas1 –	casse3 –	cave3 –
cache2 –	cal2 –	cap –	cas2 –	casse4 –	cave4 –
CAF –	cale1 –	cape –	case1 –	casse5 –	
cage –	cale2 –	caque –	case2 –	CAT –	

At this point we can see the richness of this rotation of vowels and consonants and I only considered the rotation of the final consonant and accepted the various pronunciation of the vowel which is not entirely a question of rotation but of incidental pronunciation of the vowel due to what comes after it, with only three particular cases in French: caille, caisse and cause.

4. Root - Stem - Frond

This rotation of vowels and consonants produces simple syllabary entities that become the basis of the first lexical items of any language, a **root** for Semitic languages, a **stem** for isolating languages and a **frond** for agglutinative or synthetic-analytical languages.⁵ Languages from each one of these three phylogenetic groups have of course to go beyond this “one-word” level at best doubled up like in “mama” (sucking movement of lips for /m/) or “papa” (terminating the previous sucking movement of lips for /p/). It is only with the two-word sentence that the child enters the linguistic logic that will bring “category” and “function” into play. When a child is confronted for several years to only one language the particular values of “category” and “function” of this first language will be transported to the second language because it has not been conceptualized at a higher level. Categories like “spatial” or “temporal” are essential to differentiate two lexical items as static (spatial) and “dynamic” (temporal) leading to nominal and verbal. These categories can carry along some elements like “gender” or “class” or “number” which are not functional though they may be ancillary under functional determination. When a language stops at this second articulation to build its discourse like isolating languages these categorized lexical entities are invariable and thus are captured as genderized, classerized, or numberized. Functions though remain discursive.

Note in a root language (Semitic languages) the roots are the only element captured in langue which means category, gender, class or number are discursive elements, hence determined in discourse, just like function. With the third articulation, all functions are integrated into langue, hence the fronds of these languages integrate into their langue marks for the functions of the nominal thematic arguments in connection with the relation expressed by the verbal element. Note these marks can be relational and positional ranks in the final linear utterance. Agglutinative languages also integrate into the verbal elements functional marks that are symmetrical to those of the nominal elements necessary for the sentence to be complete. Synthetic-Analytical languages do not. Yet in frond languages, we should consider the tense and mood conjugation marks as integrated into Langue, including the various agreements between the verb and the nominal elements that support it (agreement in person and in number). These various marks have to be seen as the realization of deeper langue systems.

This brings up an essential element. The communicational situation is the matrix of language and its syntax but this syntax does not have to be in langue. Any language is able to produce a fully developed discourse but this fully developed discourse can be based on a more or less extended langue and

⁵ COULARDEAU & EVE 2017: ebook

that is a great difficulty in learning a second language because it may systematically block the differences between the first and second language. What I have said implies the langue of Semitic languages is a lot less developed than the langue of the two other types. The langue of Isolating languages is more developed than that of Semitic languages but a lot less than that of Synthetic-Analytical languages. More about it later.

5. The case of Gender

The most common realization of such difficulties, because it is very easily noticed, is the gender differences of nouns in languages like English, French or German. English has three genders that are mostly sexually determined for masculine and feminine. Neutral is the non-sexually determined rest. French has two genders that are arbitrary except when sexually determined, meaning that all non-sexually determined elements can be either feminine or masculine. German has three genders that are arbitrary even when they could be sexually determined, meaning the neutral gender can be used with elements that are understood as masculine or feminine in sexual definition. The most surprising case is “das Kind” in German that can be in French “un enfant,” “une enfant,” but “l’enfant,” and in English “the child,” “a child” that will call for a feminine or masculine pronoun according to the reality of the situation. That leads to some difficulties that are often long-lasting (Figure 2).

ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN
Table = it	la table = elle	der Tisch = er
Cow = it	la vache = elle	die Kuh = sie
Dog = it (Brit often he)	le chien = il	der Hund = er
Cat = it (Brit often she)	le chat = il	die Katze = sie
Girl = she	la fille = elle	das Mädchen = es
Woman = she	la femme = elle	das Weib = es
Window = it	la fenêtre = elle	die Frau = sie
House = it	la maison = elle	das Fenster = es
Chair = it	la chaise = elle	das Haus = es
		der Stuhl = er

Figure 2. Gender variations in languages

And we could get a lot farther if we started considering abstract nouns that are neutral in English and can be either feminine or masculine in French and either feminine, masculine or neutral in German. And imagine languages that do not have the category of gender though they are like the three European languages considered here of the same third synthetic-analytical articulation, for example, Bantu languages. In langue, they do not have the gender category

but in meaning they do and no matter what class the words for woman or man or child are they are understood as feminine or masculine, just the same as the neutral “Mädchen” refers to a child that is understood as feminine.

In Lingala⁶, for instance, most human nouns (humans, peoples and ethnic origins, persons, family members) are in the first class “MO-BA” on the model of “moto-bato” for “human being” or “person.”

Yet “twin” is in the “LI-MA” class, singular “lipása” and plural “mapása.”

The “E-BI” class also contains words designating human beings: “étílé” (“orphan”), “elengé” (“boy,” “girl”), “eseka” (“mate”), “elémá” (“crazy person”), “ezóba” (“stupid person”), ebóto (“parent”), “elombé” (“giant person,” “courageous person”), “esopa” (“talkative person”), “eboma” (“bad driver”), “éma” (“aunt”).

Note “nokɔ” (“uncle”) would be a prefix-free member of the “MO-BA” class.

The “BO-MA” class also has some person nouns like “bokiló” (“father in law,” “mother in law”), “bozéngé” (“widower,” “widow”).

The “MO-MI” class also has some person names: “mondele” (“white man”), “mónganga” (“doctor,” “MD”), “mongúná” (“enemy”), “mobáli” (“man,” “male”), “mokonzi” (“chief”).

Note two words of the “N-N” class: “nganga” (“priest”) and “Nzámbe” (“God”) designate religious human or humanoid entities.

The natural conclusion is that in class-languages, gender is not an operational category but it is contextually or referentially contained in the meaning of the word. One case is the two nouns in the “BO-MA” class that cover both masculine and feminine values only differentiated by the referential situation. Most of the words quoted in the “E-BI” class are of the same type and covering both masculine and feminine, differentiated of course by the context or the situation.

6. Langue – Conceptualized discourse - Discourse

That has to lead to the idea that what is not included in the langue of a language has to be included in discourse, but a good part of this has to be **conceptualized in discourse** in what is a **discursive langue**. Saussure, Benveniste, Guillaume and most other western linguists have never thought of that because they have not analyzed languages from the phylogenic standpoint I use here. Let’s specify what it means (Figure 3) if we consider the three phylogenic articulations. It is quite clear that the extensions of langue and conceptualized discourse (discursive langue) are inversely proportional from the first to the third articulation. That implies in psychomechanics that the system of systems that langue is, has to include the discursive langue or conceptualized discourse. Languages that do not have articles yet have ways to understand and conceive

⁶ VAN EVERBROECK 1967; NO AUTHOR 1967

nominal spatial extension. Articles are not even present in all Indo-European languages and when they are present they were derived from deictic elements that are present in languages that do not have articles.

The case of Lingala again is fascinating. It does not have any articles, but it has deictics. Three deictic degrees. The first degree is “-yo” for the singular of the “MO-BA” class, and “-ye” for the plural of the “MO-BA” class and all other classes. The second degree is “-ngó” for all classes. The third degree is “-ná” or “-na” for all classes. These deictics are always preceded by the singular or plural prefix of the class of the concerned noun. But it is not that simple as for the meaning of these deictic elements. The first degree concerns what or who the first person “I” is speaking of. The second degree concerns what or who the second person “you” is speaking of. These two degrees are freely used within this differentiation but necessarily within direct oral communication. The third degree concerns what or who the third person “he/she” is speaking of. This third degree is archaic and never used in oral language which sounds normal since the third person is not a direct participant in the concerned oral exchanges. These deictics then are expressing the personal distance and not as most often in Indo-European languages the plain spatial distance (close, far, very far) with possible positive or negative valorization. And the connection with the nominal classes is direct in singular and plural in Lingala.

1 st ARTICULATION	2 nd ARTICULATION	3 rd ARTICULATION
Root languages Semitic languages	Stem languages Isolating languages	Frond languages Agglutinative and Synthetic- Analytical languages
LANGUE		
ONLY ROOT	CATEGORIZED ROOT = STEM	CATEGORIZED ROOT = STEM FUNCTIONALIZED STEM = FROND
CONCEPTUALIZED DISCOURSE		
CATEGORIES + FUNCTIONS + FOCALIZATION, TOPICALIZATION AND EXPRESSIVITY	FUNCTIONS + FOCALIZATION, TOPICALIZATION AND EXPRESSIVITY	FOCALIZATION, TOPICALIZATION AND EXPRESSIVITY

Figure 3. The articulations, from root to frond in Langue and Conceptualized Discourse

7. Two-Tense Verbal System

A student in Arabic once told me, when I was saying that Arabic only had two basic langue tenses, that it was false because Arabic has a full conjugation system. And that’s the point. In langue, Arabic as a Semitic language

only has two basic tense or aspect stems multiplied by two for active and passive. In a particular voice, one stem (the *past or accomplished stem*) is used for the past tense, and the other (the *non-past or non-accomplished stem*) is used for the present and future tenses, along with non-indicative moods, e.g. subjunctive and imperative. And all other periphrastic expressions of tense and mood are conceptualized discourse, just like English only has two basic tenses (present and preterit) and all other six tenses are periphrastic categorized discourse using various auxiliaries, or in the same way as French has eight basic tenses and modals forms in langue (present, imparfait, simple past, simple future, conditional present, subjunctive present, subjunctive imparfait and imperative present) and all other nine tenses and modal expressions are periphrastic conceptualized discourse using various auxiliaries. And to come back to Arabic we could wonder if the two basic forms are not in fact conceptualized discourse because it is based on the variations of vowels and in Semitic languages the use of vowels is conceptualized discourse. But these two “tenses” that some consider as “aspects” do not use periphrastic or derived constructions which is linguistically significant as compared to all other periphrastic or derived forms.

Note it is a common trait with Bantu languages that only have two basic tenses: real accomplished and virtual non-accomplished. To take the case of Lingala again, we have two tenses. The present that is built with **[a pronominal prefix + the infix “ko” (eventually “ka” in the first person singular) + radical + final “a”]** (note this final “a” is the final vowel of the infinitive): na+ka+sal+a = “nakasala” (“I work”): It is used to express a general timeless statement, a present action in progress, and a near future action. Common language often drops the “ko” infix, particularly when the periphrastic suffix “ka” is used to express a habitual or frequent or repeated action (frequentative present). The second basic tense is the past tense for the narrative of past events or fables, and for actions that are finished but whose resultative effect is still present. It is composed as follows: **[pronominal prefix + radical + final letter “i”]** like in na+sal+i = “nasali” (“I worked” or “I have worked”). In the same way in modern urban Picard in the North of France, only two tenses have survived from an older more complex conjugation system: the old “imparfait” (past tense) for past and present, and the old conditional present for future and hypothetical tenses:

(4) Mi j’volos nin comprintre.

“I don’t want to understand,” but it could also mean with a past adverbial phrase, “I didn’t want to understand.”

(5) Mi j'allos nin dormir ach't'heure.

"I am not going to sleep now." It could also mean "I was not going to sleep" with a past temporal adverb.

(6) Mi j'iros ouvrer d'main.

"I will go to work tomorrow." It could mean "I would go to work tomorrow" if under a conditional clause like "sij'volos bin," "if I wanted," or "If I want."

8. Tense Variability

Let's consider a last example of this variability between French and English.

(7) I have waited (I have been waiting) for the bus for fifteen minutes.
"J'attends le bus depuis quinze minutes."

(8) I have waited (I have been waiting) for the bus since 12:15
"J'attends le bus depuis 12:15."

(9) I waited for the bus for twenty minutes this morning.
"J'ai attendu le bus pendant vingt minutes ce matin."

(10) I waited for the bus from 8:00 to 8:20 this morning.
"J'ai attendu le bus de 8 heures à 8 heures 20 ce matin."

The main difficulty is in the fact that in English the present perfect expresses an action that started in the past and continues in the present, or its direct effects are still active in the present, whereas in French the "passé composé" is normally today in common French the way to express a past finished action, and this French "passé composé" hence corresponds to the English preterit. The second difficulty is to make French students aware that the French "depuis" has two possible corresponding terms with a sharp difference in meaning: "for" expresses a length of time, and "since" expresses the moment when the action started. These two words are not used in the same way with the preterit: "for" is possible with its standard meaning; "since" is impossible. But if we shift to a pluperfect, things are different, back to what it was with the present perfect:

(11) I had waited for the bus for twenty minutes when it finally arrived, ten minutes late.

"J'attendais le bus depuis vingt minutes quand il est enfin arrivé avec un retard de dix minutes."

(12) I had waited for the bus since 12:30 when it finally arrived at 12:45, ten minutes late.

“J’attendais le bus depuis 12:30 quand il arriva enfin à 12:45, avec un retard de dix minutes.”

These difficulties bring up the question of the order of presentation to French students of the various forms and constructions in English, and probably vice versa. It is rather simple to say that the best way is to follow the time depth and thus start with sentences (7) and (8) though they are complex and the French students may produce a translation like:

(13) J’ai attendu le bus depuis quinze minutes.

(14) J’ai attendu le bus depuis 12:15.

The two translations are incorrect because they both mean the action happened in the past, which is not the meaning of the original English sentences. This implies it would be better to start with sentences (9) and (10) because then it could enable the student to work on the preterit in English and build its correspondence with the French present perfect (or “passé composé”). I insist here on working on the correspondence between the two concerned languages because the students are supposed to become conscious of the difference, that there is a difference to clearly separate present perfect from “passé composé.” They look alike but do not taste the same.

9. Early introduction of the preterit

I assert here it would be better to start with the preterit sentences in such a situation of expressing the duration of an action of the moment when it started, hence the use of “for” and “since,” which would enable us to introduce “ago” too, hence with the narrative of past events a lot earlier in the logic of a full course. In fact, then the present and the preterit should be presented in parallel from the very start. Some might say it does not make sense since the present perfect is necessary for the narration of present events and it should be introduced along with this narration of present events. I would advocate here the introduction of the past a lot earlier than they do in most textbooks. In fact, the past could be introduced very early with this simple question at the beginning of any class, even in the second period:

(15) What did we do yesterday?
Expecting the answer:

(16) Yesterday we learned a song.
This answer could be the echo of the sentence on the previous day:

(17) OK, class, now we learn a song: "Lavender Blue, diddle, diddle"
We can imagine this very early.

(18) What words did we learn yesterday? What *new* words did we learn yesterday?

With kindergarten teachers we noticed and recorded the strange use of the French pluperfect for the simple narration of past event with five-year-olds:

(19) Hier soir la sorcière elle était venue et mon père il avait pris sa ceinture et il l'avait battue.

"Yesterday night, the witch, she had come (came) and my father, he had taken (took) his belt and he had beaten (beat) her.

We tried to understand why they said that. We thought it might be the underlying Picard dialect of Tourcoing since we were in Tourcoing. But that did not work really because all the children had that use of the pluperfect in common though some were from Arabic-speaking families, others from Portuguese-speaking families and others from French-speaking families with or without the popular use of Picard. I would say that it either has to do with the understanding of the "passé composé" as a present tense and, consequently, they used the past of this "passé composé," a past present perfect or pluperfect. Of course, the children did not know the names of these tenses but they practiced them all the time anyway. They were thus conscious of the opposition between present and past, and they were only five. That would also imply the French "passé composé" is moving and is becoming a tense that expresses a past event but with direct consequences or continuation in the present. It is not the case in the above examples in French.

I believe there might be a second reason. Since we, the teacher and I, had asked the children the previous week to think about what would happen if the witch (the task was to invent a story about a witch) visited them in the evening in their homes, we could see then a double distance: the past for what happened yesterday, and a second past tense to express the surreal story, the unreal story. That would explain why the passé composé seems natural for sentences (7) and (8).

10. Interrogative and negative forms

But I would like to consider now the case of the interrogative and negative forms that are necessarily used from the very first lesson of a second

language class. I am considering kids that could be as young as six or seven, and why not even before, in kindergarten?

First, let's clearly describe the analytical system of English and its use of auxiliaries. In English, the interrogative and negative forms ALWAYS use an auxiliary. If standard action verbs of any type are used without an auxiliary in a sentence or utterance, then the auxiliary DO is required and used. It is also required and used for any emphatic utterance like:

(20) Paul does read his paper every day between 8 and 9.

(21) Do read this book, please.

The category of auxiliary in English can be subdivided into various constructions as listed below.

<p>In all cases, interrogative and negative forms are built with the proper auxiliaries:</p> <p>1- For basic action non-auxiliary verbs of any type that come without an auxiliary in the sentence or utterance it is required to use the auxiliary DO conjugated in the proper form + to-less infinitive;</p> <p>2- As for auxiliary verbs three cases can be found:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a- the auxiliary BE, and "be" is always an auxiliary even when used alone: three possible constructions:</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">i- auxiliary BE + predicate: "He is a teacher," "She is intelligent"; Exception: negative forme of BE in imperative: "Don't be silly!" "Don't be a father for once!"</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">ii- auxiliary BE + present participle: progressive form: "They are reading books";</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">iii- auxiliary BE + past participle: passive voice: "The car is parked in front of the house";</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b- the auxiliary HAVE + past participle: perfective aspect: "the cat has eaten the mouse." Note when "have" is not followed by a past participle it is a normal verb and it uses DO when necessary: "Paul and Mary do not have to take the 9 o'clock train," "How many pages does the book have?";</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">c- a modal auxiliary + to-less infinitive: "The weather can/must/may/will/shall change tomorrow."</p>
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Figure 4. Auxiliaries in English, Interrogative and Negative forms⁷

The first thing we have to say is that this English auxiliariation of verbal conjugation in most cases (only affirmative non-emphatic simple tenses

⁷ COULARDEAU 2018

of non-auxiliary verbs do not use an auxiliary) is in contradiction with the German system or with the French system and thus it represents a difficulty for German and French students. In French, the case I am going to examine here, the normal construction for interrogation is simple subject-verb inversion with two cases, either when the subject is a noun, or when the subject is a pronoun:

(22) **Paul lit-il** le livre que je lui ai donné ?
Does Paul read the book I gave him?

(23) Peter prit le train de midi pour sa conférence à 14 heures. Mais **arriva-t-il** à l'heure?
Peter took the midday train for his 2 pm lecture. But did he arrive on time?

For the negative construction French does not use any auxiliary and builds the construction on the verb itself:

(24) **Paul ne lit pas** le journal dans le train.
Paul does not read the paper on the train.

(25) Non, **il n'arriva pas** à l'heure.
No, he did not arrive on time.

The problem is how do we introduce this auxiliarized English architecture to students who do not have this characteristic in their first language?

French textbooks to teach English have tried several ways.

First to start with the progressive form which is in a way in congruence with the practice of the class.

(26) Mary is writing on the board. What is Mary doing? She is not reading. She is writing on the board. What is she writing? She is not writing "dog." She is writing "Mark is eating the apple."

When a whole class has repeated and drilled these forms for a couple of weeks it will be difficult for them to understand something that could be introduced from the very start: simple present and the use of do like in the following class practice:

(27) Michael reads all the time. He reads in the morning. He reads in the evening. He likes reading.

Note the verb “like” cannot be used in any way in the progressive form except with a sarcastic or ironical meaning (“He is behaving as if he liked this or that: he is liking my dog very much”). Then the drilling of these forms will be:

(28) What does Michael do all the time? What does he do in the morning? What does he do in the evening? What does he like doing?

(29) Does Michael write letters all the time? No, he does not write letters all the time. He does not play football all the time. He reads all the time? Does Michael read books all the time? No, he does not read books all the time. He reads newspapers.

When drilled in such constructions for a couple of weeks, the students will find it difficult to shift to the progressive form, but the meaning of that progressive form will be easily contrasted with “all the time” in opposition to “right now.” And it will be easy to explain that “be” here is an auxiliary and when there is an auxiliary you do not need “do.”

11. Phylogeny and auxiliaries

Phylogenetically the progressive form is very recent in English. Shakespeare uses the structure but it is not yet a progressive form because the V-ing form keeps a nominal value since it is derived from a Germanic feminine noun derived from a verb to speak of the action itself. The present participle had to be reconstructed from a (feminine) nominal derivation from a verb to replace the old Anglo-Saxon or Germanic present participle in -end.

The following illustration (Figure 5) from the Guardian shows how the use of the auxiliary “do” developed after Chaucer in the Renaissance: it is here dated as being Shakespearean, though the progressive form will only stabilize later because it is needed for the fictional storytelling of the novel. Hence the two auxiliary constructions of, on one hand, the use of “do” for interrogative and negative forms and of, on the other hand, the use of “be” as an auxiliary of the progressive form are traced back to Shakespeare’s time, which implies that in the 16th century English was in the process of auxiliarizing its verbal architecture. English thus externalized aspect with the interrogative, negative and emphatic forms with “do” for all the non-auxiliary verbs in their simple tenses first, and then the progressive form with “be” and a reconstructed present participle. It is thus phylogenetically correct to start with normal action verbs in class in the simple present, including of course verbs that cannot be used in the progressive form, and always connect the simple present with some

kind of repetitive, customary actions. Then the progressive form will be easier to understand in its real value.

(30) You listen to the radio every morning, but are you listening to the radio now? You watch television in the evening, but are you watching television right now? Do we watch television in class? Yes, we watch television in class. What do we watch on television? We watch films. What film are we watching this week?

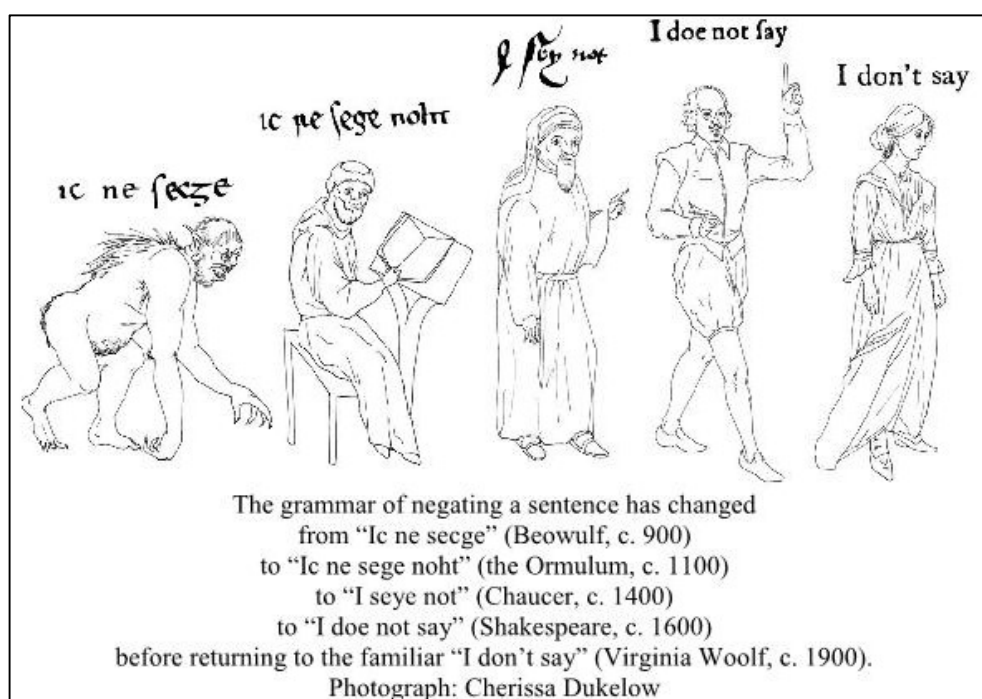


Figure 5. Negative form from Anglo-Saxon to modern English⁸

12. Modals in Interrogative and Negative forms

The other solution proposed by some textbooks of English in France is to use the modal auxiliary "can" with class discourse like:

(31) Can you get up, Paul, and can you go to the blackboard?

⁸ DAVIS 2018.

The particular value of this modal either is lost by this systematic use or it reduces tremendously the possible discourse in class. It is definitely not phylogenetic since modal auxiliaries have always had their syntactic architecture, particularly being followed by to-less infinitives. This syntactic architecture is Germanic in origin and was reinforced by the French influence in England. We can wonder how English devised its systematic auxiliarization but it cannot be traced to these modals who actually survived very well in the English system since they found themselves in full phase with the emerging new system of systematic use of auxiliaries that emerged in the 16th century.

I come then to the conclusion that it is better to start with plain action verbs in the simple present including “have” as a verb of possession, and in the preterit from the very start. It will always be easier to explain later the behavior of “be” as a predicative auxiliary or as the auxiliary of the progressive form: it is an exception and it would be better to keep the auxiliary have for later (which is normal due to its value as the auxiliary of the present perfect) and modal verbs just a few weeks after the beginning of the training session, maybe a month or two at the most. Once again the use of be and modals with another verb behind makes them exceptions that are nevertheless in phase with interrogative, negative and emphatic construction with “do” followed by the to-less infinitive of a verb.

This remark brings back to my mind a presentation by André Joly in Lille a long time ago in which he argued that “do” was a modal because of its systematic use with a to-less infinitive. This, of course, goes against the grain of phylogeny. English modals are Germanic by essence and they are preterit-present verbs. The important verbs in this category are:

agan = to possess	cunnan = to know	dugan = to achieve
durran = to dare	magan = to be able to	motan = to be allowed to
munan = to remember	nugan = to suffice	sculan = must, to be obligated
unnan = to grant	purfan = to need	witan = to know

Figure 6. Preterite-Present Verbs in Anglo-Saxon

To construct a conjugation for a Preterit-Present Verb, we have to do the following:

Subtract the *-an* ending from the infinitive. This gives the stem of the verb: *cunnan* - *-an* = *cunn*

Use the Strong Verb Paradigm to determine what the Past Singular would be: *cunn*, the Preterit would be *kann*: *cunn* → *can*.

This now becomes the stem for the paradigm, and what you would have expected to be the present tense (*cunn*, the stem minus the *-an* ending of the infinitive) moves to the past tense built this time on the basis of regular weak verbs, hence *kunþē* that will become in modern English *could*, as the preterit of *can*.

The verb “do” is in no way a preterite-present verb.

13. The progression I propose

It is as follows:

- 1- Start with plain action verbs and introduce interrogative form and negative form, at once, with auxiliary do, including for the verb “have” when it is not an auxiliary (its only use for several months: a verb expressing possession, ownership, content). “Be” can also be introduced very early as a predicative auxiliary and it is at once explained as an exception.
- 2- I suggest to introduce the preterit of standard action verbs as soon as the second lesson and of course “did.”
- 3- Then move, after two months or so of drilling plain action verbs with auxiliary “do,” to the progressive form with “be” as an auxiliary with the present participle. Strongly contrast the meaning between the simple present and the progressive present of action verbs
- 4- Then move, after a couple of months or so, to the use of “can” and “must.” Keep “may,” “will,” and “shall” for later. Insist on the heavy meaning of these modals in their radical uses. Keep epistemic uses for later.
- 5- Make students move to the practical conclusion that in interrogative and negative forms English verbs use an auxiliary, “do,” if they don’t already have one, or the one they already have.
- 6- I would suggest the introduction of the passive here to introduce the past participle and because the passive is easy to integrate: pure gymnastics: crossing games are, what’s more, very psychological: the “Mutter da – Mutter fort” game of a five-year-old child in Freud.
- 7- The future comes later, but after “can” and “must” have been drilled. Only use “will” and keep “shall” for later due to its particular meaning. Note “is going to V” is an easy future periphrastic structure since it is nothing but a progressive form.
- 8- the present perfect can then be introduced and “have” as the auxiliary with the past participle of the verb. It is easy to connect with the passive: “The cat eats the sausage.” “The sausage is eaten by the cat.” “The cat has eaten the sausage.”

In this particular case, I follow the phylogenic progression and at the same time the psychogenetic conceptualizing development and progression of the child based on the concept of “Zone of Proximal Development” of Lev Vygotsky.⁹

14. Conclusions

The most important conclusion is that teaching a language is teaching a vision of the world that has built itself and accumulated data, words, and syntactic

⁹ VYGOTSKY1934/1962; 1978; 1985;1987

structures for decades, centuries, millennia and even beyond, since the beginning of the emergence of Homo Sapiens and his invention-development of articulated language. This vision is transmitted to all learners along with language itself. Language has to be understood with its two meanings, first that of language as the ability of Homo Sapiens to communicate orally – and later in writ –, and that of the natural languages that this language has diversified into, and still is, over the long history of man. One only thinks what the language he speaks enables him to say within the frame of human articulated language.

The second conclusion is that communication in discursive practices of any type is always maximum for any speaker (maximum up to what he/she can say) in any situation (one does not speak of what is not within his knowledge nor within his situation's requirements), and if new requirements appear, the language the speaker speaks will develop – I should even say “develops” because it is automatic – to cope with the new requirements.

Our languages are articulated and they map themselves on these articulations. Three vast families can be seen, and for each family, the langue, the conceptualized discourse (or discursive langue) build up the system of systems of the language at stake. All discursive elements that are not contained in langue and conceptualized discourse are purely discursive. Langue and conceptualized discourse are inversely proportional from first articulation to third articulation. When the two are integrated into langue at their maximum level, only focalization, topicalization, and expressivity are left in discourse.

The fourth conclusion is that in our teaching of a language we have to take into account the phylogeny of the first and second languages at stake and as much as possible respect this phylogeny of the two languages, though the phylogeny of the second language is the target and must dominate. The teaching of the second language can only be effective if it is articulated properly onto the psychogenesis of the learner, hence if it is positioned in his Zone of Proximal Development, which means it has roots in the first language, roots that have to be contrastive since the meta-langue of the learner will have to be restructured to integrate, without mixing them, the two (Langues + Conceptualized Discourses) into one mental construct.

The fifth conclusion is, in fact, an opening because I did not consider it in depth here. It is the class practice and discourse in the second language, with or without the first language. That has to do with pedagogy, the day-to-day connection between the teacher and the learners and among the learners themselves. It has to do with transference activities, motivations, communicational skills, personal involvement, and the identificatory dimensions of language for the learners, etc. There is no perfect practice since it depends on too many personal variables. There is only a constructive practice that can never be the

same for all students and for all teachers. The idea of a homogeneous unified standard method for all, ready to be used by all, is a myth that has no value whatsoever. Compulsory official “instructions” for language teaching are both a myth and guaranteed failure.

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