

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-12/msg00298.html>

- *From:* Lee Sau Dan <danlee@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 04 Dec 2005 22:44:50 +0800
-

>>>> "leuwarden" == leuwarden <leuwarden@xxxxxxxx> writes:

leuwarden> Lee Sau Dan wrote:

>> >>>> "leuwarden" == leuwarden <leuwarden@xxxxxxxx> writes:

>>

leuwarden> and the motivation! the inclination! if your new
leuwarden> girl friend speaks Chinese, you'll speak Chinese by
leuwarden> Christmas

>> I already speak Chinese.

leuwarden> sorry. I hope it did not sound offensive. it is simply
leuwarden> that Chinese is popularly believed to be the most
leuwarden> incredibly difficult thing to learn.

That's a myth. Chinese is much easier because you don't have to recite any declension tables. No verb conjugations. No plurals. No gender. An extremely regular number system. The classifiers presents some difficulties, though. And you have to adjust your mind to the topic-comment structure.

leuwarden> partly, maybe, this is because until recently China was
leuwarden> simply so far away.

But you've been importing Chinese products for more than 1000 years: silk, tea. And you've imported many Chinese technologies: gunpowder (and firework), magnetic compass, ...

leuwarden> the world was Eurocentric. and you would know that
leuwarden> in English, in Spanish, and in German, "Chinese" is
leuwarden> used to mean "unintelligible:

In English? English speakers seem to like to use "Greek" for that purpose. I know the French use "chinois" for that.

leuwarden> "me parece chino", "it sounds Chinese to me" , "kommt

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

leuwarden> mir chinesisich vor"

Say it again in English!

>> If your theory is correct, how come this guy from NZ, having a
>> HK-immigrant girl-friend for years, living in HK for over 18
>> months, surrounded by people speaking Cantonese, has not yet
>> mastered Cantonese by *last* Christmas?

leuwarden> it was not a theory. it was meant more like a
leuwarden> recommendation: if you want to learn a language, first
leuwarden> get to know and like the people etc

That's far away from loving a person of that language.

Yes, I agree with you. The more you're fond of that language and culture, the stronger your eager to master that language, and the more likely you'd succeed in learning it to a competent level.

leuwarden> I know there are not any rules. I have seen quite a
leuwarden> few stories of the kind you told here.

So, finding a lover to learn a language doesn't work. You need to love the language, not a person.

leuwarden> I only know about English, and English is non-typical
leuwarden> as a language in many regards. Still, I found that
leuwarden> women learn more easily than men and that the best
leuwarden> learners,
>> Because women like to talk more than men do?

leuwarden> that could be. but also because, unlike women, men are
leuwarden> after content rather than form.

I agree.

leuwarden> somebody says "I going speak". you correct him: "I AM
leuwarden> going TO speak".

Well... Chinese is much less rigid in this aspect. Maybe, you'd like to learn Chinese. :)

leuwarden> (I am also pretty sure that somehow this is why gay men

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

leuwarden> learn so very well)

Well? You mean gay men must show some feminine character? I've heard that there are many gay men who remain very masculine in character and appearance. They just like men instead of women.

leuwarden> there is yet another problem: what is the aim? at what

leuwarden> point do you really *know* a language?

>> That's why I hate to answer questions like: which/how many

>> languages do you _know_? Well... please tell me how you define

>> "knowing a language" first. Then, define "a language" (vs.

>> "dialect", and probably also "accent").

leuwarden> here is the formula that I have been using to explain

leuwarden> the two or three or four that I "know":

leuwarden> $a + b + c + d \dots = 1$

leuwarden> where a, b, c... are the languages that you "know".

Then, you should define "+" for these objects, and define what "1" means in that equation. :)

>> Why?

leuwarden> for instance for myself. for me to assemble a sentence

leuwarden> in a foreign language is like doing a fairly long

leuwarden> mathematical equation without writing anything down. I

leuwarden> can do it, but it is tough.

I don't have any problems in it. Maybe, you're a more visually oriented person. So, you'd like to see things written down. I also like to see things written down, and find it much easier to read than to listen. But I have no problem making up a sentence in a foreign language without writing it down. (Except for very very very lengthy sentences, which even native speakers won't compose when speaking.)

In case you're not aware of it, English is a foreign language for me.

—

Lee Sau Dan N^f ~{ @nJX6X~ }

E-mail: danlee@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Home page: <http://www.informatik.uni-freiburg.de/~danlee>

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

- **Follow-Ups:**
 - ◆ **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
 - ◇ From: leuwarden

- **References:**
 - ◆ **Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
 - ◇ From: ck
 - ◆ **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
 - ◇ From: leuwarden
 - ◆ **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
 - ◇ From: Joachim Pense
 - ◆ **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
 - ◇ From: leuwarden
 - ◆ **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
 - ◇ From: Lee Sau Dan
 - ◆ **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
 - ◇ From: leuwarden

- Prev by Date: **Re: Be and Have in Hebrew, and ACC case**
- Next by Date: **Re: Natural Language Praised**
- Previous by thread: **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
- Next by thread: **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
- Index(es):
 - ◆ **Date**
 - ◆ **Thread**