

Techniques and Activities for Self-directed Language Learners

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Summary

This book contains detailed descriptions of techniques and activities you can use to learn a second language by working with speakers of the language. Each technique has a detailed description of the objectives of the technique, the guidelines to follow, and the procedure to use. These techniques can be helpful to you in developing your own language learning program or supplementing a language school.

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Introduction to techniques and activities

We have put together a collection of language learning techniques and activities you can use to build your language skills with the help of one or more native speakers of the language you want to learn. We have used the term *technique* to refer to procedures with sequenced steps as distinct from less structured *activities*. Most of the *activities* (and a few of the techniques) assume that the learner is living in a community where the target

language is spoken.

See also

- Keywords: activities for language learning, techniques for language learning

OVERVIEW

Index of techniques

Introduction

This module group contains listings of techniques, according to the type of skills they help to develop.

In this module group

Here are the modules on index of techniques:

- Techniques for improving pronunciation
- Techniques for developing grammatical accuracy
- Index to grammatical structures you can learn through comprehension techniques
- Techniques for building vocabulary
- Techniques for learning discourse structures
- Techniques for practicing communicative functions
- Techniques for learning appropriate varieties
- Techniques for learning interactional skills
- Techniques for building cultural understanding

See also

- Keywords: techniques for language learning

Techniques for improving pronunciation

Description

Here are some techniques to use to improve your pronunciation. Some techniques are for single sounds that are problem areas. Others focus on comparing several sounds you have trouble distinguishing. Still others help you work on features such as tone, stress, and intonation.

Objectives

Here are some pronunciation objectives you can work on with these techniques:

- To be able to distinguish when your pronunciation differs from that of a mother tongue speaker
- To improve the production of sounds that are difficult for you

Techniques

Here are the techniques to use to improve pronunciation:

- The Intonation Drill technique
- The Record and Compare technique
- The Record for Correction technique
- The Single Sound Drill technique
- The Sound Contrast Drill technique
- The Stress Pattern Drill technique
- The Tone Pattern Drill technique

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

Techniques for developing grammatical accuracy

Description

Any technique or method that gives you exposure to a broad variety of grammatical structures, such as the Total Physical Response techniques or the Text-based techniques, will help you acquire structures and, with enough exposure, should improve your accuracy. The following techniques, however, will help you isolate and work on developing grammatical accuracy with specific structures.

See: Index to grammatical structures you can learn through comprehension techniques for ideas on how to practice specific structures.

Techniques

Here are some techniques to use to develop grammatical accuracy:

- The Clause Type Practice technique
- The Part of Speech Placement technique
- The Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique
- The Structure Contrast Drill technique
- The System Drill technique
- The Tense Practice technique

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, grammar, techniques for language learning

Index to grammatical structures you can learn through comprehension techniques

Introduction

In "Kick-starting your language learning," Greg Thomson gives suggestions for how to use comprehension-based language learning techniques, such as Total Physical Response and Photo Book techniques to learn to comprehend a variety of grammatical structures. Thomson has deliberately used a nontechnical vocabulary in referring to grammatical structures, so as not to intimidate language learners who are not familiar with that technical vocabulary.

It may sometimes be helpful, however, to be able to associate a technical term with what Thomson is talking about. For example, if a learner is in language school and is studying the imperfect aspect (in some languages called the imperfect tense), it might be helpful to be able to refer to "Kick-starting your language learning" for ideas on how to do extra practice outside of class by working with a language helper.

Description

This index lists the technical names of grammatical terms with links to the section in which they are discussed by Thomson in "Kick-starting your language learning."

Grammatical structures

- Identificational clauses
- Descriptive clauses
- Noun phrases
- Imperatives
- Active clauses
- Intransitive clauses
- Transitive clauses
- Direct objects
- Subject pronouns
- Indirect objects
- Benefactives
- Location phrases
- Possessors and possession
- Instruments
- Source
- Manner
- Past tenses
- Future tenses
- Imperfective aspect
- Time words
- Passive voice
- Interrogatives
- Subjunctive mood
- Optative mood
- Negation

- Inchoative
- Complex sentences
- Compound sentences
- Relative clauses
- Temporal clauses
- Reason clauses
- Conditional clauses
- Concessive clauses
- Purpose clauses
- Causative constructions
- Comparatives
- Superlatives
- Indirect speech

Techniques for building vocabulary

Description

Any technique that gives you exposure to language you can understand will help you build vocabulary. The techniques listed here are particularly good for building up your comprehension vocabulary.

Techniques

These are the techniques to use to build vocabulary:

- The Dialogue techniques
- The Discovering Categories technique
- The Interview techniques
- The Look and Listen techniques
- The Text Portfolio technique
- The Total Physical Response techniques

See also

- Keywords: techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Techniques for learning discourse structures

Techniques

Here are the techniques to use to learn discourse structures:

- The Text Analysis technique
- The Text Portfolio technique
- The Write and Rewrite technique

See also

- Keywords: discourse, techniques for language learning

Techniques for practicing communicative functions

Techniques

Here are the techniques to practice communicative functions:

- The Dialogue techniques
- The Survival Phrases technique

See also

- Keywords: communicative functions, techniques for language learning

Techniques for learning appropriate varieties

Description

These techniques will help you learn what varieties of language are appropriate to different communication situations and purposes.

Techniques

Here are the techniques to learn appropriate varieties of language:

- The Dialogue techniques
- The Handling Idioms technique
- The Text Portfolio technique
- The Write and Rewrite technique

See also

- Keywords: techniques for language learning, varieties of speech

Techniques for learning interactional skills

Techniques

Here are techniques to learn interactional skills:

- The Dialogue techniques
- The Interview techniques

See also

- Keywords: interactional skills, techniques for language learning

Activities for self-directed language learners

Techniques for building cultural understanding

Techniques

Here are techniques to build understanding of the cultural framework:

- The Dialogue techniques
- The Discovering Categories technique
- The Interview techniques
- The Picture Descriptions technique
- The Text Analysis technique

- The Text Portfolio technique

See also

- Keywords: culture learning, techniques for language learning
-

Techniques for self-directed language learners

Introduction

These are called techniques for self-directed language learners because you can use them to achieve your own language learning objectives, working with any native speaker of the language that you want to learn. They can be used to supplement a language school or independent study course, or as part of your own language learning program.

Things to do

- Use the Comprehension Building techniques.
See: The Comprehension Building techniques
- Use the Culture Exploration techniques.
See: The Culture Exploration techniques
- Use the Discourse Practice techniques.
See: The Discourse Practice techniques
- Use the Memory Reinforcement techniques.
See: The Memory Reinforcement techniques
- Use the Production practice techniques.
See: The Production Practice techniques

See also

- Keywords: techniques for language learning
-

The Comprehension Building techniques

Introduction

With the Comprehension Building techniques you are concentrating on learning to understand more and more of the language you are learning, rather than focusing on speaking it.

Things to do

- Use the Audio Archive technique.
See: The Audio Archive technique
- Use the Look and Listen techniques.
See: The Look and Listen techniques
- Use the Physical Response techniques.
See: The Physical Response techniques
- Use the Predictable Text techniques.
See: The Predictable Text techniques

The Audio Archive technique

Introduction

With the Audio Archive technique, you use examples of various types of spoken texts as models for style, intonation, and other conventions that go with each genre. You can also use this technique for vocabulary learning and review.

Objectives

- To make full use of the large body of recorded materials you get throughout your language learning
- To acquire a feel for the style and look of different genre of spoken text
- To gain an understanding of the way each type is organized
- To learn new vocabulary
- To use this as a method of reviewing known vocabulary, intonation, and overall production of each specific type of text

Guidelines

- Begin this collection with your first recordings in language learning. Include

recordings of the language associate (LA) saying vocabulary items, giving example sentences, and other such speech. One of the advantages of this technique is that you can learn from materials you have already collected rather than having to collect all new data.

- Keep bibliographical information on each tape (speaker, topic, and date of recording) for future reference.
- Catalog tapes according to content for easy access and review.
- Take advantage of opportunities to record different types of speech.
 - Attend village meetings.
 - Attend church or school functions.
 - Find a good storyteller or a willing historian.
- Listen to the tapes and make note of unfamiliar vocabulary, intonation patterns, and specific stylistic techniques. Go over any questions you have with the LA, playing the tape for clarification (this may not be necessary if you are only trying to define vocabulary items). Also, when talking about intonation and style, it may be difficult for a native speaker to distinguish the specifics used for one genre versus another. Your best teacher for such things may be to record several different speakers giving similar information, and then to compare them to learn overall principles.
- Keep all recorded texts for your current level of language learning as well as previous levels.
- Review the texts on a regular basis for best retention.

The Look and Listen techniques

Introduction

With the Look and Listen techniques, you use collections of photos or drawings to acquire vocabulary and grammatical structures.

Objectives

- To build comprehension vocabulary
- To recognize new grammatical structures
- To associate new vocabulary directly with the pictures, without translation

Guidelines

- Find out if it is culturally appropriate for you to take photos.
Reason: In some parts of the world, you can get mobbed or arrested for taking photos in public places. In other places, you must always ask permission before taking photos (a polite thing to do in any case). You may be obligated to get prints for the people you photograph. Be sure to find out about this before you take your photos.
- Arrange the photos or drawings in the order of simple to more complex in their content.

Things to do

- Use the Illustrated Dictionary or Picture book technique.
See: The Illustrated Dictionary or Picture Book technique
- Use the Photo Book technique.
See: The Photo Book technique
- Use the Picture Book Plus Recordings technique.
See: The Picture Book Plus Recordings technique
- Use the Picture Cues technique.
See: The Picture Cues technique
- Use the Picture Descriptions technique.
See: The Picture Descriptions technique
- Use the Dialogue Strip technique.
See: The Dialogue Strip technique

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, comprehension vocabulary, photographs and photo books, pictures and picture books, techniques for language learning

The Illustrated Dictionary or Picture Book technique

Introduction

With the Illustrated Dictionary or Picture Book technique, you learn vocabulary by looking at pictures in a book while reading or hearing the corresponding words in the target language.

Objectives

- To gain a large amount of comprehension vocabulary quickly
- To associate the new vocabulary directly with the pictures, without translation

Guidelines

- Work in one semantic domain at a time.
- Go slowly enough to learn all of the items before moving on to another domain.
- Be aware of morphophonemic changes that may occur, depending on the location of the word within the sentence. To see if such changes occur, try getting the word in a different context.
- Record your session for repeated review.
- Suggested materials:
 - An illustrated picture dictionary such as Larousse Illustré or Duden's (publishers)
 - A children's book with culturally suitable pictures of certain semantic domains such as farm animals, tools, or transportation
 - A scrapbook made by cutting pictures from magazines

Steps

Before your session

1. Find an illustrated picture dictionary or other suitable book.
2. Select a page or section. If it is not written in the language you want to learn cover up the gloss.
3. Decide whether you will record the session, and if so get the tape recorder ready.

During your session

4. Let the language associate (LA) look at the pictures.

During your session

5. Ask the LA to name the words for you or to put them in a simple sentence, such as, "This is a _____."

After your session

6. If you have recorded your session, listen to the recording and associate what you hear with the pictures in the book.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, comprehension vocabulary, dictionaries, pictures and picture books, techniques for language learning

Example: The Illustrated Dictionary or Picture Book technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Illustrated Dictionary or Picture Book technique:

1. You select a page from a book that has pictures of various kinds of farm animals.
2. You cover up the other language gloss (if there is one).
3. You decide you want to record the session so you get your tape recorder and tape ready.
4. You let the LA view the pictures.
5. You record the LA giving the names of each item or putting them in a simple sentence, such as, "This is a pig."
6. You listen to the tape while looking at the pictures.

The Photo Book technique

Introduction

With the Photo Book technique, you take photos yourself or collect photos from other sources, to use to acquire vocabulary and grammatical structures.

See: The use of a book of photos in initial comprehension learning

Objectives

- To provide a recognition vocabulary from the first day of language learning
- To provide language learning that involves real communication: receiving messages,

processing messages, and responding to messages (even if nonverbally)

- To provide visual teaching or learning aids to use at various stages of language learning that builds on what has been already learned

Guidelines

- Take at least 50–100 photos, if it is culturally appropriate to do so (see guidelines, The Look and Listen techniques).
- Take photos that contain one or more people as main characters, who are, in most cases, involved with either another person, or with a nonhuman object (which sets the stage for simple transitive sentences).
- Arrange the photos in a book.
- Collect one type of information about the photos with each pass through the book, for instance, identifying humans (man, men, woman, women, boy, girl, and so forth), identifying objects, simple transitive sentences, more verbs, existential sentences, more nouns, locations, instruments, agreement categories, tense/aspect; constituents of noun phrases, negation, questions, commands, modality, voice, coordination and related phenomena, other NP characteristics, and noun roles. See Brewster and Brewster 1976.
- Check to see if the LA has difficulty in interpreting photos, which is true in some monolingual situations. Line drawings might work better as an alternative.
- Use the photo book as a conversation starter after your initial run throughs, talking about the people in the photos, facts about the people and the situations involved in taking the photos.
- Create a photo book for later stages of language learning by illustrating all steps in a procedure, the major events in the daily cycle, yearly cycle, or life cycle, or showing the major differences in each stage. Or photograph major cultural happenings in great detail, and arrange in logical, spatial, or chronological manner.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, comprehension vocabulary, grammar, photographs and photo books, techniques for language learning

The Picture Book Plus Recordings technique

Introduction

With the Picture Book Plus Recordings technique, you look at pictures and hear a description of them in the target language. The pictures are designed so you can understand the meaning of what is spoken from the context of the picture.

Objectives

- To learn a large amount of comprehension vocabulary
- To associate the new vocabulary directly with the pictures, instead of associating the words with translations in your own language
- To enhance listening comprehension skills
- To hear new vocabulary many times before speaking it, which should help your pronunciation when you eventually pronounce the word

Guidelines

- Purchase a program, such as *The learnables* by Harris Winitz, which consists of a book of drawings with accompanying record (or tape). Such materials already have the material divided into learnable chunks (called sections). If these are not available or not suitable for the target culture or language, you can create your own. See: How to make your own Picture Book Plus Recordings technique.
- Work on a section at a time and repeat each one two or three times.
- Take a break before working on a new section, at least 15 minutes.
- Aim to understand the words. Do not repeat the words out loud, as this will not aid in understanding and may cause mispronunciation. Do not spell the words, or you may tend to hear them as they are spelled rather than the way they are pronounced. Do not be concerned with reading; understanding the language must come first. Do not replay an item that you do not understand, listen to the entire program without rewinding the tape recorder. Some words are understood only after being heard a number of times. Each word should be programmed into the section many times, so that by continued study, you can gain understanding.
- Play the program without looking at the pictures for review. Use the tape as background while doing other activities, such as washing dishes or riding in the car.

Variation to develop reading skills

You can adapt this technique to develop reading skills by having a written version of the script, instead of a recording, to accompany the pictures. It is a good idea to use the recording first, and then the written version. In this way you are learning to read what you can already understand orally.

See also

- Keywords: Picture Book Plus Recordings technique, audio recordings, comprehension, comprehension vocabulary, context, pictures and picture books, predictability, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

The Picture Cues technique

Introduction

With the Picture Cues technique, you have someone ask you questions about a picture. You answer according to what you see in the picture.

Objectives

- To help expand the subject matter of your language learning beyond your immediate physical context
- To practice responding simply and naturally to questions

Steps

Before your session

1. Select pictures, drawings, or photos you want to use.
2. Decide whether you want to record the session, and if so, get the tape recorder ready.

During your session

3. Give the pictures to the language associate (LA), and have him or her make statements or ask questions about them.

Have the LA scramble the pictures so you cannot predict the order.

4. Respond briefly, when appropriate, with true-false answers, short words, or phrases.
5. If you choose to record, have the LA ask questions about the pictures (without your response) while you record.

After recording is complete, ask questions about any vocabulary you are unsure of. Replay the tape to find the words in question, if necessary.

After your session

6. Practice with the tape and keep the pictures in the same order that the LA used when

asking the questions.

You may answer orally or write the answers to the questions.

See also

- Keywords: audio recordings, comprehension, photographs and photo books, pictures and picture books, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Picture Cues technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Picture Cues technique:

1. You select pictures of a market scene.
2. You decide to get your tape recorder and tape ready.
3. You give the pictures of the market scene to the LA and ask him or her to make statements or ask questions about them.

Have the LA scramble the pictures so you cannot predict the order.

4. You respond briefly, when appropriate, using true-false answers, short words, or phrases.
5. You record the LA asking questions about each picture without your response.

After recording is complete, you ask questions about vocabulary items you do not understand.

You replay the tape to find the words in question, when the LA does not remember exactly what he said.

6. You practice with the tape and keep the pictures in the same order that the LA used when asking the questions.

You may answer orally or write the answers to the questions.

The Picture Descriptions technique

Introduction

With the Picture Descriptions technique, you ask the language associate (LA) to describe

pictures you have chosen and you record the descriptions for later practice.

Objectives

- To acquire
 - descriptive words
 - identification and descriptive sentences
 - present tense verbs (if the pictures contain people doing things), and
 - paragraph structures
- To increase comprehension skills of large amounts of language within controllable limits and with visual clues of the meaning

Guidelines

- Choose pictures that have vocabulary you want to learn.

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Picture Descriptions technique:

Before your session

1. Decide what type of pictures you want to look for.
2. Look for appropriate pictures in magazines or books, or take photos.
3. Get your tape recorder and tape ready.

During your session

4. Ask the LA to describe the pictures.

Record the descriptions to listen to later, but also pay attention to the LA while recording.

5. Ask questions to clarify things you do not understand.

After your session

6. Listen to the tapes while looking at the pictures to reinforce what you have learned.

Variation to develop reading skills

You can adapt this technique to develop reading skills by having a written description of the pictures instead of a recording.

See also

- Keywords: audio recordings, comprehensible input, comprehension, descriptions, identification, pictures and picture books, techniques for language learning, tenses, verbs, vocabulary

Example: The Picture Descriptions technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Picture Descriptions technique:

1. You decide to look for pictures that have to do with farming.
2. You find magazine or book pictures, or photos you have taken of locals doing farming.
3. You get your tape recorder and tape ready for the session.
4. You ask the LA to describe the pictures. Record the descriptions for later, but also pay attention to the LA while recording.
5. You ask questions when you do not understand what the LA means.
6. You listen to the tapes while looking at the farming pictures to reinforce what you have learned.

The Dialogue Strip technique

Introduction

With the Dialogue Strip technique, you learn basic language functions by looking at cartoon strips illustrating a short dialogue exchange, while hearing the corresponding dialogue in the target language.

Objectives

- To understand what people typically say in everyday encounters
- To associate the dialogue directly with the pictures, without translation

Guidelines

- If you start with cartoon strips you have already drawn or with a book such as The

Lexicarry containing such strips, your Language Associate (LA) may have trouble understanding the situation illustrated by the cartoon. Make sure you both agree on the situation the cartoon strip is illustrating.

- Be aware that there may be several dialogue variations that could be illustrated by the same picture.
- Record your session for repeated review.
- Suggested materials:
 - The lexicarry
 - Cartoon strips you make yourself by drawing pictures
 - Sequences of photographs that illustrate a dialogue exchange
 - Strips made by cutting pictures from magazines

Steps

Before your session

1. Purchase or make a cartoon strip illustrating a short dialogue exchange.
2. Decide whether you will record the session, and if so get the tape recorder ready.

During your session

3. Explain to the language associate (LA) the situation the cartoon strip is intended to illustrate.
4. Ask the LA to take the part of each of the men in the encounter and record the dialogue exchange.

After your session

5. If you have recorded your session, listen to the recording and associate what you hear with the dialogue strip.

See also

- Keywords: audio recordings, communicative functions, comprehension, Dialogue techniques, pictures and picture books, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: Illustrating a greeting exchange

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Dialogue Strip technique:

Before your session

1. You draw a cartoon strip illustrating a greeting exchange between two men who know each other, passing on the street.
2. You decide you want to record the session so you get your tape recorder and tape ready.

During your session

3. You show the strip to your LA and explain that it is meant to illustrate a greeting exchange between two men who know each other, passing on the street.

Note: Your LA may ask you questions about the age of the men, the time of day or other factors about their relationship that might affect what is said.

4. You record the LA greeting an acquaintance on the street and responding to the greeting.

After your session

5. You listen to the tape while looking at the cartoon strip.

The Physical Response techniques

Introduction

With the Physical Response techniques, you practice responding to commands spoken in the target language.

Objectives

- To make mental associations between forms and meanings
- To build comprehension vocabulary quickly
- To build listening comprehension skills without interference from trying to speak
- To avoid translating from your own language to the target language
- To begin to assimilate basic sentence and sound patterns

Guidelines

- Plan your session thoroughly in advance. This method will not be successful if you just try to make it up as you go along.
- Demonstrate this technique to the language associates (LAs) so they understand you are trying to listen and respond appropriately to each command.
- Try to associate each command with the appropriate action without translating into your own language.
- Have the LA repeat the commands many times in random order so you get lots of practice. It is important to repeat things often enough to learn them well.
- Respond as quickly as possible, so the response becomes naturally connected to the command.
- Record your session with the LA so you can listen to the tape later and practice your responses. Keep reviewing previous lessons.

Things to do

- Use the Listen and Do technique
See: The Listen and Do technique
- Use the Following Spoken Directions technique
See: The Following Spoken Directions technique
- Use Techniques for Introducing and Expanding Material
See: Introducing and Expanding Material

See also

- Keywords: TPR (Total Physical Response), action association, commands, comprehension, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

The Listen and Do technique

Introduction

The Listen and Do technique is the principal technique in the Physical Response group. All the other techniques are based on it. The objective of the technique is to help you associate sound and meaning directly, without translation into another language, and to reinforce the meaning by physical action or response.

Steps

Before your session

1. Choose a situation where commands would be given that you are likely to use.
2. List in your own language five or more different commands that might be useful in the situation.
3. Gather any props or materials you need for the session.

During your session

4. Communicate to the LA how to do the exercise and what commands in the target language you want to learn.

Tip: Demonstrate the technique by giving commands in English or another language to a learning partner, so the LA can see what you mean.

5. Record the LA giving the commands while you carry out the appropriate action.
6. Have the LA give the commands repeatedly and randomly until you can respond quickly without thinking in your first language. Encourage the LA to correct any wrong responses.
7. Write down the commands at the end of the session if you want to.

After your session

8. Listen to the recording of the commands.
 - Perform the actions as you listen, or make simple drawings that illustrate the actions.
 - Listen to the recording again and focus on the pronunciation.
 - Practice mimicking the commands on the recording when you feel ready (this may not be for several weeks). Look at the picture or perform the action to associate the meaning with the sound.

Variation

G. Thomson (Kick-Starting Your Language Learning) suggests a way to do TPR using two language learners, which works even with LAs who have little or no educational background. The first language learner faces the LA, and the second gets behind the first, in view of the LA, but not of the first learner. The second learner then does things, and the LA instructs the first learner to do whatever he sees the second learner doing.

See also

- Keywords: commands, comprehension, techniques for language learning

Example: How to use the Listen and Do technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Listen and Do technique:

1. You choose to learn commands for how to use a book.
2. You list the following commands in English:
 - Pick up the book.
 - Put down the book.
 - Open the book.
 - Close the book.
 - Read the book.
3. You prepare for your session by gathering
 - a book for the demonstration
 - cards or slips of paper, and
 - your tape recorder.
4. You communicate to the LA how to do the exercise and the commands you want to learn.

With a learning partner you demonstrate several commands in English for the LA, as follows:

- One of you gives a command.
- The other person carries out the command.

Example:

- One of you says, "Pick up the book."
 - The other person picks up the book. You repeat the demonstration until the LA understands.
5. You record the LA giving each of the commands while you do the appropriate action.

6. The LA gives the commands repeatedly and randomly as you respond by performing the appropriate actions with the book.

You encourage the LA to correct you when your response is incorrect.

7. You write down the commands at the end of the session.
8. You listen to the tape.
 - You perform the commands as you hear the LA give them:
 - open the book
 - close the book
 - read the book
 - pick up the book
 - put down the book
 - You listen to the recording, paying attention to the pronunciation of each command
 - You practice mimicking the tape when you feel ready (this may not be for several weeks).

The Following Spoken Directions technique

Introduction

With the Following Spoken Directions technique, you follow a series of spoken (or recorded) directions. Evaluation is based on how closely the directions are followed or how many points out of a series are accomplished.

Objectives

- To take advantage of a limited amount of natural speech
 - to help you improve your listening comprehension ability
 - to actually perform the task being described

Guidelines

Learner:

- Use this technique in a simplified form as a beginner.
- Alter this technique for intermediate or advanced stages by increasing the difficulty of

the directions to be followed, or by increasing the number of steps to be performed.

Teacher:

- Pace the flow of speech of the directions to fit the stage of language learning achieved.
- Use a recorded set of directions for the same learner at different stages of language learning as an evaluation of progress.

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Following Spoken Directions technique:

During your session

1. Complete a set of oral directions given to you by the language associate (LA).
2. Have the LA check your work to see how well you followed directions.
3. Have the LA record another set of directions for at-home practice.

After your session

4. Follow the set of recorded directions for at-home practice.

Check the results during your next session.

Variations

One variation of this technique is to do it with another language learner. For example, sit back-to-back while listening to instructions given by the LA. An appropriate activity might be to use blocks or rods to build a house. After you are done, you then compare results with each other.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, directions, techniques for language learning

Example: Following Spoken Directions

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Following Spoken Directions technique:

1. You complete the following set of directions as given to you by the LA:
 - a. Take a piece of notebook paper and place it in front of you, with the long side

positioned horizontally.

- b. In the middle of the page, draw a circle about one inch in diameter.
 - c. On top of this circle and touching it, draw another circle, just a little smaller in size.
 - d. On top of these circles, draw another circle a bit smaller than the second one. This is the beginning of a snowman.
 - e. Make a face on the top circle by drawing eyes, a nose, and a mouth.
 - f. Draw a tall hat on the head but do not cover the face.
 - g. Draw two arms that look as if they were made out of two sticks.
 - h. Write your name on the back of the paper.
 - i. Give your paper to the LA.
2. You have the LA check your work to see how well you followed directions in drawing a snowman.
 3. You have the LA record a set of directions on how to draw and color various shapes (triangle, square, circle, or rectangle).
 4. You follow the recorded directions dealing with shapes.

You check your work during the next session to see how closely you followed directions.

Introducing and Expanding Material

Introduction

Many beginning techniques can be adapted in a variety of ways to expand the learning experience. Ramiro Garcia has developed and tested many of these variations using Total Physical Response (TPR) in the classroom over many years (Garcia 1988). Some variations have to do with the way new items are introduced to the language learner (called *introductory techniques* by Garcia). Others refer to the way previously introduced material is combined and expanded for the language learner, to promote greater comprehension (called *working techniques* by Garcia). Along with TPR, the variations given here can be implemented for many of the Look and Listen techniques.

Objectives

- To aid in vocabulary acquisition

- To distinguish between several items or actions
- To transfer previously-learned concepts to new situations
- To recognize and respond to previously learned material when it is combined with newly introduced material

Guidelines

- Follow the natural progression of these techniques, from simpler to more difficult, and move at a manageable pace.
- Be sure the language associate (LA) understands what you are trying to do, what new parameter you are introducing to previously learned material, so he or she can truly carry through with the technique throughout the session.
- Make sure the LA does not fall into a pattern of predictability by making the "next step" obvious. Variety is the key to successfully expanding on learned material.

See: Variation of the Listen and Do technique for a suggestion of how two language learners can work together productively. It is applicable to the techniques listed here also.

Steps: Introducing New Material techniques

1. Have the LA speak a command and perform the action. You then listen and mimic the LA's action.

Example: The LA says, "Ted, get up" and stands up, motioning for you to do the same. The LA then says, "Ted, sit down" and he sits down. Ted responds by doing the same as he observed the LA doing.

2. Ask the LA to create a situation so you must choose between two items, one you already learned, and the other which, by the process of elimination, is easily recognized. Example: The LA shows you two photos from the photo book. You already know the word for "house" but have not learned the word for "barn" yet. He points to the photo with the house and says, "This is a house," then to the photo with the barn and says, "This is a barn." You can understand this even though you have never heard the word before.
3. Have the LA get three items for you to choose from, only one of which is known to you. If you guess wrong, then you try again. If you guess correctly, a word of praise is given. Example: The LA has a basket with three items; a banana, a mango, and a guava. You only know the word for banana. The LA says, "Ted, take out the mango." If you pick up the guava, he tells you to try again. If you pick up the mango, he says, "Good work, Ted."
4. Ask the LA to introduce a new item following an already learned item. He or she

makes it very obvious what to perform by either gestures or other cues.

Example: The LA says, "Ted, open the door." Then he says, "Ted, close the door," using a small hand gesture to hint at the meaning of the action needed.

Steps: Expanding Material techniques

Follow these steps to use the Introducing and Expanding Material technique for expanding and combining previously learned material with new material:

1. Ask the LA to recombine already learned vocabulary items and create different (new) situations, so you can transfer the concepts to new situations.

Example: You already know the commands, "Open the door" and "Touch the book." The LA recombines them as, "Touch the door" and "Open the book."

2. Have the LA follow a slow pace in introducing new material. Too much vocabulary too quickly may prove to be counterproductive for retaining material. Example: see number 8.
3. Ask the LA to recombine vocabulary and also expand material by placing items in more complicated utterances (or performances).

Example: Looking at the Illustrated Picture Book, the LA shows you a page with farm animals on it. You already know the names of the farm animals. The LA says, "This is a pig. The pig is big. The pig is big because he eats a lot of corn husks."

4. As your comprehension vocabulary increases, have the LA add function words to the commands, making them flow more smoothly.
- Example: The LA says, "Ted, point to the door with the banana that is in the basket."
5. Ask the LA to continue using the previously learned material, making it the foundation for more complex constructions.

Example: You have already looked at the Illustrated Picture Book farm page and know the basic material (names of animals and their usual activities). Look at the book again. The LA says, "This pig is eating the corn husks so that one day he will be big enough to slaughter. Then the pig will be cooked and eaten."

6. Have the LA use synonyms and equivalents from the beginning. This may sound confusing, but is not when properly carried out.

Example: The LA points to the photos and says, "Ted, this is a little house." "This is a small chair." "This is a huge barn." "This is a large bed."

7. Once you have learned several individual commands, then have the LA give several commands in sequence to be performed as a continuous action. This should not be taken to an extreme or you will not be able to follow through all the way, as it could

become an exercise in memorization rather than in comprehension.

Example: The LA says, "Ted, get up, walk to the door, open it, turn around, hop over to the window on one foot, and sit down in the chair there."

8. The LA should not introduce too many similar items at one time, or it may be overwhelming to you. Three or four items at a time is much more manageable. Giving eight or ten related new items might prove very stressful.

Example: While looking at the photo book, the LA shows you several different types of boats. You already know the generic word for boat, but he gives you specific names for "platform fishing boat," "dugout canoe," and "passenger boat."

See also

- Keywords: TPR (Total Physical Response), commands, comprehension, photographs and photo books, techniques for language learning, variations

The Predictable Text techniques

Introduction

The Predictable Text techniques are all based on the premise that intermediate learners of a language can understand simple connected discourses if the content of the discourses is already known to them, or is predictable, because of related knowledge.

Things to do

- Use the Bilingual Reading technique
See: The Bilingual Reading technique
- Use the Familiar Stories technique
See: The Familiar Stories technique
- Use the Shared Experiences technique
See: The Shared Experiences technique
- Use the Dumb-Smart Question technique
See: The Dumb-Smart Question technique

See also

- Keywords: discourse, techniques for language learning, text

The Bilingual Reading technique

Introduction

With the Bilingual Reading technique, you practice reading a translated text in the target language for which you have an equivalent text in your mother tongue. You take advantage of familiarity with the content to assist your reading practice and comprehension in the target language. This technique can be used with translated material, such as the Bible, magazines, or familiar stories. This is an independent technique and does not require a language associate.

Objectives

- To improve your recognition of grammar patterns and vocabulary items
- To improve your ability to control verb tense and aspect
- To improve your reading comprehension
- To control spelling and suprasegmentals (accent and tone markings)

Guidelines

- Use a modern translation of the text, not one with archaic words.
- If you choose the Bible, start with narrative passages such as the Gospels or historical books.
- Unless you are very familiar with the passage, read it in your mother tongue first to get the meaning and then in the target language.
- Start with short passages and reread each one until you have full understanding.
- Read each passage out loud in the target language at least once.
- Commit yourself to reading daily at a set time for disciplined practice.

Steps

Before your session

1. Choose a short passage in the target language.
2. Have the following items handy:
 - The text in your mother tongue

- A target language dictionary (if available)
- A target language grammar book (if available)
- A fine-point pen or a highlighter and a notepad

During your session

3. Read the passage silently in the target language.
4. If you found the passage hard to understand or saw many new things, read the passage again.
5. Check the meaning by
 - reading the passage in your mother tongue, and
 - using the dictionary for the meaning of words in the target language.
6. Look at these structures in the passage:
 - Verb forms
 - Tense uses
 - Relation between tenses in the passage
 - Grammatical constructions

Identify the tense and aspect of every verb and make notes about these structures if you wish.

7. Read the passage aloud once or twice and pay special attention to the flow of words and sounds.

Variations

The Bilingual Reading technique may also be implemented by using recorded texts in the target language. With this variation, you should listen to the recording of the passage until you comprehend it easily and it does not sound strange to you.

Dictation Exercise

If your printed version of the passage matches the recorded version, play the passage and write it from dictation. Use the pause control or stop key to give yourself time to write. Compare your version with the printed passage and correct the errors. Practice writing any misspelled words several times, or record someone reading the passage as a means of practicing with the dictation exercise.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, discourse, narrative discourse, techniques for language learning, text

Example: The Bilingual Reading technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Bilingual Reading technique:

1. You choose to read John 1:29-34 at your scheduled time of 4:00 p.m.
2. You have the following items handy:
 - The text, John 1:29-34, in your mother tongue
 - A target language dictionary
 - A target language grammar book (if available)
 - A fine-point pen or a highlighter and a notepad
3. You read John 1:29-34 in the target language.
4. You do not understand one part of the passage so you read John 1:29-34 again.
5. You read the passage in your mother tongue and use the target-language dictionary to check for meaning.
6. You look at these structures in John 1:29-34:
 - Verb forms
 - Tense uses
 - Relation between tenses in the passage
 - Grammatical constructions

You identify the tense and aspect of every verb. You decide to make notes about these structures.
7. You read John 1:29-34 aloud once or twice and pay special attention to the flow of words and sounds.

The Familiar Stories technique

Introduction

With the Familiar Stories technique, you get the language associate (LA) to tell you a story in the target language that you are familiar with in another language. You listen and record it for further understanding and evaluation.

Objectives

- To take advantage of your knowledge of the story content to:
 - acquire vocabulary
 - learn grammatical constructions
 - acquire a sense of the discourse organization

Guidelines

- Try to find out if the target language has familiar stories. Many Western languages have versions of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Cinderella, or Little Red Riding Hood. Even non-Western languages have some familiar stories (acquired in this age of international communication).
- Do not try to translate word-for-word when listening to a familiar story; try to follow the gist of the story.

Steps

Before your session

1. Get your tape recorder and tape ready.

During your session

2. Have the LA tell a story in the target language that is familiar to you.
3. Record the story.

After your session

4. Listen to the tape and try to follow the gist of the story.
5. Listen to the tape repeatedly to become familiar with
 - vocabulary,
 - grammatical constructions, and
 - some of the discourse organization.

Variation

The Familiar Stories technique may be used with the following variations:

1. You may listen to the news on the radio or TV in your mother tongue, then listen to it in the target language. If possible, record the target language version and practice with it.
2. If you find a book with a familiar story in it, you can record the LA reading it. Once you have read the print version, try reading along while you listen to the recording. Do not worry if you cannot follow every word. If there is a translation of the Bible in the target language, you can use it for some familiar stories. See: The Bilingual Reading technique.
3. You can use this technique with two or more language learners. You might tell a story to the LA with a second language learner present not knowing what story is being told. You could use a fairy tale from your culture or a story familiar to the other language learner (from the Bible, an event from history, or from personal experience). The LA then tells the story to the second language learner in the next session.

See also

- Keywords: discourse, story-telling, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Familiar Stories technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Familiar Stories technique:

1. You get your tape recorder and tape ready.
2. You get the LA to tell the story of Cinderella in the target language.
3. You record Cinderella.
4. You listen to the tape and try to follow the gist of Cinderella.
5. You listen to the tape repeatedly, making note of new vocabulary items, grammatical constructions, and a sense of the discourse organization.

The Shared Experiences technique

Introduction

With the Shared Experiences technique, you listen to the language associate (LA) recounting something that happened when you were together. **Adapted from:** Greg Thomson Language learning in the real world for non-beginners.

Objectives

- To take advantage of your knowledge of an event to help you
 - understand the reporting of an event more easily
 - acquire new vocabulary
 - acquire new grammatical structures

Guidelines

- Pay attention to things happening during the activity to ask the LA about later (possibly take notes).

Steps

Before your session

1. Think of an event or activity you can do with the LA.

During your session

2. Go with the LA and do whatever you have decided on.
3. Take notes to give yourself a script for what happened.
4. Ask the LA to describe what you did together, as if speaking to a third person. Record what is said and add it to your Audio Archive.

After your session

5. Listen to the tape and see if you can follow what the LA said.
6. Make a note of things you do not understand to ask the LA about later.

Variation

The Shared Experiences technique can be used to practice your own storytelling. You can turn it into a more sophisticated version of the Record and Compare technique. After your shared experience, try telling the story first. Then ask the LA to tell his or her version of it. Listen to both versions and note the differences.

See also

- Keywords: discourse, reporting, techniques for language learning, text, vocabulary

Example: The Shared Experiences technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Shared Experiences technique:

1. You decide to go to the market with the LA.
2. You go with the LA to the market.
3. You make notes of the 'events' during your visit to the market.
4. You ask the LA to describe what you did together, as if speaking to a third person. You record the description and add it to your Audio Archive.
5. You listen to the tape and try to follow what the LA said.
6. You make note of things you do not understand in the recording to ask the LA about later.

The Dumb-Smart Question technique

Introduction

With the Dumb-Smart Question technique, you ask a lot of people the same question in the target language. This needs to be a question you already know the answer to. This permits you to focus on listening to their somewhat predictable responses.

Adapted from: Gradin 1993.

Objectives

- To improve listening comprehension skills
- To build confidence as you discover you can understand what people say
- To learn new vocabulary and new information
- To increase your contact time with people
- To show yourself to be a friendly, interested person

Guidelines

- Use this technique after you have acquired some basic vocabulary and feel confident

about asking questions.

- Take advantage of the structured nature of this technique to enjoy interacting with people in a nonthreatening way.
- Select carefully the questions you ask. If people seem reluctant to answer you might be asking a culturally inappropriate question or people might be confused about why you are asking a question with such an obvious answer.
- Focus on listening. Try to notice how people state their answers, because you usually already know what they are going to say. Look for stylistic factors of speech.
- When possible, record the answers. Prepare your recorder ahead of time.
- File your written versions of the answers and collect the recorded answers on tape to become part of your Audio Archive .

Steps

Before your session

1. Select a topic you already know something about.
2. Think of a question on this topic that everyone might answer the same way.

During your session

3. Find out from the language associate (LA) how to ask the question in the target language.
4. Record the question for practice later.
5. Ask the LA the question in the target language.
6. Record the LA's answer.
7. Write the answer if that helps you.
8. Try to understand the answer, working from your knowledge of the topic.

Ask the LA to restate or paraphrase parts you do not understand.

9. If necessary, get help to clarify or translate words you do not understand.

Tip: It is best to try to understand directly from the target language.

After your session

10. Listen repeatedly to the recording of the LA's answer until you can understand it at normal speed.

11. Repeat the question until you can say it easily and accurately.
12. Go out and ask several people the same question. Listen for familiar vocabulary and try to get the main idea of their answers.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, interviewing, paraphrase, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Dumb-Smart Question technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Dumb-Smart Question technique:

1. You decide you want to learn how to ask for directions to the bus station since you have been there several times and know the way.
2. You decide on the question, "How do I get to the bus station?"
3. You ask your LA how to ask in the target language, "How do I get to the bus station?"
4. You record the LA's question for practice later.
5. You ask the LA, "How do I get to the bus station?"
6. You record the LA's answer.
7. You write the answer if that helps you.
8. You try to understand the answer, working from your knowledge of the topic. You ask the LA to restate or paraphrase parts you do not understand.
9. You clarify words that you do not understand.
10. You listen repeatedly to the recording of the LA's answer until you can understand it at normal speed.
11. You repeat the question until you can say it easily and accurately.
12. You go out and ask several people how to get to the bus station. Listen for familiar vocabulary and try to get the main idea of their answers.

The Culture Exploration techniques

Introduction

The Culture Exploration techniques help you investigate areas of culture you need to understand in order to communicate effectively in your new language. Remember that communication takes place within a cultural framework, and that the more you know about the culture of the speech community, the better you will know what is going on.

Things to do

- Use the Interview techniques
See: The Interview techniques
- Use the Discovering Categories technique
See: The Discovering Categories technique
- Use the Kinship Analysis technique
See: The Kinship Analysis technique
- Use the Participant Observation technique
See: The Participant Observation technique
- Use the Script Analysis technique
See: The Script Analysis technique

See also

- Keywords: techniques for language learning

The Interview techniques

Introduction

With the Interview techniques, you go out into the community and interview people to find out more about different groups community and the life of individuals in it.

Things to do

- Use the Ethnographic Interview technique
See: The Ethnographic Interview technique
- Use the Life History Interview technique

See: The Life History Interview technique

See also

- Keywords: interviewing, techniques for language learning

The Ethnographic Interview technique

Introduction

With the Ethnographic Interview technique, you ask questions of members of a culture (or subculture) in their own language in order to learn about the culture. This technique is used for anthropology studies, but may also be used for language learning purposes. For a full description, see Spradley 1979.

Objectives

- To understand certain aspects of another culture from the insider's point of view
- To build vocabulary
- To discover how insiders categorize objects, people, and actions

Guidelines

- Develop rapport with the language associate (LA) you wish to interview by making repeated explanations when something is unclear, by restating what the LA says to clarify meaning, and by asking for usage of terms and objects rather than "definition."
- Elicit information by asking descriptive questions. Analyze the information given during the ethnographic interview and categorize terms used by the language associate.

See: The Discovering Categories technique

See also

- Keywords: elicitation, ethnographic interviewing, interviewing, techniques for language learning

The Life History Interview technique

Introduction

With the Life History Interview technique, you meet with an older person on a regular basis to learn about local history and the recent past. This is a technique related to the Ethnographic Interview technique.

Objectives

- To have contact with elderly people
- To have the opportunity to learn a little of the local history which might give insight into why things are the way they are now
- To learn
 - what is important history for these people
 - how they measure time
 - storytelling features
 - discourse features

Steps

1. Find an elderly person who is willing to spend several hours with you over a period of several weeks. Explain that you would like to learn about their life and some of the things that happened locally.
2. Spend your first meeting on socializing, not on beginning the work. You might also try to find out if the person has some things he or she would like to talk about.
3. Set up a time to go back and begin your history work.
4. Meet at a suitable location, in the elderly person's home, a park, or wherever you can have time together (without a lot of interruptions or insertions by others).

Use your judgment about whether or not to record or take written notes during the session. If not, write up your findings immediately afterward.

Spend one to two hours with the elderly person, long enough to get work done, but not so long that it gets tiring.

5. Note various storytelling features which were present, and also note discourse features.
6. Try to make a life history timeline, marking dates and events of import, both historical and personal to the elderly person. Notice how the person's life interweaves with historical events, what the person perceives to be important events, and how time is measured.

7. Share what you did with the elderly persons. They might enjoy having a copy and it may also stir up some other interesting memories.

See also

- Keywords: discourse, interviewing, social visiting, techniques for language learning

Example: The Life History Interview technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Life History Interview technique.

1. You decide to ask the 83 year old grandfather of your friend if he would be willing to visit with you and share some of his life and history. He says yes and you tell him you would like to meet with him several times at his convenience.
2. You ask the man if there are certain stories he would like to tell you. He says that he will think about it.
3. You agree to come back tomorrow at 10 a.m.
4. You decide together to sit on his porch during your visit. You ask if it is okay for you to record his stories and he is agreeable. You get out your tape recorder and set it up. You test it to make sure that it will pick up his voice outside.

You ask him if there are any stories or events that he particularly remembers as important to himself or his family, giving him freedom to talk as he wants to. You prompt or insert questions only when needed. He begins to drag a little after 1 1/2 hours, so you suggest that you will continue next week. He agrees.

5. You spend time listening to the tape and writing the stories in your ethnographic notebook. You notice the storytelling style and discourse features.
6. After several sessions, you construct a timeline, marking historical events of note and personal events in the life of the grandfather. You note his concept of important events and how he measures time.
7. After you have completed your paper or historical timeline, you share a copy of what you have done with him.

The Discovering Categories technique

Introduction

With the Discovering Categories technique, you elicit words in various domains of cultural information and try to analyze the semantic categories mother-tongue speakers use to organize relationships between words. Consciously or unconsciously, every language learner must continue to discover and use the categories unique to the target language. This technique is an anthropological research tool, but may also be used as a language learning tool.

Also known as: Domain analysis, taxonomic analysis. Adapted from: Spradley 1979

Objectives

- To understand the sociolinguistic framework of the target culture
- To know how the vocabulary items relate to each other
- To begin to think in the categories recognized by native speakers

Guidelines

- Use the material you gather in an ethnographic interview as a starting place for discovering categories.
- Look for the names of things.
- See if any items seem to be grouped together, if they belong to the same overall grouping.
- Use these items as jumping-off places to explore and discover categories.

See also

- Keywords: analysis, semantic category, sociolinguistic framework, techniques for language learning

The Kinship Analysis technique

Introduction

With the Kinship Analysis technique, you study the structure of the kinship system and discover how it is organized. Comprehending the kinship of a culture and understanding how it affects life is an ongoing project. Some of the aspects of kinship you need to study are:

- kinship terms referring to specific relationships,
- the types of relationships that are allowed between these various kin, and
- acceptable and taboo relationships of intimacy.

Objectives

- To discover how members of the culture refer to one another
- To discover what these references infer and assume within the parameters of relationship

Guidelines

- Pay attention to the terms that people use in conversation and in reference to others.
- Begin with one person when you do an in-depth study, such as a kinship chart. Work with that person extensively, learning as much as possible, before you go on to another person.
- Look for similarities in the relationships of similarly related persons to see what are the acceptable and unacceptable ways of relating. Example: Do they have a joking relationship, a superiority relationship, or a same level relationship?
- Write down all of your observations and insights so that you have a point of reference as you do further study. Take these insights as hypotheses, not as definite understandings, so you can make changes as you gain new and more specific information.

See also

- Keywords: analysis, kinship systems, techniques for language learning

The Participant Observation technique

Introduction

With the Participant Observation technique, you learn about a culture by participating in activities and observing them. It is important to develop your observation skills so that you make a habit of active observation.

Objectives

- To identify important social situations in the culture

- To find out the rules for interaction in these social situations, including the scripts people are likely to follow
- To learn new vocabulary
- To discover the way people in the culture categorize concepts and experiences

Guidelines

- Pay explicit attention to what is going on and make note of as many details as possible to record later.
- Maintain an insider/outsider perspective. This means that, in part, you are experiencing whatever is going on subjectively as a participant. However, another part of you is looking at it objectively, as an observer.
- Keep records of both your objective observations and subjective feelings.

Sources

See Spradley, James (1980) for detailed information on how to do participant observation.

See also

- Keywords: culture learning, participant observation, social situation, techniques for language learning

The Script Analysis technique

Introduction

With the Script Analysis technique you observe the way people interact in predictable social situations and note the important features of each script.

Objectives

- to identify social situations for which there are predictable scripts.
- to learn how people typically act in these situations and what they say, so that you can learn to do things the "right way".

Guidelines

- You need to observe people interacting quite a few times to identify situations for

which there are predictable scripts.

- The easiest kind of script to identify is one occurring in a particular place, such as in a restaurant, church, or shop.

Steps

1. Identify a common communication situation
2. Describe the setting of the communication situation.
3. Describe the participants in the communication situation and the role each is taking.
4. Describe the main purpose of the communication situation.
5. Describe the act sequence that makes up the script, including the kinds of things people typically say.
6. Describe the rules of interaction you notice the participants observing.
7. Describe what you have to know in order to understand what is going on.

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, scripts, techniques for language learning

Example: How to use the Script Analysis technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Script Analysis technique:

1. You identify *Going to a restaurant* as a common communication situation
2. You describe the restaurant as a moderate-priced sit-down restaurant in Dallas.
3. You identify yourself and your friend as *customers*, and also identify a *hostess* and a *waiter* as the roles of two other participants.
4. You describe the main purpose of the communication situation as ordering a meal.
5. You note that the hostess usually asks "How many in your party?" , and then "Smoking or non-smoking?" and then picks up the appropriate number of menus and says "Please follow me." (and so on)
6. You describe the fact that parties will be seated in the order they arrive at the restaurant, unless they have phoned ahead for reservations, in which case they may be

- seated ahead of a party with no reservations (and so on).
7. You describe the fact that meals on lunch menus usually are smaller than meals on the dinner menu and will also usually cost less (on so on).

The Discourse Practice techniques

Introduction

You can use the Discourse Practice techniques to learn to understand and form appropriate discourses of different kinds. As you use these techniques, pay attention to the structure of the different kinds of discourses you hear.

Things to do

- use the Cloze technique
See: The Cloze technique
- Use the Dialogue techniques
See: The Dialogue techniques
- Use the Series technique
See: The Series technique
- Use the Text Portfolio technique
See: The Text Portfolio technique
- Use the Text Analysis technique
See: The Text Analysis technique
- Use the Write and Rewrite technique
See: The Write and Rewrite technique

See also

- Keywords: techniques for language learning

The Cloze technique

Introduction

With the Cloze technique, you take a text with every seventh word blanked out, write appropriate words in the blanks, then ask a language associate (LA) to check your answers. This is a technique used widely for literacy purposes, but it is also helpful in language learning efforts (see Literacy Module: Cloze Procedure, for a complete description).

Objectives

- To develop your ability to use context to infer the meaning of words you do not know within a text
- To understand why some words are incorrect and inappropriate as you discuss your answers with an LA
- To see the natural flow of text in the target language
- To improve your reading fluency

Variation

A variation of the Cloze technique is the Specialized Cloze technique. For this activity, you ask someone to blank out all the words of a particular grammatical form in a text (for example, all articles or prepositions), then you fill in the blanks. You ask a good writer of the language (or an LA) to check your answers to see if they are correct.

The Specialized Cloze technique will help you gain accuracy in the use of a particular grammatical form, and see how the form is used in natural text.

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, inference, techniques for language learning

The Dialogue techniques

Introduction

The Dialogue techniques involve acting out communication situations. In some techniques, two language associates (LA) act out the dialogue situation while you observe. Other techniques involve one LA, who is familiar with the communication situation, and you, the language learner, involved in two roles of a dialogue.

There is a natural progression with these Dialogue techniques. The ones used initially involve the language learner as an observer only (the Simulations and Dialogue

Variations techniques). Techniques which involve the language learner as a role participant are reserved for later, after some progress in speaking ability is made (Reverse Role-Play and Role-Play).

Objectives

- To familiarize yourself with both roles involved in a dialogue situation
- To gain confidence in the role you will most likely play in a real-life communication situation
- To understand what a mother-tongue speaker might say when playing a given role in a communication situation

Guidelines

- Choose only situations in which you have already observed the involvement of locals.
- Choose only situations that you are likely to use in real-life communication.
- Use these techniques only after you are past Stage 1 in the Guidelines for a language and culture learning program, so you can perform your role without a written script.
- Use these techniques to learn acceptable skills in the area of social interaction.

Examples:

- How to make excuses (to graciously decline an invitation for a day at the beach and supply a valid reason for not accepting)
- How to recognize intent (to understand the real attitude behind the statement of a woman in the doctor's office saying, "Pneumonia, that's all I need.")
- How to express politeness or annoyance (to apologize to the hostess for spilling a glass of drink, then breaking the glass while trying to set it aright)

Things to do

- Use the Simulations technique
See: The Simulations technique
- Use the Dialogue Variations technique
See: The Dialogue Variations technique
- Use the Reverse Role-Play technique
See: The Reverse Role-Play technique
- Use the Role-Play technique

See: The Role-Play technique

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, culture learning, Dialogue techniques, language associates, role-playing, techniques for language learning

The Simulations technique

Introduction

With the Simulations technique, you get two or more language associates (LAs) to act out a common communication situation. Example: Buying something at the market or greeting and chatting with a friend you meet when you are out for a walk.

Objectives

- To get more authentic real-life interaction than if you just ask one LA to write or record a dialogue for you

Guidelines

- Let the LAs practice before you start recording. Everybody needs a rehearsal. Some LAs find it easier than others to play a role, just like some of you!
- Record real life encounters as a "natural" alternative to Simulations.

See: The Audio Archive technique for guidelines and warnings

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what communication situation you want to learn about.

During your session

2. Explain the communication situation to the LAs and ask each of them to take a role.
3. After they are happy with the simulation, record it.
4. Play the recording for them and ask if they are satisfied with it.
5. Ask about anything you did not understand. You might ask one LA to listen to the tape and write down the dialogue for you, or transcribe it yourself. (This is a lot easier if you are already familiar with much of the vocabulary.)

After your session

6. Listen to the tapes again. Note the events that make up the script.
7. After you are comfortable with this information, you are ready for Reverse Role-Play.

Variation

The Simulations technique may also be done with a video recorder. You should record the simulation and then note nonverbal interaction styles.

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, interactional skills, role-playing, techniques for language learning, video

Example: The Simulations technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Simulations technique:

1. You decide you want to have the LAs act out a dialogue of buying oranges at the market.
2. You explain to the LAs that you want them to act out a buying scene at the market. Ask one to be the buyer and the other to be the seller.
3. You let them practice until they are happy with the simulation, then record it.
4. You play the recording for them and ask if they are satisfied with it.
5. You ask about some words you did not understand. You ask one LA to listen to the tape and help you transcribe it.
6. You listen to the tapes again and you note the events that make up the script, such as
 - a. Greeting
 - b. Buyer indicates interest in oranges
 - c. Buyer asks about the price, color, and size of oranges
 - d. Bartering occurs
 - e. Seller answers and points out good qualities of the oranges
 - f. Buyer asks for 8 oranges

- g. Seller tells buyer the total price is \$.75
 - h. Buyer pays
 - i. Buyer and seller take leave
7. You are ready to use Reverse Role-Play with your information from the tape.

The Dialogue Variations technique

Introduction

With the Dialogue Variations technique, you record a number of versions of dialogues in similar situations, but with varying the age, social status, or gender of the speakers. You notice the things that change with different speakers, and the kinds of things that do not change.

Objectives

- To form a good idea of the sequence of events that make up scripts associated with different communication situations
- To learn some of the variations that can occur in these events

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what communication situation you want to explore with possible variations.

During your session

2. Have two language associates (LAs) act out a simulation of what they would say or do in a certain communication situation. Record this version.
3. Now ask the LAs to change something about the situation. Give them time to practice if they want. When the LAs are ready, record that version of the dialogue.
4. Change something else in the dialogue and record their communication situation.

After your session

5. Listen to the tapes for the following variations:
 - Notice if there are standard phrases or routines in a number of versions in connection with a given step in the script.

- Notice the difference in register or other factors with changes in relationship of the participants or the setting.

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, register, scripts, techniques for language learning, varieties of speech

Example: The Dialogue Variations technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Dialogue Variations technique:

1. You decide to explore versions of buying something in a shop.
2. You have two LAs act out the shop scene; one as the seller and the other as the buyer. You record it.
3. You ask them to change the situation to an exclusive shop and observe whether the buyer and seller act differently.

When they are ready, you record this version of the dialogue.

4. You change the situation again, so that the LAs pretend that the buyer used to be a regular customer, but has moved away, and is now back in town for a visit. You observe what the buyer and seller say and record their dialogue.
5. You listen to the tapes for the following variations:
 - You note the standard phrases and routines in several versions in connection with each step in a script.
 - You note the difference in register when they pretend it is a very exclusive shop (the customer is more aloof and the shopkeeper is more reserved, yet helpful).
 - You note that the seller is extremely friendly and almost ingratiating when the valued customer returns from an extended absence.

The Reverse Role-Play technique

Introduction

With the Reverse Role-Play technique, you act out a communication situation with a

language associate (LA). The LA plays the part you are most likely to play in real life, and you play the other part. You will probably want to record this so you can listen to it later.

Adapted from: Thomson, Kick-starting your language learning

Objectives

- To get a model of what to say and how to act in a communication situation by observing an LA.

Reason: The LA takes the part you want to play in real life so you are able to learn the way a native speaker approaches the communication task at hand.

At the beginning, your fluency and accuracy in the secondary role is not important, because what you are interested in is learning what the LA's role says.

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide on the communication situation you want to practice, including the topic, if relevant, and the setting.

During your session

2. Describe the specific role you want the LA to play.
3. Describe the specific language activity you will be engaged in. You might specify any factors to include in the communication situation, such as objects, roles, relationship between actors.
4. Take the other role in the interaction.
5. Tape the interaction.

After your session

6. Listen to the tape afterwards and note the vocabulary, structures, and communication strategies used by the LA.

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, communication strategies, fluency, role-playing, techniques for language learning

Example: The Reverse Role-Play technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Reverse Role Play technique:

1. You decide to practice the communication situation of buying fruit at the market.
2. You describe to the LA that you want him or her to play the role of a buyer.
3. You describe that the interaction will involve buying fruit at the market. You specify that oranges are to be purchased.
4. You take the part of the fruit vendor in the interaction.
5. You tape the interaction.
6. You listen to the tape and note the vocabulary, structures, and communication strategies used by the LA.

The Role-Play technique

Introduction

With the Role-Play technique, you act out a communication situation with a language associate (LA). You take the role that you would most likely take in real life, and the LA takes the other role.

Adapted from: Thomson Kick-starting your language learning

Objective

- To improve communication skills
- To gain confidence in the role you will most likely fill in a given real life communication situation
- To discover what a native speaker might say when playing the other role in a communication situation

Steps

Before your session

1. Choose the communication situation you want to practice, including the topic, if relevant, and the setting.

During your session

2. Describe to the LA the specific role you want him or her to play.
3. Describe the specific language activities which you will be engaged in. You might specify certain factors to include in the language activity, such as the objects involved, roles, or relationship between actors.
4. You take the other role in the interaction.
5. Tape the interaction.

After your session

6. Listen to the tape and note the vocabulary, structures, and communication strategies you used.
7. Listen to the Reverse Role-Play technique tape again and compare what you say in each role with what the LA says.

Variation

Another variation you can try after both Reverse Role-Play (RRP) and standard Role-Play (RP) with a particular communication situation, is to do a Dialogue Variation on it. This time you take your role from the RRP session (as vendor), and make a minor change to the communication situation (for example, buy a small bunch of bananas instead of oranges).

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, role-playing, techniques for language learning

Example: The Role-Play technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Role-Play technique:

1. You decide you want to practice buying fruit at the market.
2. You describe to the LA that you want him or her to play the role of the vendor.
3. You describe that the language activity will be negotiating the price of a kilo of oranges.
4. You take the part of the buyer in the interaction.
5. You tape the interaction.

6. You listen to the tape and note the vocabulary, structures, and communication strategies you used.
7. You listen to the Reverse Role-Play technique tape again and compare what you say in the role of buyer with what the LA says. Then compare what you say in the role of vendor with what the LA says.

The Series technique

Introduction

With the Series technique, you observe and listen to a language associate (LA) perform and describe the sequence of steps involved in a common everyday activity, such as making a cup of coffee. This technique is particularly useful in understanding how speakers of the language structure procedural texts.

Adapted from: Francis Gouin, nineteenth century

Objectives

- To develop the language learning skill of noticing actions and then finding out how to say them
- To understand some of the forms (words and affixes) used in the language to indicate actor and time reference
- To learn vocabulary in context by practicing the series and performing each action
- To learn how everyday activities are carried on in the new culture

Guidelines

- Categorize some standard procedures to draw upon for this technique.
 - household activities
 - family activities
 - hobbies
 - meal-related activities
 - car activities

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what activity you want the LA to perform for you.
2. Gather up all the needed props if your language session is somewhere other than at your home (if props will not be readily available).

During your session

3. Have the LA perform a step-by-step demonstration of the activity.

Have the LA stop after each activity phase and describe the action. Record the LA describing the action.

Ask the LA about any unclear vocabulary.

After your session

4. Listen to the tape and go through the motions while the activity is described. Combining physical activity while listening will help you learn while you are doing the motions.
5. Tell the series to someone else when you feel ready. You might start by saying something like, "I have been learning about how to _____. May I tell you what I have learned? You can tell me if I have it right."

Variations

- You can work with two LAs. One LA performs the technique step-by-step in view of the other LA, but you do not watch the action. For instance, you could face the describing LA, and the performing LA would be behind you. The describing LA can tell what the performing LA is doing. In this way you can test your listening comprehension, because you know what the activity is but do not see the action. To check your comprehension, you could then perform the task and describe your actions for the LAs.
- You can videotape the LA or another member of the culture doing some everyday action, or use pictures. For example, the LA can cook something or wash some clothes. Then show the tape to the LA and get him or her to describe each step in the process.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, context, predictability, procedural discourse, techniques for language learning

Greg Thomson's discussion of the series technique in *Kickstarting your language learning*, Chap 2.3

The Text Portfolio technique

Introduction

With the Text Portfolio technique, you collect several examples each of various genres of written texts to use as models for the style, vocabulary, and conventions that go with each genre.

Objectives

- To acquire a feel for the style and look of each genre of writing
- To gain an understanding of the way each text type is organized
- To prepare yourself to start writing

Guidelines

- Collect examples of many different genres of written texts from a variety of sources—anything you can read in the target language:
 - business letters
 - personal letters
 - news stories
 - editorials
 - short stories
 - poems
 - novels
 - advertisements
- Cut out or photocopy short texts from newspapers, magazines, or books.
- Make a summary or book report for long texts. Keep the bibliographical information (author, title, publisher) so you can find the long texts again.
- Consider this portfolio of texts the written equivalent of your tape audio archive. See: The Audio Archive technique

See also

- Keywords: discourse, genre, media, newspaper, techniques for language learning, text

The Text Analysis technique

Introduction

With the Text Analysis technique, you study the structure of written or oral texts and discover how these texts are organized. Comprehending and producing a language means understanding how the parts of the language fit together as parts of a discourse.

Objectives

- To discover what makes a text hold together cohesively
- To discover how to make important information prominent and less important information subordinate
- To see patterns which might not be noticeable without text analysis
- To understand the patterns and be able to use them in conversation, storytelling, and other discourse opportunities

Guidelines

- Begin with a short text that you have recorded or heard and written down.
- Work with a language associate (LA) to clarify any questionable items of content.
- Read about discourse analysis. A good place to start is with Analyzing discourse from the Linguistics bookshelf
- Analyze several different genre, one at a time, recognizing that different genre may have different rules for what is acceptable.

Steps

1. Record a simple story or short speech.
2. Listen to the recording and try to write it exactly as spoken.
Tip: If you have trouble, listen with an LA, and have him or her clarify any speech that is unintelligible to you or words you do not recognize. DO NOT analyze at this point.
3. After you transcribe the entire text, listen again and follow along with the written text to look for errors or holes.

Check for sentence breaks. You will need them if you plan to chart the text.

4. Ask the LA about any vocabulary you are unfamiliar with or any morphological patterns you have not seen before.

Realize the LA may not know why certain things happen in text, but simply that they need to happen to have good text.

5. Once you identify as many words as possible, you need to analyze on your own how the text works. You can do this by charting the text. There are several types of text charting to choose from. Analyzing discourse: A manual of basic concepts describes several kinds of charting. (Longacre and Levinsohn gives other examples). The point of charting is to visualize what happens in the text, and to see relationships that are less clear when in simple paragraph form.
6. Write down some of the patterns you see and observations you have made from working with the chart.
6. Write down some of the patterns you see and observations you have made from working with the chart.
7. Investigate the patterns further by looking at other texts of the same genre, and by paying attention when other stories are told.

See also

- Keywords: analysis, discourse, genre, techniques for language learning

The Write and Rewrite technique

Introduction

With the Write and Rewrite technique, you write drafts of various kinds of texts and ask a good writer of the target language to correct the drafts or make suggestions for improvements. You continue to rewrite a particular text until it is acceptable.

Note: In general, more accuracy is expected in written material than in the spoken language.

Objectives

- To develop accuracy in your writing
- To develop a better style in your writing
- To gain confidence that you can write in the target language, using correct discourse

structures

- To develop a personal portfolio with samples of different kinds of texts you write:
 - narratives
 - business letters
 - reports
 - technical papers
 - personal letters
 - magazine articles

Note: This is separate from the Text Portfolio which is samples of authentic mother-tongue speaker texts used as models for your own work.

Guidelines

- Set realistic goals. Do not try to write complex material until you are ready for the challenge.
- Try not to get discouraged when others point out your mistakes.
- Remind yourself that your ultimate goal is accuracy.
- Stick with it even though it is difficult because this is the only way to truly hone your skills as a writer in the language.

Steps

Before your session

1. Choose a type of text you want to learn to write well.
2. Look in your Text Portfolio for examples of this kind of text.
3. Plan out your text.
 - What parts should it have?
 - Look at the structure of examples in your Text Portfolio.
4. Make an outline and fill in the general content.
5. Write the content without worrying too much about accuracy. Use a thesaurus or dictionary if necessary and available.
6. Edit the text looking for one of the following on each read through.

- vocabulary choices
- connection and overall sense, and
- spelling and punctuation.

During your session

7. Ask a good writer of the language to make corrections and suggestions.

After your session

8. Rewrite the text and repeat Step 7 until the good writer is satisfied.
9. Add the final version of the text to your personal portfolio.

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, discourse, genre, techniques for language learning

Example: The Write and Rewrite technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Write and Rewrite technique:

1. You decide you want to learn to write a business letter.
2. You look in your Text Portfolio for examples of business letters.
3. You plan your text and by looking at examples, determine that you need to include:
 - date
 - addressee
 - greeting
 - body of letter
 - closing, and
 - your signature and address.
4. You make an outline and fill in the general content:
 - Date: 8Sept94

Mr. John Jones

Jones' Grocery
456 Jones Ave.
Grocerytown, TX

- Greeting: Mr. Jones
 - Body: Request bimonthly delivery of groceries to my home, order to be dropped off by hand, bill to be paid upon delivery
 - Closing: Express appreciation, sign name and include address.
5. You write the content of the business letter, working from your outline, without worrying too much about accuracy. You use a dictionary when needed.
 6. You edit the business letter looking for one of the following on each read through.
 - vocabulary choices
 - connection and overall sense, and
 - spelling or punctuation errors.
 7. You ask a good writer of the language to look at the business letter and to make corrections and suggestions.
 8. You rewrite the business letter and repeat Step 7 until the good writer is satisfied.
 9. You add the final version of the business letter to your personal portfolio.

The Memory Reinforcement techniques

Introduction

With the Memory Reinforcement techniques you use various strategies to strengthen your memory of words you are learning, so that you can recognize or produce them later.

Guidelines

- Create mental associations between words
- Review items frequently at first, less frequently later
- Use your senses, (sight, hearing, touch) to remember words.
- Group words in meaningful ways

Things to do

- Use the Semantic Map technique
See: The Semantic Map technique
- Use the Flashcards technique
See: The Flashcards technique
- Use the Color-coding technique
See: The Color-coding technique
- Use the Symbol Association technique
See: The Symbol Association technique
- Use the Mental Image technique
See: The Mental Image technique

See also

- Keywords: memorization, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

The Semantic Map technique

Introduction

With the Semantic Map technique, you draw a graphic representation of words that fit together in the same area of meaning.

Objectives

- To use your visual and tactile senses to help you remember the relationship among words.
- To help you figure out just what the relationship among words is.

Guidelines

- You may want to draw pictures or cut some out of magazines to represent the different words.
- Avoid putting English (or your mother tongue) on the map. Use only the target language.
- You can make semantic maps to represent various sorts of relationships among

words, such as

- Kinds of (furniture, fruit, etc.)
 - Words associated with a key concept (such as words that have to do with hair)
 - Words associated with a certain place (such as the kitchen) or with an activity (gardening)
- You can also use a semantic map to take notes on a lecture or a book.
 - Review your map periodically, when you've made it.

Steps

1. You decide on a key concept around which to build your map.
2. You write the word for the key concept in the middle of the piece of paper (or at the top, whichever makes better sense to you).
3. You think of the words you know, related to the key concept, and write them on the paper around the key concept in ways that show the relationships.
4. Draw lines between the words to represent the relationships among them. Add words, if necessary, to show subgroupings.

See also

- Keywords: inference, semantic category, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Semantic Map technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Semantic Map technique:

1. You decide to make a semantic map to represent kinds of fruit in English.
2. You write the word *fruit* in the middle of the page.
3. You write the words *apple, pear, mango, grapefruit, orange, lemon, lime, pineapple, grape, watermelon, canteloupe*, around the word *fruit*.
4. You add the words *citrus fruit* and *melons* and draw lines between the words to show the relationships.

The Flashcards technique

Introduction

With the Flashcards technique, you combine visual clues with words on flash cards to aid in learning new vocabulary.

Objectives

- To learn new vocabulary
- To internalize the language without translation from your mother tongue (MT) or other previously learned language

Guidelines

- Make flashcards for all new vocabulary items.
- Avoid translation. Use the visual clue to learn the word in the language, do not just connect it to a word in your MT. Note: Some flashcard techniques suggest using the word in your MT on one side, and the word in the new language on the other side. It is preferred to go from concept (via illustration) to word in the new language, so you learn the true meaning (to the degree that you comprehend it), not just translate a similar word from your MT (with all of its connotations) into the target language (which may have completely different connotations and inferences).
- Use cartoons for action words.
- For advanced learning, give a simple explanation in the language or add an illustrative sentence (in the language).
- Review, review, review. Use all flashcards until you have internalized the words and can use them with ease.

Steps

1. Go through your data and make a flashcard for each word that you are currently learning to use. Write the word (in the language) on one side and draw a simple picture or a cartoon to illustrate the word on the other side.
2. Scramble the flashcards so you cannot predict their order.
3. Look at each illustration and say the related word. Check your accuracy by looking at the other side of the card.
4. Flip through the set of cards several times a day. Add new cards for new vocabulary

items and remove cards after sufficient practice.

Variation

One variation or extension of the Flashcards technique is to make two copies of each card (photocopy if possible) and play a matching game with them. Turn one set of the cards so that the illustration is facing up and the other set so that the word or sentence is facing up. Then work until you can match each set of cards, practicing your pronunciation as you work.

See also

- Keywords: flashcards, pictures and picture books, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

The Color-coding technique

Introduction

With the Color-coding technique, you combine visual clues with words on flashcards or lists of paper to aid in learning new vocabulary.

Objectives

- To use colors to group words meaningfully

Guidelines

- Choose colors that have associations *for you*. They don't really need to make sense to anyone else.
- Review words at regular intervals, until you've got them.

Steps

1. You decide on groups of words you think it would be helpful to associate with different colors.
2. You get different colored paper or highlighters and mark the words in ways that make sense to you.
3. When you review your vocabulary words, you make note of the color.
4. When you are trying to remember the group the words are in, remember the color you marked them with.

See also

- Keywords: flashcards, pictures and picture books, semantic category, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Color-coding technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Color-coding technique:

1. You decide to use colors to help you remember the gender of German nouns.
2. You use highlighters to mark masculine words blue, feminine words pink, and neuter words yellow.
3. You review your vocabulary words, noting which words are blue, pink, and yellow.
4. When you are trying to remember which article to use for a noun, remember whether it was blue, pink, or yellow.

The Symbol Association technique

Introduction

With the Symbol Association technique, you use a symbol to represent the group a word belongs to.

Objectives

- To use visual cues to help you remember groups of vocabulary
- To use your own creativity in practicing words

Guidelines

- Use a symbol or icon easy for you to draw.
- Use a symbol that makes sense to you.
- Use this technique to represent a grammatical grouping, a semantic grouping, or any other way you find it helpful to group words.

Steps

1. Decide on a group of words you can illustrate with a symbol.
2. Choose a symbol that illustrates a word with which you are already familiar and which is representative of the group.
3. You draw the symbol next to all words in that group in your vocabulary list or cards.
4. When you review your vocabulary words, take note of the symbol on the paper or card.
5. When you want to use a word, try to remember the symbol you drew next to it on the page.

See also

- Keywords: inference, pictures and picture books, semantic category, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Symbol Association technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Symbol Association technique:

1. You decide to use symbols to illustrate noun classes in a Bantu language.
2. You choose a stick figure to represent the class for human beings, a mountain to represent the class the word for mountain is in, a dog to represent the class for animals, and so on.
3. You draw stick figures next to all words in the class for human beings, a mountain next to the class mountains are in, and so forth.
4. When you review your vocabulary words, you take note of the symbol on the paper or card.
5. When you want to use a word, you remember the symbol you drew next to it on the page and know what noun class agreements to use.

The Mental Image technique

Introduction

With the Mental Image technique, you make a mental image of a word or group of words

to help you remember them.

Objective

- To use mental images to help you remember new words.

Guidelines

- Use images that make sense to you.
- Make a mental image of the place you first heard a new word.

Example: You went to the market and saw a butcher, cutting up meat. You create a mental image of that butcher and that market when you practice the word *butcher*.

- Make a mental image of objects representing words in an idiom.

Example: You think of a corpse next to a dented bucket to remember *he kicked the bucket*.

- Make a mental image of words with an extended sense.

Example: You think of a potato with a (human) eye in it to remember *the eye of a potato*.

- Visualize yourself or someone else doing an action for action verbs.

Example: You have just seen a cooking program where the chef tells you to braise the meat. You store the image of him doing that action, when you think of the word *braise*.

See also

- Keywords: inference, mental images, pictures and picture books, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

The Production Practice techniques

Introduction

With the Production Practice techniques you work on skills that will help you speak or write your new language comprehensibly and fluently.

Things to do

- Use the Handling Idioms technique
See: The Handling Idioms technique
- Use the Limited Answer techniques
See: The Limited Answer techniques
- Use the Memorized Routines techniques
See: The Memorized Routines techniques
- Use the Pronunciation practice techniques
See: The Pronunciation Practice techniques
- Use the Shortened Forms technique
See: The Shortened Forms technique
- Use the Structure Practice techniques
See: The Structure Practice techniques

See also

- Keywords: production, techniques for language learning

The Handling Idioms technique

Introduction

With the Handling Idioms technique, you collect and analyze current idioms and then try to incorporate them into your speech.

Objectives

- To understand idioms when used by other speakers
- To use idioms appropriately and easily

Steps

Before your session

1. Note idioms in your journal (or notebook) that you hear being used in conversations.

After your session

2. Incorporate as many of these idioms as possible (and still sound natural) in your conversations.

Watch people's reactions as you speak. If they correct you, find out how their understanding differs from what you thought it meant.

3. Add this new information to your journal.

See also

- Keywords: idioms, techniques for language learning

Example: The Handling Idioms technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Handling Idioms technique

1. You pull from your data notebook all the idioms you have heard: You bet!, Right on!, It's happenin', Out to lunch.
2. You ask the LA the meaning of each idiom and its appropriate usage:

Idiom	Meaning	When to use and with whom	Caution
You bet!	I agree, I will	informally with almost anyone	Do not use in formal writing
Right on!	I agree, Let's do it	very informal, with young people	Use with friends
It's happenin'	I like it	very informal, with young people	Use with friends
Out to lunch	Bad idea	informally with almost anyone	Do not use in formal writing

3. You try to use these idioms in your conversations and watch to see people's reactions. One friend said he was impressed that you knew how to use idioms correctly. He warned against using them too often in a given conversation, or people will get tired of listening to cliches. You write this in your journal.
4. You make a note of his suggestions in your data notebook.

The Limited Answer techniques

Introduction

With the limited answer techniques you build on comprehension techniques, such as Look and Listen or Physical Response, and start to respond with short answers. This is a natural way to learn to converse, as we often give short answers to questions even in our first language.

Example: "Where are you going this weekend?" "Camping."

Things to do

- Use the Simple Question and Answer technique
See: The Simple Question and Answer technique
- Use the True-False Comprehension technique
See: The True-False Comprehension technique

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, techniques for language learning

The Simple Question and Answer technique

Introduction

With the Simple Question and Answer technique, the language associate (LA) questions you about an area of knowledge in which you already understand some vocabulary. You listen and give a short answer, usually one word or two word. This can be built on vocabulary you have learned with the Photo Book technique or the Physical Response techniques, as well as through the Survival Phrases and Power Tools techniques.

Adapted from: Madsen, Bowen, and Hilferty 1985:79-80

Objectives

- To focus attention on the details of an utterance and its meaning
- To respond simply and to show your real speaking ability in the language

- To practice answering the kinds of questions people in the community may ask you
- To give your conversation partners a better idea about how to phrase their questions in a way you will really understand (especially helpful for beginners)

Guidelines

- Work in a subject area in which you already understand some of the vocabulary.
- Give only short one-word or two-word answers.

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what subject you wish to answer questions about.

During your session

2. Have the LA ask questions about the subject you chose, and respond with short answers. You can repeat the entire series of questions and answers for practice.

After your session

3. Practice this technique in your social interaction with native speakers, if the opportunity arises.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, techniques for language learning

Example: The Simple Question and Answer technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Simple Question and Answer technique:

1. You decide you want to answer questions about your family.
2. The LA asks you these questions and you give appropriate responses:
 - Do you have brothers and sisters? Yes
 - How many brothers do you have? Two
 - Do you have sisters as well? Yes, I do.
 - How many? One

- So, there are four of you altogether? Yes, that is right.
 - Really? Are your mother and father still living? Yes, they are.
3. You practice this technique when you are out in social settings, answering questions that people ask about your family.

The True-False Comprehension technique

Introduction

With the True-False Comprehension technique, the language associate (LA) makes statements about a domain in which you already understand some of the vocabulary. You listen and give a short answer to verify the statement as true, or declare it false. This can be built on vocabulary learned through the Look and Listen techniques or the Physical Response techniques.

Objectives

- To improve listening comprehension skills by focusing on the details and meaning of a statement
- To respond simply with one word or two word replies

Prerequisites

- You need to know the common vernacular forms of
 - "True" or "Yes," and
 - "False" or "No."

Guidelines

Here is a guideline to follow when you use the True-False Comprehension technique:

- Have the LA repeat the statements in random order several times to thoroughly test your comprehension.

Steps

Before your session

1. Select a subject area where you have already learned some vocabulary.
2. Practice saying "true" and "false" in the vernacular. If necessary, you can mimic a

recording.

See: The Look and Listen techniques.

3. Gather any pictures or props you want to use to show the LA the subject area you want to practice.

During your session

4. Ask the LA to make some statements about the props or pictures you brought.

Explain that you want the LA to say some things that are true and some things that are not true. You then decide whether what was said is true or is not true.

5. Practice responding appropriately to whatever the LA says. Ask the LA to correct you if you answer incorrectly.

See also

- Keywords: comprehension, statement, techniques for language learning

Example: The True-False Comprehension technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the True-False Comprehension technique:

1. You decide to respond to true and false statements about what you see out the window.
2. You practice saying "true" and "false" in the target language.
3. You do not have to gather any props, because you are using whatever you see out the window
4. You ask the LA to make some statements about what is out the window. You reply appropriately as to whether what was said is true or is not true.
5. You listen and try to respond appropriately to statements the LA makes. You ask the LA to correct you if you do not answer correctly.

The Memorized Routines techniques

Introduction

With the Memorized Routines techniques you memorize phrases to help you meet immediate communication needs and to elicit comprehensible input. These memorized sentences do not represent your general proficiency in the language ; in other words, you do not know the language well enough to have put these sentences together for yourself. For this reason there can be a danger in using these techniques that people will think you speak the language better than you actually do. On the other hand, memorized routines can be a very useful emergency measure to help you have something to say, while you are developing real creative ability in the language.

Things to do

- Use the Survival Phrases technique
See: The Survival Phrases technique
- Use the Power Tools technique
See: The Power Tools technique

See also

- Keywords: memorized routines, mimicry, techniques for language learning

The Survival Phrases technique

Introduction

With the Survival Phrases technique, you record the language associate (LA) saying survival phrases (sentences and questions) you need to use. You then practice them until you can say them fluently.

Objectives

- To learn to say phrases that will help you with early communication

Guidelines

- Find out the meaning of each phrase, but avoid direct translations.
- Use this technique as a way to build up your comprehension vocabulary first. This will prevent you from simply "parroting" memorized phrases without true comprehension.
- Avoid eliciting and using direct translations and try to learn natural speech. Explain the situations in which you need appropriate phrases as best as you can, so the LA

will suggest more natural phrases.

Steps

Before your session

1. Identify a specific social situation where you need good control of the language. Be as specific as possible.
2. Decide what phrases you need to learn to communicate well in the situation you have identified.

During your session

3. Describe to the LA
 - the situation you have in mind, and
 - the kinds of things you want to say.
4. When the LA gives you a phrase to say, check the meaning by asking questions in your shared language, such as:
 - "What does that mean?"
 - "Who would say that?"
 - "When would I say that?"
 - "To whom would I say that?"

If you have no shared language, do your best to check the general meaning of the phrase.

5. Record the phrases when you are satisfied that you know their general meaning, and that they are appropriate in the situation you had in mind.
6. Transcribe the phrases.
7. Try to get the meaning of the parts of the phrases.

After your session

8. Listen to the recording of the phrases and try to understand what they mean.
9. Try to memorize the phrases.

Variations

The Survival Phrases technique may also be done with the following variations (as suggested in G. Thomson, Kick-Starting your language learning, Section 3.3):

1. Record 50-100 phrases with the gloss preceding or following each phrase. Listen frequently and your comprehension will increase. You can possibly make a drawing to go along with the phrases to spur on remembrance.
2. Use role-play or reverse role-play. Choose a communication situation—for example, a taxi cab going around town. You play the driver and listen to the rider's instructions.

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, memorized routines, production, role-playing, social situation, survival phrases, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Survival Phrases technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Survival Phrases technique:

1. You decide you want to learn appropriate things to say in a market situation when you go to buy something.
2. You decide you need to know how to
 - ask if the vendor has yams, and
 - ask the price.
3. You describe to the LA that you want to learn how to buy yams in the market.
4. When the LA tells you how to ask the price of yams, check its meaning by asking (in English):
 - "Would I say this to every vendor?"
 - "How do I say that the price is too high?"
 - "How do I suggest a lower price?"
5. You record the phrases when you are satisfied that you know the general meaning of the phrases and that they are useful in the market.
6. You transcribe the phrases.
7. You try to learn the meaning of the parts of the phrases.
8. You listen to the recording and try to understand the phrases.

9. You try to memorize the phrases, imagining yourself at the market.

The Power Tools technique

Introduction

With the Power Tools technique, you record the language associate (LA) saying sentences (questions and requests) you can use to learn more about the language. You then practice them until you can say them fluently.

Objectives

- To learn phrases that will be helpful in eliciting new vocabulary

Guidelines

- Find out the meaning of each phrase, but avoid direct translations.
- Use this technique as a way to build up your comprehension vocabulary first. This will prevent you from simply "parroting" memorized phrases without true comprehension.
- Avoid eliciting and using direct translations and try to learn natural speech. Explain the situations in which you need appropriate phrases as best as you can, so the LA will suggest more natural phrases.

Steps

Before your session

1. Identify specific things you would like to be able to ask about the language or request people to do in your language sessions or out in the community.
2. Decide what phrases you need to learn to say to elicit the information you want.

During your session

3. Describe to the LA
 - that you want to learn to ask some questions in the target language
 - the kinds of things you want to say.
4. When the LA gives you a phrase to say, check the meaning by asking questions in your shared language, such as:

- "What does that mean?"
- "What would you answer if I said that?"

If you have no shared language, do your best to check the general meaning of the phrase.

5. Record the phrases when you are satisfied that you know their general meaning, and that they are appropriate in the situation you had in mind.
6. Transcribe the phrases.
7. Try to get the meaning of the parts of the phrases.

After your session

8. Listen to the recording of the phrases and try to understand what they mean.
9. Try to memorize the phrases.

Variations

The Power Tools techniques may also be done with the following variation (as suggested in G. Thomson, *Kick-starting your language learning*, Section 3.3):

Use role play or reverse role play. You could get power tools by speaking English (or some other common language between you) while the LA pretends not to understand. He or she says (in the target language), "What is this?" You say, "It is a hammer." The LA says, "Could you please say it more slowly?"

See also

- Keywords: communication situations, power tools, production, role-playing, social situation, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

The Pronunciation Practice techniques

Introduction

With the Pronunciation Practice techniques you concentrate on skills that will help you to pronounce the language more accurately make it easier for speakers of the language to understand.

Things to do

- Use the Phonetic Work Chart technique

- See:** The Phonetic Work Chart technique
- Use the Sound Checklist technique
 - See:** The Sound Checklist technique
- Use the Single Sound Drill technique
 - See:** The Single Sound Drill technique
- Use the Sound Contrast Drill technique
 - See:** The Sound Contrast Drill technique
- Use The Intonation Drill technique
 - See:** The Intonation Drill technique
- Use the Stress Pattern Drill technique
 - See:** The Stress Pattern Drill technique
- Use the Tone Pattern Drill technique
 - See:** The Tone Pattern Drill technique
- Use the Tone Checklist technique
 - See:** The Tone Checklist technique
- Use the Record and Compare technique
 - See:** The Record and Compare technique
- Use the Record for Correction technique
 - See:** The Record for Correction technique

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, mimicry, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

The Phonetic Work Chart technique

Introduction

A phonetic work chart is a blank phonetics chart you fill in with the phones you are discovering in the language you are learning.

Benefits

Making a phonetic work chart can show you groups of sounds you need to check to see if they are in contrast, in variation, or if you have transcribed them inconsistently.

Prerequisites

- A course in articulatory phonetics

Steps

1. Look through your data notebook and write on the phonetics chart every phone you have recorded.
2. Look for clusters of suspect sounds you need to check for contrast.
3. Look for gaps in the pattern of phones to give you ideas of what other phones to look for in your data.

See also

- Keywords: phonetics

The Sound Checklist technique

Introduction

With the Sound Checklist technique, you systematically compare words which you are unsure of, to see whether they have similar or identical sounds and group the sounds accordingly.

Objectives

- To group words according to their like sounds:
 - difficult to distinguish vowel digraphs
 - consonant clusters
 - other sounds difficult to recognize
- To begin to distinguish between distinctive, yet similar, sounds
- To study the environments of sounds for any phonological explanations or to see if they are all distinct sounds

Guidelines

- Use this technique to clarify and confirm your hypotheses whenever you find yourself struggling with similar sounds.

Tip: Do it early, so you do not “learn” the wrong way.

Steps

Before your session

1. Check your data for words that you think have similar or the same sounds and make a list.

During your session

2. Show the list to a language associate (LA) and have him or her say the words. Use the first word as the reference point once through the list. Mark whether each following word is same or different. Have the LA continue through the list and group all words into same groupings. Record the LA saying the list each time.
3. Have the LA read through each grouping while you record it.
4. Have the LA read each grouping, and you repeat each word after the LA. Have him or her check your pronunciation. Repeat the process as necessary.

After your session

5. Use the recording to: continue practicing your pronunciation and to tune your ear to hear the difference between similar sounds.
6. Compare the environments that the similar sounds are found in. Look for complementary distribution or other conditioned explanations. If you find none, assume that the sounds are separate phonemes.

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, checklists (language learning), phonology, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

The Single Sound Drill technique

Introduction

With the Single Sound Drill technique, you focus on practicing a sound of the language you are having difficulty pronouncing. Sounds that cause difficulty are usually those that

do not occur in your mother tongue.

Objectives

- To improve your ability to pronounce a particular sound
- To use that sound without hesitation in the normal course of your speech

Guidelines

- Make drills of the sound in various environments (word initial, medial and final) to get the full range of practice on that sound.
- Drill any sound you:
 - know you do not pronounce accurately
 - stumble over when speaking
 - notice often seems to cause confusion among native speakers if not correctly pronounced
 - have a hard time distinguishing from another similar sound when used by a native speaker

Steps

Before your session

1. Identify a consonant or vowel sound you are having difficulty pronouncing.
2. Look through your list of words and find from five to seven words that have this sound in them in the same position, either:
 - word-initial
 - word-medial, or
 - word-final.

3. If you do not have enough words, ask a language associate (LA) to think of some more words with that sound in them.

During your session

4. Record the LA saying the words, reading down the column.
5. Have the LA repeat each word and you mimic the pronunciation.
Have the LA correct any of your incorrect pronunciation.

6. Pronounce each word on your own.

After your session

7. Listen to the recording and practice mimicking the pronunciation of the words.

See also

- Keywords: drills, mimicry, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

Example: The Single Sound Drill technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Single Sound Drill technique:

1. You identify the [θ] sound in English as one you are having trouble pronouncing.
2. You look through your word list and find the following words containing the [θ] sound: thin, thank, three, thorn, and thread.
3. You arrange the words in a column:

Word-initial

thin

thank

three

thorn

thread

4. You record the LA saying the words in the column; thin, thank, three, thorn, thread.
5. You have the LA repeat each of the words and you mimic. You have the LA correct any of your incorrect pronunciation.
6. You practice producing each of the words thin, thank, three, thorn, and thread, on your own.
7. You listen to the recording and practice mimicking the pronunciation of each word.

The Sound Contrast Drill technique

Introduction

With the Sound Contrast Drill technique, you practice hearing and speaking distinctions between two or more contrastive but similar sounds that may be confusing to beginning language learners.

Objectives

- To hear the difference between similar but contrastive sounds
- To practice pronouncing each sound correctly

Guidelines

- Use this technique to practice hearing and speaking similar but contrastive sounds that you tend to confuse, not just any two contrastive sounds.
- Use minimal pairs (words that differ only by the contrast of the two similar sounds) to practice hearing and speaking these similar sounds.
- Keep a list of sound contrasts you find difficult to hear or produce.

Steps

Before your session

1. Select two similar but contrastive sounds you need to drill. Check your data for examples.
2. Get additional words from the language associate (LA) that differ only by the contrast of the two similar sounds.
3. Make two columns of words, one for each of the sounds.

During your session

4. Record the LA reading one column at a time.

Tip: Use pictures or objects if the LA can not read.

5. Ask the LA to say a word at random, and you point to the column where the word is located.

Implication: You can discriminate between the two sounds.

6. Practice the words in each column by
 - having the LA read them, and
 - mimicking as the LA reads.

7. Practice words randomly by
 - saying a word from the list at random, and
 - having the LA point to the correct column and repeating the word.

Implication: The last pronunciation you hear is that of the native speaker, not your own.

After your session

8. Listen to the recording and mimic the LA's pronunciation of each column of words.
9. Practice pronouncing the contrastive minimal pairs in your list.

Variation

You can use the Sound Contrast Drill technique to practice the sound in a variety of positions in a word or sentence to get the full range of practice. See Brewster and Brewster 1976:303-312 for more discussion of this drill.

See also

- Keywords: drills, mimicry, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

Example: The Sound Contrast technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Sound Contrast technique:

1. You decide to drill the contrast between the /θ/ and /t/ sounds in initial position in English. You check your data for words with this contrast: *three* and *tree*, *thank* and *tank*, and *thin* and *tin*.
2. You have the LA give you additional minimal pairs with /θ/ and /t/ sounds (*thick* and *tick*, *thorn* and *torn*, and *thread* and *tread*).
3. You make two columns for the following minimal pairs:

/θ/	/t/
thin	tin
thank	tank
three	tree

thick	tick
thorn	torn
thread	tread

4. You record the LA reading one column at a time.
5. You have the LA say a word and you point to the column where the word is located.
6. You mimic the /θ/ column after the LA, and then do the same with the /t/ column. Then you mimic across each row.
7. You say a word, the LA points to the correct column, then repeats it after you.
8. You listen to the recording and practice the sounds several times.
9. You practice pronouncing the contrastive minimal pairs listed in 3. above.

The Intonation Drill technique

Introduction

With the Intonation Drill technique, you distinguish the various intonation patterns used in speech and practice clauses together which have the same pattern.

Objectives

- To be able to distinguish between different intonation patterns used in speech
- To be able to produce the intonation patterns appropriately
- To have more natural sounding speech

Guidelines

- Begin by listening to native speakers for the way their language flows and for the lilt of their speech.
- Use your recorded materials for further help and frequent reminders as you tackle new patterns.
- If the language associate (LA) has trouble verbalizing how certain clause types are intonated, try listening to recorded examples together.

Reason: It is sometimes hard to analyze your own speech patterns when they are very natural to you. When you try to produce them, you overemphasize the

stresses because you are focusing on them. By listening to a recording (of yourself or someone else in natural speech) you can tend less toward extremes, and hear the true pattern.

- Work on one intonation pattern at a time.

Reason: More than one pattern may cause you to intermix them in your mind and add to the confusion. After you have sufficiently drilled one pattern, move on to another pattern.

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what intonation patterns you want to work on and listen to examples you recorded from other sessions.
2. Write down example sentences from your data.

During your session

3. Ask an LA to read your example sentences and record them.
4. Have the LA say each sentence and repeat after him, or her trying to match the intonation.
5. Ask the LA to give you any helpful pointers or comments.

After your session

6. Listen to the recording and practice one pattern at a time until you feel comfortable. Practice using the correct intonation pattern in everyday speech.

See also

- Keywords: drills, intonation, pronunciation, stress (linguistic), techniques for language learning

The Stress Pattern Drill technique

Introduction

With the Stress Pattern Drill technique, you make lists of words that have the same stress pattern and practice them until you are comfortable with their pronunciation.

Objectives

- To be able to pronounce words with the correct stress
- To see patterns of stress in the language

Guidelines

- Make lists of words in a consistent manner with regard to their syllable pattern and segmental length.
- Create special drills for words that are special problems which you do not seem to be able to pronounce right, even after the initial drill practice. For example, words which are borrowed in one or both of the languages and which are similar, if not identical, except for stress (*photograph* in English and *fotogra'fi* in Swedish).
- Practice long words consisting of many syllables which you find difficult to pronounce by doing the following:
 - tap the rhythm,
 - mimic the last few syllables, and gradually add the beginning of the word, and
 - put the long word into sentences, placing it in different positions for practice.

Note: In some languages, you will find that word stress is modified when a word is placed in a sentence. Word stress might disappear altogether, or stress might shift to a different syllable. Therefore, it is good to practice stress patterns, not only on words in isolation but also to see what happens to the same words when they are placed in various positions within sentences.

Steps

Before your session

1. List the words in which you have trouble placing stress on the correct syllable.

Place the words into columns according to where stress falls. Make a separate chart for each separate syllable pattern.

During your session

2. Have the language associate (LA) read down each column. Mimic each word he or she says.
3. Have the LA read across each row. Mimic each word.
4. Record the LA reading down the lists and put the tape aside for practice after your session.
5. Read down and across each list and have the LA correct you if you do not pronounce

correctly.

After your session

6. Listen to the tape and continue drilling until you feel confident with the stress patterns.

See also

- Keywords: drills, mimicry, pronunciation, rhythm, stress (linguistic), syllables, techniques for language learning

Example: The Stress Pattern Drill technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Stress Pattern Drill technique:

1. You make a list of words for which you are having trouble pronouncing the stress correctly.

Portuguese Initial stress	Portuguese Medial stress	Portuguese Final stress
's s s	s 's s	s s 's
<i>'palido</i>	<i>pa'lito</i>	<i>pale'to</i>
<i>'sabia</i>	<i>sa'bia</i>	<i>sabi'a</i>
<i>'peseego</i>	<i>mor'cego</i>	<i>empre'gou</i>

2. You have the LA read down each column. You mimic each word after him or her.
3. You have the LA read across each row and you mimic each word.
4. You record the LA reading down the list and set it aside until after your session.
5. You read down and across the lists and have the LA correct you when you do not pronounce a word correctly.
6. You listen to the tape and continue drilling until you feel comfortable with the stress patterns.

The Tone Pattern Drill technique

Introduction

With the Tone Pattern Drill technique, you compare utterances to decide their pitch by substituting them into a constant environment (a "frame"). By keeping the same frame, you will be better able to tell when the substitution items change pitch. After the patterns are distinguishable, you produce them.

Objectives

- To distinguish one tone pattern from another
- To recognize, initially within a controlled environment, the tone patterns
- To be able to produce words using the correct tone patterns

Guidelines

- Select a frame which will stay the same as you change the substitution items.
Tip: It is best to select a frame in which the substitution items occur utterance medially. If that is not possible, then it will be necessary to check all items with a following frame as well as a preceding one.
- Make sure substitution items are of the same class (all nouns), so they will fit into the same frame. Substitution items can be whole words or unaffixed forms, depending on the language constraints.
- Arrange the substitution items into groups with the same number of syllables, and as much as possible with the same syllable pattern.

Steps

Before your session

1. Make a list of words you want to practice to determine their tone pattern. Try to come up with a possible frame for the drill.

During your session

2. Explain to the language associate (LA) what you want to do. Have the LA say each item with the frame two times.
Tip: You may have to go through the list several times before you can clearly hear the pitch, and determine its level. You can use other substitution items to compare the pitches (higher, lower, level, or gliding.)
3. Regroup the substitution items into groups with the same tone patterns and go through each group again in the frame for another check on consistency. Regroup

again if necessary.

4. Check the groups by substituting them into a different frame: one with a different pitch pattern from the first frame.
5. Record the LA saying the substitution items and frames, one stress pattern group at a time.

After your session

6. Use the recording to practice the items until you feel comfortable with them.

See also

- The Tone Checklist technique
- Keywords: drills, phonology, pronunciation, stress (linguistic), syllables, techniques for language learning, tonal languages

Example: The Tone Pattern Drill technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Tone Pattern Drill technique:

1. You make a list of words you need to practice to determine their tone pattern: spider, snake, squirrel, buffalo, lion, antelope, crocodile, lizard, and hippopotamus. (This example is given in English, even though it is not a tone language, for ease of understanding.)

You decide on the frame: "The man killed a ... yesterday."

2. You explain to the LA what you want to do.

You have the LA say each item within the frame two times.

You have him or her repeat the following another time, since you had a hard time determining their tone the first two times: snake, crocodile, lizard.

3. You regroup the items according to their tone pattern.

Group 1 (lower than the frame): buffalo, lion, crocodile, hippopotamus

Group 2 (higher than the frame): squirrel, snake, antelope

Group 3 (same as the frame): spider, lizard

You go through each group again, checking for consistency. You do not need to regroup anything.

4. You recheck the tone groups by substituting them into a different frame: "A ... played on the rocks."
5. You record the LA saying the groups within the frames, one at a time.
6. You use the recording to practice several times until you feel comfortable with the tone patterns.

The Tone Checklist technique

Introduction

With the Tone Checklist technique, you systematically compare the tone patterns of words to see whether they are the same or different.

Objectives

- To identify the contrasting tones in a language
- To study the phonological environments of tones for any factors that may be causing a change in pitch

Guidelines

- In considering tone, it is essential to make comparisons in a controlled environment; that is, in a frame with pitches that stay the same relative to each other. You can then compare words with that frame, noting whether the pitch is the same as, or different from, the pitch of the frame.
- If possible, look for a frame where the words you want to check the pitch of are in the middle and where there is a high tone immediately preceding or following the word you are checking.
- You will need to make different checklists for different parts of speech: for example, for nouns and verbs.
- Arrange the words you are checking into groups with the same number of syllables, and as far as possible the same consonant-vowel pattern, length and stress pattern.

Steps

Before your session

1. Check your data for words that you think have similar or the same tone patterns and make a list.

During your session

2. Show the list to a language associate (LA) and have him or her say the words in a frame. Mark whether each word has the same or different pitch from the preceding word in the frame.
3. Group together all the words you think have the same pitch as the frame.
4. Go back through the words you marked as having a pitch lower than the high pitch frame, but this time try to find a low-pitch frame, and mark whether the words are the same as, or higher than the frame.
5. When you think you have identified groups of words which all have the same pitch, ask the LA to read through each grouping while you record it.
6. Ask the LA to read each grouping again, and you repeat each phrase after the LA. Have him or her check your pronunciation. Repeat the process as necessary.

After your session

7. Use the recording to:
 - continue practicing your pronunciation, and to
 - tune your ear to hear the difference between similar tone patterns.
8. Compare the environments that the similar sounds are found in. Look for complementary distribution or other conditioned explanations. If you find none, assume that the sounds are separate phonemes.

See also

- The Tone Pattern Drill technique
- Keywords: checklists (language learning), phonology, pronunciation, techniques for language learning, tonal languages

The Record and Compare technique

Introduction

With the Record and Compare technique, you record your language associate (LA) saying short segments in the language, followed by yourself saying the same words or sentences. You listen in order to compare your speech with the LA 's, while focusing on and identifying the differences in pronunciation and intonation, so that you can correct those differences.

Objectives

- To pinpoint where your pronunciation and intonation differs from that of the native speaker
- To learn to hear the kinds of details of pronunciation that allow you to correct yourself. The payoff comes when you are always understood and have a barely detectable foreign accent so your pronunciation does not detract from what you say

Guidelines

- Let your ear become accustomed to hearing native speakers of the target language before you try to use this method. If you get used to hearing your own mistakes too early, you will begin to think they sound okay.
- Do not try to listen for pronunciation and speak at the same time. If you only listen, you can hear yourself in comparison to the model. By recording both yourself and your model, then listening repeatedly, you can hear far more accurately and discern where and how you need to improve.
- Concentrate on these issues:
 - Can you pinpoint where your pronunciation differs?
 - Can you state what is wrong with each difference?
 - Can you make the required changes to match the model?
- Listen to the recording with one hypothesis in mind when you are unsure just how you differ. Example: "I am making the vowel longer than the LA is." If something else seems wrong, try another hypothesis, for example, "I am changing the vowel quality; the LA is not."
- Investigate sentence intonation with this technique also. However, be sure to get a recording of sentences with natural intonation, that fits the context, and does not sound like it was read out of a book.
- Do not work so long on a given word that you "go deaf" on it (unable to hear distinctions anymore; not being able to tell if you are improving or not). If you do, then leave it for a while, and return to it later.

Steps

Before your session

1. Choose words or phrases from a previous session.

During your session

2. Record the LA and you both saying the words, the LA always saying each word first. Record each item two or three times.

After your session

3. Listen repeatedly to the tape and compare your pronunciation with the LA's. Check one thing at a time: vowel length, vowel quality, stress, consonants, intonation, and so forth.

Your goal: to pinpoint where you differ from the model and to hypothesize exactly what you need to change to match the model.

4. Try to improve accuracy by using a previous recording of only the LA speaking these words. Listen and mimic.
5. Ask the LA to help you focus on specific spots that you have identified as needing improvement. After you work on them, re-record both of you saying those words.
6. Listen to the new recording to see how much progress you have made and decide what remains to be done.

You can repeat steps 3 through 6 as often as needed.

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, audio recordings, intonation, mimicry, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

Example: The Record and Compare technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Record and Compare technique:

1. You choose customary greetings from a previous session: Good morning, good afternoon, and good night.
2. You record the LA and you each saying the greetings, the LA always first. Record each greeting three times.
3. You listen repeatedly to the tape of greetings, and compare your pronunciation with the LA's. You check one thing at a time: vowel length, vowel quality, stress, consonants, and intonation.
4. You try to improve your accuracy by using a recording from a previous session of only the LA speaking the greetings. You listen to the greetings and mimic.

5. You ask the LA to help you focus on specific parts of the greetings that you have identified as needing improvement. After you work on them, record again both of you saying the greetings.
6. You listen to the new recording of the greetings to see how much progress you have made and decide that you still need to work on phrasal stress.

You repeat steps 3 through 6 until you are satisfied.

The Record for Correction technique

Introduction

With the Record for Correction technique, you record yourself discussing or describing something and ask native speakers to listen and correct errors in your usage or grammar.

Objectives

- To achieve the accuracy needed for superior proficiency

Guidelines

- Do not try this technique too soon, or you may be discouraged. At the beginning of Stage 2, for example, when you are just starting to try to talk spontaneously, you will probably make lots of errors or be tongue-tied if you try to get everything exactly right.
- During initial attempts at this technique, seek correction of only those errors that most bother your language associate (LA).
- Use this technique when you prepare a speech for some occasion, to assure as natural sounding speech as possible.

Note: It may take several recordings and sessions with the LA.

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what kind of spoken material you want to record for evaluation.
2. Record yourself.
3. Listen to the tape and note any mistakes.
4. Record again if necessary.

During your session

5. Play the recording for the LAs. Ask them to listen to it several times and note phrases that sound awkward or incorrect.
6. Ask the LAs how to say things correctly.

After your session

7. Incorporate the suggestions and make another recording for evaluation. Repeat the process until the material is ready to use.

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, audio recordings, pronunciation, techniques for language learning

Example: The Record for Correction technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Record for Correction technique:

1. You decide you want to work on giving a speech about yourself and your family for your local ladies' club.
2. You record yourself giving the speech.
3. You listen to the tape of your speech and note any obvious mistakes.
4. You record the speech again.
5. You play the recording of your speech for the LAs. You ask them to listen to it several times and note phrases that sound awkward or incorrect to them.
6. You ask the LAs for suggestions and incorporate them into your speech.
7. You incorporate the suggestions and make another recording of your speech for evaluation. Repeat steps 5 through 7 until you are satisfied that it is ready for the ladies' club.

The Shortened Forms technique

Introduction

With the Shortened Forms technique, you practice names, phrases, or titles which are most generally used in a shortened form or as an acronym in the target language.

Objectives

- To build vocabulary
- To recognize shortened forms such as contractions and acronyms when used in verbal and written communication
- To understand the process of derivation of shortened forms

Guidelines

- Use the Shortened Forms technique to gain both verbal and written familiarity with shortened forms.
- Make note of shortened forms used in everyday speech so you can explore them with the language associate (LA). Note: Some cultures make great use of these forms for:
 - names (nicknames)
 - contractions
 - commonly used noun phrases (phrases that have been shortened to compounds: a store that sells sporting goods—a sports shop)
 - official titles
- Concentrate on correct pronunciation, including correct stress assignment.
- Try to recognize patterns of derivation, which will help as you begin to experiment with making shortened forms on your own.

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide on a specific type of shortened form you are having trouble understanding.

During your session

2. Work with the LA to make a list of several shortened forms.
3. Make a chart containing the long version and the shortened form.

Work with the LA to find the pattern of derivation.

Try to come up with new shortened forms, according to the pattern of derivation to see how widely used it is.

See also

- Keywords: acronyms, stress (linguistic), techniques for language learning, verbs, vocabulary

Example: The Shortened Forms technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Shortened Forms technique:

1. You decide you want to explore nicknames.
2. You work with the LA to come up with this list of nicknames: Sue, Tom, Bob, Dick, Beth, and Joe.
3. You make a chart.

Full name	Shortened form
Susan	Sue
Thomas	Tom
Robert	Bob, Rob
Richard	Dick, Rick, Rich
Elizabeth	Beth
Joseph	Joe

You come up with these observations about derivation:

- Usually a nickname incorporates the first syllable of the long form.
- Sometimes a final vowel is added (Sue or Joe).
- Other times the initial consonant is replaced.
- Exceptionally, the final syllable of the long form is taken as the nickname in Beth.

You apply the most common pattern of derivation (the first syllable) to other names:

Result:

Full name	Shortened form
William	Will
Zachary	Zach
Raymond	Ray
Christene	Chris
Louise	Lou

The Structure Practice techniques

Introduction

With the Structure Practice techniques you learn to recognize and produce the grammatical structures of the language you are learning.

Things to do

- Use the Linking Drill technique
See: The Linking Drill technique
- Use the Pronominal Reference Drill technique
See: The Pronominal Reference Drill technique
- Use the Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique
See: The Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique
- Use the Structure Contrast Drill technique
See: The Structure Contrast Drill technique
- Use the System Drill technique
See: The System Drill technique
- Use the Clause Type Practice technique
See: The Clause Type Practice technique
- The Part of Speech Placement technique

- **See:** The Part of Speech Placement technique
- Use the Tense Practice technique
- **See:** The Tense Practice technique

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, drills, grammar, mimicry, syntax, techniques for language learning

The Linking Drill technique

Introduction

With the Linking Drill technique, you practice linking clauses together within complex sentences.

Objectives

- To differentiate between the various ways of linking clauses together
- To learn how to use each appropriately in order to use more complex sentence structures

Guidelines

- Begin by using simple independent clauses that you have previously used, and which can be linked together in some type of relationship.
- Work on one type of clause link at a time (cause/effect, temporal relationships: before/after, succession, overlap, simultaneous occurrence).

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what kind of link you want to practice and look through your data for clauses to use for practice.

During your session

2. Explain to the language associate (LA) what you want to do. Begin by using two sentences, then try to link them together. Let the LA correct you.
3. Listen to the LA link the clauses, then repeat the sentence.

4. Substitute other clauses, using the LA's linking pattern. Adjust your pattern according to the LA's suggestions or changes. If the LA gives you more than one pattern for the same type of linking, work until you understand the variation and when to use it.
5. Record the LA saying all the linking sentences you worked on.

After your session

6. Listen to the tape and practice saying the sentences.

After your session

7. Try to use the construction in conversation, and pay attention to whether or not it is easily understood. Adjust accordingly.

See also

- Keywords: accuracy, conjunctions, drills, techniques for language learning

Example: The Linking Drill technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Linking Drill technique:

1. You decide that you want to work on cause/effect links. You look through your data and find the following clauses that might be useful:
 - She fell down the stairs.
 - She dropped the pot.
 - The thunder crashed.
 - The dog is running.
 - There has been no rain for six months.
 - We have no vegetables.
2. You explain to the LA that you want to learn how to link two clauses together by their relationship to each other.
 - You begin by saying: "Because she fell down the stairs, then she dropped the pot."
 - The LA corrects you by saying: "Because she fell down the stairs she dropped the pot."
3. You listen to the LA link the clauses and then you repeat the sentence.

4. You try linking two more clauses: “Because the thunder crashed, the dog is running.” He also gives you the alternative: “The dog is running because the thunder crashed.”

You repeat it, and ask if there is a difference in meaning. The LA says there is no difference, either way is fine. You also ask which way he or she would say it. He says that he would normally say it the second way. So you assume that this is the preferred usage.

You then try: We have no vegetables because there has been no rain for six months.

5. You record the LA saying all the sentences.
6. You listen to the recording and practice all of the sentences until you can easily produce the new constructions.
7. You try to use the construction in conversation, and note when you are corrected or not easily understood. You make adjustments as needed.

The Pronominal Reference Drill technique

Introduction

With the Pronominal Reference Drill technique, you practice the correct selection and placement of pronouns in sentences.

Objectives

- To learn when to use pronouns instead of nouns
- To learn which pronouns are subjects and which are objects (if there are different sets)

Steps

Before your session

1. Look through your data and write down all the pronouns you have learned.
2. Build a set of sentences where you think a pronoun is appropriate.

During your session

3. Use the set of sentences for your language associate (LA). Note the LA's corrections or additions to your constructions, and when it is appropriate to use them.

4. Substitute other constructions until you use all the pronouns you know.
5. Ask the LA to add other pronouns. If a different set of pronouns is used in the object position, repeat steps 1 through 4.

After your session

6. Drill the correct usage of pronouns until you feel comfortable using them.

See also

- Keywords: drills, pronouns, techniques for language learning

The Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique

Introduction

With the Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique, you concentrate on the structural pattern of one type of sentence at a time.

Objectives

- To improve your ability to produce a given sentence pattern without hesitation or without getting the words in the wrong order
- To gain new vocabulary
- To formulate some "rules" about the structure of the language, whether consciously or unconsciously, while learning how the language works

Steps

Before your session

1. Select a particular sentence pattern you want to practice.

During your session

2. Have the language associate (LA) give you several sentences of the same type.

After your session

3. Line up the sentences, so that the words in the same slots are aligned.
4. Write a rule which describes the structure.
5. Make different sentences by changing the words in the slots.

6. Choose an activity where you have to use the forms meaningfully.

Variations

You can use one variation of this technique with a tutor or a very sophisticated LA. (See: Madsen, Bowen, and Hilferty 1985). The tutor or LA prepares a sheet of written sentences, some grammatically correct and some with errors. The LA then reads the sentences, allowing the student to decide whether each one is correct or not.

Discussion: Some will disapprove of this variation because it introduces errors. This disapproval stems from thinking that the students might remember the errors rather than the correct forms. One aid to overcoming this possibility is to follow the drill with a discussion of why certain items are wrong, and how to correct them. Another possible option is for the student to read the exercises, rather than the LA. Then the student will not hear the LA say it incorrectly. They can then note the correction and have the LA read the corrected version. A further variation of this exercise is for the student to hear the sentences and then to correct them. For example, the student focusing on prepositions needs to recognize when the wrong preposition is used and to be able to make the correction.

See also

- Keywords: drills, techniques for language learning

Example: Stage 2 Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique; appropriate for Stage Two:

1. You decide you want to drill conditional sentences in English.
2. You ask the LA to give you sentences beginning with an "if clause."
3. You line up the sentences, noticing that each one has the following two parts:

Part One	Part Two
<i>If I go to France this year</i>	<i>I will visit the Louvre.</i>
<i>If it gets warm enough this afternoon</i>	<i>I will go swimming.</i>
<i>If my friend does not call</i>	<i>I will be sad.</i>

If we finish early today *I will go* for a walk.

4. You come up with this rule: "The verb in Part One (the if clause) is present tense, and the verb in Part Two is future tense." So far, this rule is a hypothesis. You will have to look for other sentences with *if* to see whether it always holds true.
5. You practice this sentence structure in various ways:
 - You take the chart shown above and cut off the sentences in Part Two. You cut all the sentences apart, scramble them, then try to match them with Part One in all the ways that make sense. You might say, "If we finish early today, I will go swimming" but probably not, "If I go to France this year, I will be sad."
 - You change the second half of the sentences to represent something you would actually do in that circumstance. For example, you might say: "If we finish early today, I will go shopping in Oxford" or "If I go to France this year, I will be able to speak French." The point is to say something you really would do.
 - You think up different ways you could begin each sentence:
 - If ... I will go for a walk.
 - If ... I will go swimming.

The Structure Contrast Drill technique

Introduction

With the Structure Contrast Drill technique, you practice the difference between two similar but contrasting sentence structures.

Objectives

- To improve your ability to distinguish between two closely related patterns
- To produce either pattern or its contrast without hesitation

Steps

Before your session

1. Select two related semantic patterns: ones that are different by only one grammatical feature.

During your session

2. Ask the language associate (LA) to list other examples under each of these two related sentences.

After your session

3. Look at the forms and try to determine the change in *meaning* and the change in *form*.
4. Think of a way to structure an activity so you can practice the difference between the two structures in a meaningful way.

See also

- Keywords: drills, techniques for language learning

Example: The Structure Contrast (Stage One) technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Structure Contrast technique; appropriate for Stage One:

You select positive/negative forms to practice, such as:

- He's drinking water.
 - He isn't drinking water.
2. You ask your language associate (LA) to give you other examples:

Positive	Negative
He's drinking water.	He isn't drinking water.
She's mopping the floor.	She isn't mopping the floor.
He's cutting the grass.	He isn't cutting the grass.
John's studying French.	John isn't studying French.

3. You try to decide: What is the change in the form of these pairs of sentences? What is the change in the meaning?

You describe the change: "The change in form is that the negative contains the word 'isn't.' The change in the meaning is that the positive form indicates an action that is taking place, and the negative form indicates an action that is not taking place."

4. You practice the two types of sentences in this way: You use pictures and drawings that depict the actions you wish to practice talking about. You place them in random

order and then try to describe the action as each picture comes up.

Example: The Structure Contrast (Stage Two) technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Structure Contrast technique:

1. You discovered a second type of *if* sentences such as, "If I were a millionaire, I would buy a Porsche."

Compare: Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique

2. You chart the following sentences:

Part One

If I were a millionaire,

If you loved me,

If we were all geniuses,

If it were summer,

Part Two

I would buy a Porsche.

we would not fight all the time.

we would not have to study so hard.

we could go swimming.

3. You analyze the difference from the first set of *if* sentences. "The form of the verbs in these second sentences differs from those in the first group."

"The *if* clause in these sentences describes something that is not true, so the second set of sentences are not really possible occurrences."

4. You practice these sentences in the same way as those in the Single Sentence Pattern Practice technique, (see steps # 3-5) then contrast the two types of sentences.

The System Drill technique

Introduction

The System Drill technique may be used for languages which have concord and government systems, in which, if you change one item in an utterance, a change is required in another part of the utterance. For example, in many European languages, when you change the pronoun, you must also change the verb endings.

These types of changes have been traditionally practiced through paradigm drills. However, a system drill will enable you to have automatic control of the trouble spot, by incorporating several substitution drills.

Objectives

- To gain control of the related changing elements of utterances

Guidelines

- Concentrate on meaning, not just mimicking when doing these drills. Use pictures, drawings, objects, or actions to accentuate your learning. Do not simply read the drill.
- If the system is too complex to practice all at once, try practicing two or three components at a time, then go on to a few others.
- Use flashcards as an aid when practicing the system. Example, one flashcard for each person; each verb form, with appropriate person and tense. You can then place these cards side by side in the order in which you wish to practice them.

Steps

1. Set up several Single Sentence Practice drills, one for each structure.
2. Practice each drill thoroughly in order to gain control of the association of the parts.
3. When you feel confident that you can control each separate drill, combine them into a chart, showing the relation of the parts of the system to each other, and practice the entire system.
4. When you are ready, make a stimulus-response drill in which you get a cue that tells you which part of the system to use.

See also

- Keywords: drills, flashcards, paradigms (grammatical), techniques for language learning, tenses, verbs

Example: The System Drill technique: French tenses

Introduction

Here is an example of the System Drill technique. This is a system drill to learn the French Tense System, specifically the first person plural of the Present, Imperfect and Future tenses in regular verbs:

Steps

Follow these steps to use the System Drill technique:

1. You set up three Single Sentence Practice drills, one for each tense.

Person	Imperfect	Object
<i>nous</i>	<i>achetions</i>	<i>les oeufs</i>
we	were buying	the eggs
	<i>mangions</i>	
	were eating	
	<i>portions</i>	
	were carrying	
	<i>cassions</i>	
	were breaking	
	<i>comptions</i>	
	were counting	

2. You practice each tense, using pictures, or acting out the present tense, using eggs as props.
3. You combine the three drills into one, and practice it, using props and some context.

Person	Past	Present	Future	Object
<i>nous</i>	<i>achetions</i>	<i>achetons</i>	<i>acheterons</i>	<i>les oeufs</i>
we	were buying	are buying	will buy	the eggs
	<i>mangions</i>	<i>mangeons</i>	<i>mangerons</i>	
	were eating	are eating	will eat	
	<i>portions</i>	<i>portons</i>	<i>porterons</i>	
	were carrying	are carrying	will carry	

<i>cassions</i>	<i>caissons</i>	<i>cassérons</i>
were breaking	are breaking	will break
<i>comptions</i>	<i>comptons</i>	<i>comptérons</i>
were counting	are counting	will count

4. You make a stimulus response drill using the time word: *hier* (yesterday), *chaque jour* (every day), *demain* (tomorrow) to cue which tense to use.

Stimulus time word	Response verb	Object
yesterday-hier	nous achetions	les oeufs
today-aujourd'hui	nous achetons	les oeufs
tomorrow-demain	nous acheterons	les oeufs
hier	nous mangions	les oeufs
aujourd'hui	nous mangeons	les oeufs
demain	nous mangerons	les oeufs

The Clause Type Practice technique

Introduction

With the Clause Type Practice technique, you describe objects or events, using well-formed clauses of a type you wish to practice.

Objectives

- To describe an object or event so the language associate (LA) is able to guess what it is
- To gain confidence in using various clause types. Many clause types are suggested in Thomson, Kick-Starting your language learning (temporal, questions, possessives, locationals, clauses with indirect objects, instrumentals, or goals).

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide what clause type you want to practice. Select several objects or events to describe to the LA.

During your session

2. Place the objects where the LA cannot see them. Explain to the LA what you are going to do.
3. Describe the first item or event by using as many clauses as possible. Allow the LA to guess what the object or event is.

If the LA is incorrect, describe it with a few more clauses.

4. After the object is known, allow the LA to look at it, to correct your clauses, or to suggest others that might be useful. Pay attention to the grammatical structure and note if you did not use the right form.
5. Continue with the next object, repeating steps 2-4, until you have described all objects.
6. Ask the LA to describe some objects or events to you (ones you did not choose). He can describe as you listen.

Pay special attention to the LA's clause types, as you may discover some new ways to express things. You may want to record this part of the session for later reference.

See also

- Keywords: clauses, production, techniques for language learning

Example: The Clause Type Practice technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Clause Type Practice technique:

1. You decide to work on descriptive clauses. You select an apple, a flower, and a stick of firewood to study and describe for your LA.
2. You place the objects where the LA cannot see them, and then you explain that you are going to describe certain objects to him, and you want him to guess what they are.
3. *You describe the apple as such:*
 - It feels smooth and hard.

- It tastes sweet, with a little bit of tang.
- It looks attractive and shiny.
- It smells slightly sweet.

You let the LA guess what it is, but he cannot, so you add these descriptives:

- It is red.
 - It sounds crunchy when eaten.
4. You let the LA see the apple after he has guessed it as the object. You ask him to correct your descriptive clauses, and/or make his own to describe it.

You note that your descriptive clauses had the same grammatical structure as the ones he is using.

5. You continue practicing your descriptive clauses with the flower, and the stick of wood.
6. You let the LA select an object without your knowledge of it, after you have described the objects you brought.

He does the describing while you do the guessing. Pay attention to the descriptive clauses he uses. You may discover some new ways to describe objects. It might be helpful to record this session, for later review, especially if you find new descriptive patterns.

The Part of Speech Placement technique

Introduction

With the Part of Speech Placement technique, you use various activities to help you learn parts of speech and their correct placement in the clause.

Objectives

- To use the correct vocabulary item (from the appropriate part of speech) in a given sentence
- To place all the components of a clause or phrase in the correct order
- To follow spoken directions involving the part of speech being practiced

Steps

Before your session

1. Decide on the part of speech you want to practice. Develop a practice activity that will help you gain accuracy in using it.

Before your session

2. Gather the props you will need for your session.

During your session

3. Give the language associate (LA) an object and explain or demonstrate what you want him or her to do with the object.
4. Use the part of speech you are practicing as you carry out the activity you described to the LA. Have the LA correct you when you use the part of speech incorrectly.
5. After you finish with that object, you may try another object or go on to the next activity.

See also

- Keywords: object, production, techniques for language learning, vocabulary

Example: The Part of Speech Placement technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Part of Speech Placement technique:

1. You decide that you want to work on prepositional phrases.
You decide that you will describe objects which the LA has hidden, using prepositional phrases to discover their location.
2. You gather a toy car and some colored building blocks for props.
3. You give the car to the LA and ask him to hide it somewhere in the room while you step outside.
4. You tell the LA that you are going to guess the location of the car. Tell the LA to correct any incorrect phrases you might use.

"Is it under the table?" "No."

"Is it near the window?" "No."

"Is it in the bookshelf?" "Yes."

"Is it behind a book?" "Yes."

"Is it behind the blue book?" "No."

"Is it behind the brown book?" "Yes."

5. You decide to move on to the building block activity. You tell the LA that you want him to construct a "building." You then describe the construction:

- The orange block is on the top
- The yellow block is next to the orange block
- The green block is under the yellow and orange blocks
- The little blue block is next to the green block
- The long red block is under the blue and green blocks

You build another configuration and try to describe what you have done to the LA:

- I placed the long red block on the bottom
- I turned the green and yellow blocks the opposite direction on top of the red block
- I put the little blue block on top of the red one, in between the yellow and green blocks
- I put the purple block on top of the blue block
- I put the orange block on top of the purple one
- Then I put the black block on the very top

You feel comfortable with your usage of prepositions and the LA did not correct you many times, so you feel that you have practiced enough for now.

The Tense Practice technique

Introduction

With the Tense Practice technique, you use a group of objects to help elicit sentences in a chosen tense (Ur 1988:94-95,197-201).

Objectives

- To become familiar with expressing yourself in the various tenses

- To see general patterns and exceptions to the norm of how a tense works
- To see the overall tense picture, and to work on specifics you have trouble with

Guidelines

- Complete the entire set of objects for each tense you wish to elicit before you switch to another tense. Do not try to get every tense in succession for one object. This could be confusing to the language associate (LA).
- Use pictures of certain objects if you do not have the object itself. Some tenses may be more easily elicited if you have pictures. Example: For the passive tense you might have a set of pictures of a table with certain food and drink items. The first picture has all the items in their whole state. The second picture shows the items opened or consumed. Ask the LA to assume the second picture is the present and to describe what has been done.

Steps

Before your session

1. Gather the group of objects you need to help you learn about tenses.
2. Decide which tenses you want to elicit and practice the questions needed to elicit the tense clauses.

During your session

3. Tell the LA that you want answers to questions about some objects you will show him. Ask him the same question for each item.
4. Go through the objects again and ask another question to elicit a different tense. Do this until you have all of the tenses you wish to elicit.

After your session

5. Go through your elicitation again and try to come up with generalizations about each tense. Note any area you need to spend more time inquiring about.

Look for exceptions from the basic order of things and compare with all of your collected data. Note any area you want to investigate in a later language session.

See also

- Keywords: passive voice, production, techniques for language learning, tenses

Example: The Tense technique

Steps

Follow these steps to use the Tense technique:

1. You gather the following objects to use in your session: a cup, a stone, a knife, a nail, a sheet of paper, a bottle of water, and a piece of wood.
2. You decide to elicit the following tenses and practice the corresponding questions:
 - Progressive: What are you doing with it?
 - Future: What will you do with it?
 - Past: What did you do with it?
 - Passive: What was done with it?
3. You tell the LA that you want to ask some questions about the objects you have. You place the cup on the table and ask, "What are you doing with it?"

You continue with each item, asking the same question for each one.
4. You begin with the cup again and ask, "What will you do with it?"

Then you go through each object, asking, "What did you do with it?"

Last, you go through asking, "What was done with it?"
5. You go back through your material and make the following generalizations about the tenses:
 - The progressive tense is usually expressed by the verbal form *-ing* on the verb and *am* (first person singular) before the verb ("I am throwing this stone").
 - The future tense is usually expressed by the insertion of *will* before the verb ("I will throw this stone").
 - The past tense is sometimes expressed by the *-ed* form on the verb; however, a number of verbs do not use the *-ed* form but a variant form of the verb ("I threw this stone").
 - The passive is usually expressed by the insertion of *was* before the past perfect tense of the verb ("The stone was thrown").

You look back through all your data and find examples of the past tense, with *-ed* and variant verb form. You decide you need to learn when to use which form so you list

verbs you have and make a note to investigate the past tense of each for your next language session.

Endnotes

1 (Popup - Popup)

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2 (Popup - Popup)

Sandra G. Wimbish developed online helps for the Language Learning and Linguistics bookshelves of Lingualinks. She has been a member of SIL since 1986 and did fieldwork in Indonesia. She received an MA in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1991.