

Re: History of French

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Peter Dy wrote:

> *And you say that no previous instruction in pronunciation is necessary, so*
> *then how do they understand what "retroflex" and "alveolar ridge" mean?*

By pictures I suppose. That is how I was taught the Chinese series
q, j, x versus c, z, s and ch, zh, sh.

Or by seeing it demonstrated, as a New-Hebridean native once
demonstrated to me the difference between the two s's in his
language, although he had no words for "grooved", "lamino-
alveolar", "apico-alveolar", "unvoiced", and "tense".

As for "retroflex" that is an abominable term for "cacuminal".

But alas, it has become the norm. BTW, I knew someone who could
manage a retroflexed apico-nasal stop (my mother). See what I mean?
I can only manage a retroflexed lamino-antidental one (and I am
sure anybody can). Can you guess what it is? Hint: I am using
"retroflexed" as meaning just plain "retroflexed", not "cacuminal".