

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/msg00536.html>

---

- *From:* [leuwarden@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:leuwarden@xxxxxxxxxx)
  - *Date:* 6 Dec 2005 00:25:44 -0800
- 

Lee Sau Dan wrote:

> >>>> "leuwarden" == leuwarden <[leuwarden@xxxxxxxxxx](mailto:leuwarden@xxxxxxxxxx)> writes:  
>

> leuwarden> but still, I simply do not know anything about  
> leuwarden> China. The Panda bear?  
>  
> What's that?

!!!!

You must be kidding.

here are some pictures of pandas. <http://snipurl.com/kj4z>

for as long as I can remember, whenever there was some talk between China and the West, it was headlines about and small print about export quotas.

>  
> BTW, Beer was introduced from Germany, during their occupation of  
> Tsingdao, China in last 18th century.

>  
>  
> leuwarden> the way they build roofs?

>  
> Yeah. It's a special kind of curve. Mathematicians have already  
> proved that this is the curve along which things would slide from the  
> top to the bottom in the shortest amount of time. That's ideal to get  
> rid of snow or rain from the roof.

>  
>  
> leuwarden> and a very beautiful one page story by Franz Kafka  
>  
> Kafka? He's a European.

of course. All the news was through Europeans and was legendary. I forgot a beautiful poem by Hofmannsthal.

>

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

- >
- > leuwarden> and a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen about a
- > leuwarden> nightingale....but of these two I am not completely
- > leuwarden> sure that they are on a Chinese background. And the
- > leuwarden> Great Wall that is also pictured in some those famous
- > leuwarden> Heinecken landscape ads.
- >
- >
- >
- > leuwarden> In Switzerland, English and German were obligatory and
- > leuwarden> in my early childhood we spoke French at home.
- >
- > Well... but I've encountered a Swiss girl in Ascona, Ticino
- > (<http://www.ascona.ch/>). She could only speak Italian. I tried to
- > speak to her in English, but she couldn't handle it. Her boyfriend —
- > who speaks both English and Cantonese — acted as the translator.
- > Through translation, I learnt that this girl was going to learn German
- > in the next semester in Konstanz, Germany. She has been studying
- > German, according to the translator. But when I tried to talk to her
- > in German, she couldn't handle it, either.
- >
- > Isn't that very strange? I thought that every Swiss (even in the
- > French and Italian regions) should be able to at least speak some
- > basic English or German.

I do not know why abroad it is thought that the Swiss are multilingual. The country is, and to get a government job you have to pass a little test in two or three languages. The German Swiss learn English rather easily, but how many really do that? Maybe 20%? Probably fewer.

Of course, to get a job in the foreign service you have to speak several languages

- > I learnt from that instance that I was
- > wrong.

I grew up in a town where both Swiss German and French were spoken. Most people would understand both and speak a mixed language.

I do not think it is possible to have a majority of people learn more than one language well.

- >
- >
- > 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 tried to learn Russian and failed.

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

>

> That doesn't mean you would fail for Chinese. Chinese is so different.

One thing is to learn a language, another is to maintain it. I have four to maintain. Though I can no longer speak it fluently, I won't let my French go.

>

>

> to, e.g., code-switch between German and Mandarin. Since most acquaintances know English, code-switching between English and the others is done most often.

That has become universal. As the new technologies come in in English, everybody picks up the new vocabulary. It becomes obligatory.

>

>

>

>

>

> leuwarden> I do not have that problem anymore now, but it means

> leuwarden> that learning a language is tough in the beginning and

> leuwarden> then becomes more like a game

>

> Life is like a game, and language is just a subgame. :)

!!!!

heresy.

I meant that learning becomes a game.

I do not think that language and life are games.

>

>

>

> leuwarden> If the verbal sequence is complicated? A beginner has

> leuwarden> to make a very big effort to assemble tense and mood

>

> What are "tense" and "mood"? Chinese doesn't have these

> complications!

>

>

> leuwarden> and interrogation

>

> Trivial with Chinese. English has pretty complicated rules for that.

>

>

> leuwarden> or negation,

>

> Also trivial. English has the most complicated rule for negation,

> indeed.

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

>  
>  
>  
> leuwarden> and for most people this is disciplinary drilling that  
> leuwarden> they try to avoid  
>  
> Lazy.

No.

Language learning has become a very questionable drilling exercise. In some distant past, people learnt a language along with some literature.

Now, since the courses are for people who dislike literature, the texts are all of them irrelevant or downright idiotic in their pseudo-realism where the convention is that you need English to buy airplane tickets, ask the time, buy clothes and talk about Susy's boyfriend.

I wish I could kill some teachers. In fact, quite a few.

>  
>  
>  
> --  
> Lee Sau Dan N^f ~{ @nJX6X~}  
>  
> E-mail: danlee@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
> Home page: <http://www.informatik.uni-freiburg.de/~danlee>

---

• *Follow-Ups:*

- ◆ **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**  
◇ From: Lee Sau Dan

• *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

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?

◆ **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: Advice for Advanced Learning in French**
- Next by Date: **Re: Is there an optimal sequence for language acquisition?**
- 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**