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In this issue...

- 3 A Conversation with... Stephen D. Krashen**
Stephen D. Krashen
- 6 Stephen D. Krashen's "Monitor Theory" and Its Five Hypotheses of Second-Language Acquisition**
Frank Nuessel
- 9 La Grammaire Universelle et l'acquisition d'une langue seconde : une réflexion critique**
Rostyslav Bilous
- 15 Recreational Linguistics:
Crossword Puzzles and Second-Language Teaching**
Anthony Mollica

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The Journal for Language Teachers

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"The language graduate who never reads a professional journal and participates only minimally, if at all, in professional meetings, will stagnate. There is an onus on the profession in all areas to upgrade and keep abreast of current developments in the field."

— Peter Heffernan

Stephen D. Krashen

A Conversation with... Stephen D. Krashen

Stephen D. Krashen is professor emeritus, School of Education, University of Southern California. He has published widely in the field of second language acquisition.

Note: To make sure that the interviewer asked the right questions, Dr. Krashen interviewed himself.

QUESTION: *Your theory of second language acquisition consists of five main hypotheses:*

- the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis,
- the Monitor hypothesis,
- the Natural Order hypothesis,
- the Input hypothesis,
- and the Affective Filter hypothesis.

Do these five hypotheses still apply today?

KRASHEN: The five hypotheses have all stood the test of time, in my opinion. In fact, there is more evidence than ever in support of them. This has happened in two ways:

First, there are no counter examples to any of them. Papers have been written claiming the hypotheses are wrong, but a careful look at the data shows that they actually support the hypotheses. Here is one example. Studies, it is claimed, show that grammar teaching works. But a close look shows that the effect is always very modest, and the effect only happens when the conditions for Monitor use are met, when students have studied the rules, have time to

apply the rules, and when they are focused on correctness.

Much of this is contained in this book:

Krashen, S. 2003. *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use: The Taipei Lectures*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Another way the hypotheses have been confirmed is that it now appears that they apply to many different areas, more than they originally were thought to apply to. For example, the *Comprehension (or Input) Hypothesis* was originally developed in response to data in adult second language acquisition. Now it is clear it



Stephen Krashen

applies to all language acquisition, child and adult, first and second, and also applies to literacy development. I have also been looking at research to see if it applies to animal language, and the results are encouraging.

QUESTION: *Animal language? Really?*

KRASHEN: I've been reading some of the research on cases in which animals acquire communication systems they use with others of their own species and also cases where they attempt to acquire human language. The *Comprehension Hypothesis* does fairly well in explaining what researchers report. The white-crowned sparrow, for example, can acquire the song typical of its species just by listening to it played on a tape recorder. No production is necessary, no correction, and no interaction with other birds. Starlings appear to do better with interaction with other starlings, but they can acquire a considerable amount of their song by listening to tapes.

Some research has been done to see whether actual production is necessary in acquiring birdsong. When the vocal control mechanism is anesthetized during early stages of song acquisition birds (in this case, the zebra finch) have no problem developing their song. Anesthetizing the vocal tract during later stages does result in disruption of the acquisition of song, however. At this stage ("crystallization"), however, the bird has already acquired a number of songs and is choosing among them.

QUESTION: *How about chimps? Don't chimps acquire sign language?*

KRASHEN: *Next of Kin. Conversations with Chimpanzees*, the book by Roger Fouts and S. T. Mills (Phoenix, AZ: Bard Books,

1998), contains a tremendous amount of information about how one chimp, Washoe, acquired sign. Of great interest to me is that attempts to "teach" Washoe sign language failed, but Washoe picked up signs by seeing others use them. By the time she was 5, she had acquired 132 signs and a rudimentary syntax similar to that developed in early human language acquisition. (Washoe died in 2007, at the age of 42.) Here is a great quote from Fouts' book that I think says it all:

Nobody was teaching, much less conditioning, Washoe. She was learning. There is a very big difference. Despite the misguided attempts in the first year to treat Washoe like a Skinnerian rat, she was forcing us to accept a truism of chimpanzee and human biology: The child, not the parent, drives the learning process. If you try to impose a rigid discipline while teaching a child or a chimp you are working against the boundless curiosity and need for relaxed play that make learning possible in the first place. As the Gardners finally conceded: 'Young chimpanzees and young children have a limited tolerance for school.' Washoe was learning language not because of our attempts to school her but despite them (p. 83).

There's more: Louis, Washoe's adopted, son, acquired sign from Washoe, "by watching his mother," Fouts tell us. This makes him the first non-human to acquire human language from another non-human. Also interesting: Louis only acquired signs he saw other chimps use, not those used by humans!

QUESTION: *You have been looking at children, adults, oral language, written language, and now animals. What's next, aliens from outer space?*

KRASHEN: Probably not. In the vast

majority of accounts of UFO alien abduction, communication from alien to human is telepathic. It is not clear whether the aliens understand spoken human language.

Of course science-fiction often assumes that at least some aliens will use ordinary human-type language, or languages that are easily translated into human language by translating devices. The universal translator of *Star Trek* has little trouble doing this, acquiring and translating at the same time. Its occasional problems and hesitations show that it operates on the principle of comprehensible input: The universal translator doesn't try to produce and then adjust its system when communication fails (comprehensible output) nor does it get corrected. Rather, it listens and understands, and gradually acquires the system (see e.g. *Star Trek Deep Space Nine, Episode 30: Sanctuary*).

What this suggests is that science-fiction writers regard the idea of the *Comprehension Hypothesis* as plausible. But they seem to drop this when it comes to the classroom: In the first episode of the series *Star Trek Enterprise*, Ensign Sato was observed teaching an alien language at Star Fleet Academy using a version of the audio-lingual method in at Star Fleet academy. I wrote the science specialist and suggested that *Star Trek* should at least base language classes on what is known today, rather than the state of the art in 1960.

QUESTION: *Did they answer?*

KRASHEN: I got a polite response, thanking me for my input.

Those interested in more details about animal language as well as speculations about aliens, please see:

Krashen, S. 2009. "The Comprehension Hypothesis extended," in T. Piske and M. Young-Scholten, eds., *Input Matters in SLA*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, pp. 81-94.

QUESTION: *I have noticed that you have been concentrating a lot on reading as a form of comprehensible input. What got you interested in reading?*

KRASHEN: Frank Smith's book, *Reading without Nonsense* (New York: Teachers College Press). I read it in one sitting in 1983, and soon after read his *Understanding Reading*. I discovered brilliant argumentation and impressive evidence supporting the *Comprehension Hypothesis* for learning to read, coming from a totally different direction. It was very exciting.

I soon discovered the research literature on sustained silent reading (SSR, self-selected reading done in school for a few minutes each day), and noticed that although the topic was no longer popular, when you looked at all the studies, the evidence supporting SSR was compelling. I wrote my first review paper on this and included it as a chapter in one of my books published in 1985. At that time there were only a few second language studies; most of the research on SSR was with first language development with children in the United States.

QUESTION: *What has happened since 1985 with SSR?*

KRASHEN: Since 1985, the research has been overwhelming supportive of SSR. It now includes many second language studies, and consists of over 60 comparisons of SSR and regular language arts or foreign/second language teaching. SSR, I have concluded, is at least as effective as regular teaching for reading comprehension and is often

better, with very few exceptions. If studies are long-term, SSR students nearly always do better. I just completed an analysis of SSR studies done with older (high school and university) EFL students in a number of different countries. SSR was effective, that is better than the comparison group, in all of the studies, no exceptions. This paper, by the way, is available for free at

www.ijflt.com

a free journal (*The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*). Here is the complete citation:

Krashen, S., 2007, "Extensive reading in English as a foreign language by adolescents and young adults: A meta-analysis," *The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 3 (2): 23-29.

QUESTION: *Didn't a big report come out saying that SSR didn't work?*

KRASHEN: Some people have that perception. It comes from the report of the National Reading Panel, published in 2000. The report was 600 pages long but devoted only six pages to "recreational reading." They did not conclude that self-selected reading in school was

bad or that it didn't work. They only said that there is "no clear evidence that encouraging children to read more in school improves reading achievement." In other words, they said there was no evidence, not that the evidence was against it.

I think they were dead wrong, and I have said so in many papers, published in a variety of places, including the *Phi Delta Kappan*, *Education Week*, and *Reading Today*.

First, their report is actually supportive of SSR. They found 14 studies: children in classes using SSR did better in reading than children in classes without SSR in four cases, and there was no difference in ten cases. There were NO studies in which SSR was worse.

Second, they missed most of the research. As I said, so far, I have found over 60 comparisons. The panel found only 14.

Third, the panel only included studies lasting one year or less. SSR is more effective with long term studies.

Finally, the panel made a number of mistakes in their report, and did not include second language studies.

Here is where you can find a few of my responses to the Panel:

Krashen, S., 2001, "More smoke and mirrors: A critique of the National Reading Panel Report on fluency," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(2): 119-123.

Krashen, S., 2003, "Rewriting history: A closer look at some SSR studies," *Knowledge Quest*, 31 (2): 48-49.

Krashen, S., 2005, "Is In-School Free Reading Good for Children? Why the National Reading Panel Report is (Still) Wrong," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(6): 444-447.

Krashen, S., 2006, "SSR is a very good idea: A response to Shanahan," *Reading Today*, (Aug/Sept 2006).

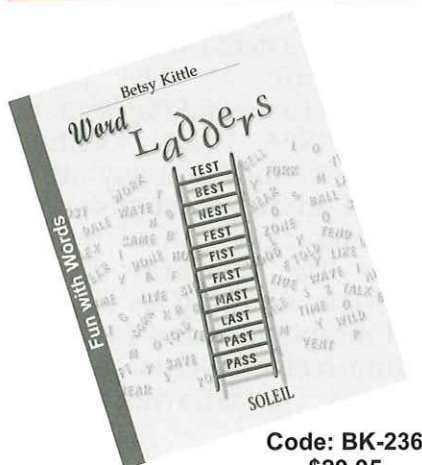
In other words: SSR, self-selected reading in school, has overwhelming and consistent support.

QUESTION: *A final question: Do you believe all that stuff you write?*

KRASHEN: I don't always believe it when I write it, but when I read it over, I find it so convincing that I have no choice.

QUESTION: *Dr. Krashen, thank you for your time.*

KRASHEN: My pleasure.



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Frank Nuessel

Stephen D. Krashen's "Monitor Theory" and Its Five Hypotheses of Second-Language Acquisition

The Author defines the five hypotheses which Krashen mentions in his interview (pp. 3-5) and identifies Krashen's influence on second-language teaching and learning.

Introduction

Stephen D. Krashen, *professor emeritus* of the School of Education at the University of Southern California, is a legendary figure in the area of

- language acquisition (Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985, 2003; Krashen and Terrell, 1983; Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982; Scarcella and Krashen, 1980),
- bilingual education (Krashen, 1997), and
- reading (Krashen, 1984, 2004).

During his illustrious academic career, Krashen has produced a major body of influential linguistic research in these three areas, which includes more than 350 articles and books. Krashen's influence in his various fields of expertise continues to grow as evidenced by ongoing and continuous reference to his major ideas (Danesi, 2000, 2003; Ellis, 1994; Omaggio Hadley, 2001; Klee and Koike, 2003, to name but a few of the many citations in books, as well as countless references in professional journals).

As noted, the references to Krashen's scholarly work are copious. In particular, scholarly

allusions to his five now famous hypotheses about second-language acquisition are innumerable. These five hypotheses are:

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis,
2. The Natural Order Hypothesis,
3. The Monitor Hypothesis,
4. The Input Hypothesis,
5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

The interview with Stephen D. Krashen in this issue of *Mosaic: A Journal for Language Teachers* mentions all five hypotheses. This essay will discuss briefly these five hypotheses in order to put that interview in historical perspective, and to focus on Krashen's major contributions to the field of second-language acquisition.

Each one will be discussed in order with selected quotations from Krashen's own work.

1. The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis makes a clear-cut distinction between "acquisition", which is a subconscious process not unlike "learning", which is a conscious and deliberate course of action on the part of the student to know about a language (Krashen, 1985: 1).

In their collaborative volume on second-language acquisition and instruction, Krashen and Terrell (1983: 27) compare acquisition and learning by noting that "acquisition" has the following characteristics:

1. similarity to first-language acquisition
2. subconscious dimension
3. use of implicit knowledge
4. formal instruction is not useful

On the other hand, "learning" possesses these distinct traits:

1. formal knowledge of the second language
2. explicit and conscious knowledge
3. formal instruction is helpful.

2. The Natural Order Hypothesis

Krashen (1985: 1) attributes the Natural Order hypothesis to Corder (1967). According to this premise, the rules of a language are acquired in a certain predictable order.

In fact, Krashen (1981: 59) proposed an "order of acquisition" for the morphemes of the English verbal system, which corresponds to previous cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. When acquisition is "natural", i.e., it occurs in informal contexts outside the classroom, this natural, or predictable, order will occur normally. In a detailed endnote to chapter one of *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications* (Krashen 1985: 19-21), Krashen provides citations to many other empirical studies in English and other languages - all of which sustain the Natural Order Hypothesis, not only for English verbal morphemes, but for other grammatical elements such as negation, auxiliaries, and inflections.

3. The Monitor Hypothesis

The Monitor Hypothesis means

that both acquisition and learning are employed in language production. As Krashen (1985: 1-2) points out:

Our ability to produce utterances in another language comes from acquired competence, from our subconscious knowledge. Learning, conscious knowledge, serves only as an editor, or Monitor. We appeal to learning to make corrections, to the change the output of the acquired system before we speak or write (or sometimes after we speak or write, is in self-correction).

Because the Monitor is a self-conscious device, it requires more time and it results in a reduction of the information being transmitted. One serious defect of the monitor, or editor, is that it disrupts conversational communication.

4. The Input Hypothesis

For Krashen, acquisition requires comprehensible input that is at a level slightly above the second-language student's ability. As Krashen (1985: 2) notes:

The Input Hypothesis claims that humans acquire language in only one way ~ by understanding messages, or by receiving "comprehensible input". We progress along the natural order (hypothesis 2) by understanding input that contains structures at our next "stage" – structures that are a bit beyond our current level of competence. (We move from i , our current level to $i + 1$, the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing $i + 1$...) We are able to understand language containing unacquired grammar with the help of context, which includes extra-linguistic information, our knowledge of the world, and previously acquired linguistic competence.

Krashen and Terrell (1983: 37) enumerate the following four major points about the Input Hypothesis:

1. [It] [r]elates to acquisition, not learning.
2. We acquire by understanding language a bit beyond our current level of competence. This is done with the help of context.
3. Spoken fluency emerges gradually and is not taught directly.
4. When caretakers talk to acquirers so that the acquirers understand the message, input automatically contains " $i + 1$ ", the grammatical structures the acquirer is "ready" to acquire.

5. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

With respect to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, Krashen (1985: 3) makes the important point that

[c]omprehensible input is necessary for acquisition, but it is not sufficient. The acquirer needs to be "open" to the input. The "affective filter" is a mental block that prevents acquirers from fully utilizing the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition.

In order to counter students must have an anxiety-free environment, good motivation, and a positive self-image.

Implications of Krashen's Hypotheses for the Classroom

In the following quotation, Omaggio Hadley (2001: 62) summarizes the implications for classroom practice suggested by Krashen's five hypotheses:

1. The main function of the classroom may be to provide comprehensible input in an environment conducive to a low affective filter (i.e., high motivation, low anxiety).
2. The classroom is most useful for beginners, who cannot easily utilize the informal environment for input. That is, it is

useful for foreign language students who do not have input sources outside of class or for those whose competence is so low that they are unable to understand the language of the outside world ([Krashen 1982:] 33-37).

3. The requirements for optimal input are that it be
 - (a) comprehensible,
 - (b) interesting and relevant,
 - (c) not grammatically sequenced,
 - (d) provided in sufficient quantity to supply $i + 1$, and (e) delivered in an environment where students are "off the defensive" ([Krashen 1982:] 127).
4. Error correction should be minimal in the classroom; if it is of some limited use when the goal is learning, but of no use when the goal is acquisition. Error correction raises the affective filter and should, therefore, not be used in free conversation or when acquisition is likely to take place ([Krashen 1982:] 116-117).
5. Students should never be required to produce speech in the second language unless they are ready to do so. Speaking fluency cannot be taught, but it "emerges" naturally in time with enough comprehensible input.

The Natural Approach to Second-Language Instruction

The collective cluster of Krashen's five hypotheses about second-language acquisition is known as the "Monitor Model" or "Monitor Theory". Tracy Terrell (1977, 1982) developed what he called the "Natural Approach" to second-language instruction by utilizing Krashen's Monitor Theory. In an important collaborative effort, Krashen and Terrell (1983) co-

authored the book entitled *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom*. In it, they describe The "Natural Approach" to second-language acquisition, which is based on Krashen's five hypotheses. The "Natural Approach" is, in effect, the translation of Krashen's "Monitor Theory" into a practical classroom communicative model of second-language instruction. These authors (Krashen and Terrell 1983: 17) note that they have written this book (Krashen and Terrell 1983) for two reasons:

1. "... as an introduction to the Monitor Theory of language acquisition and learning; the hypotheses of the Monitor Theory form the base of the tenets which underlie the Natural Approach..."; and
2. "... as a handbook for instructors who wish to use a communication-based approach in the classroom..."

In their discussion of the "Natural Approach" and language acquisition, Krashen and Terrell (1983: 20-21) summarize the major points of this model as follows (boldface type in original):

1. "**comprehension precedes production**".
2. "**production** is allowed to emerge in stages".
3. "**the students are not forced to speak before they are ready**".
4. "**speech errors which do not interfere with communication are not corrected**".
5. "**the course syllabus consists of communicative goals**".
6. "**activities done in the classroom aimed at acquisition must foster a lowering of the affective filter of the students**".

Concluding Remarks

Stephen D. Krashen's contributions to second-language acquisition theory are both influential and long lasting. His Monitor Theory has had profound

implications for the teaching of second-languages in the US and abroad. The influence of his "Monitor Theory" and its five hypotheses have also had an enormous impact on the development and construction of second-language textbooks.

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He is a member of the Editorial Board as well as a regular contributor to *Mosaic: The Journal for Language Teachers*.

Mosaic

In the next issue
(Vol. 10, No. 4, Winter 2008)
an interview with

Raymond Mougeon

on

"The Competence of French Immersion Students"

interviewed

by **Katherine Rehner**

Rostyslav Bilous

La Grammaire Universelle et l'acquisition d'une langue seconde : une réflexion critique

Il y a bon nombre d'auteurs aujourd'hui, linguistes ou non, discutant de la portée de la théorie GU pour la linguistique moderne. Cet article présente la Grammaire Universelle comme une théorie de la compétence innée capable de répondre le mieux aux besoins d'un rendement formel des découvertes dans le domaine de l'acquisition d'une langue seconde, vu qu'à l'heure actuelle elle fournit la meilleure rentabilité explicative des mécanismes sous-tendant la langue humaine.

1. Introduction

La présente étude aborde la question de la relation entre la Grammaire Universelle (GU) et l'acquisition d'une langue seconde. Cette question se trouve au centre de la polémique linguistique depuis trois décennies à peu près, vu que la réponse à cette question n'est pas facile : il n'est pas encore clair jusqu'à quel degré la compétence linguistique sous-jacente des apprenants d'une langue seconde (L2) est contrainte par les mêmes principes universaux qui gouvernent la langue naturelle en général. On suppose qu'il existe une grammaire universelle intégrée dans le cerveau humain de façon innée (Chomsky, 1965-2006; Cook et al., 1996; White 2003a/b). On assume aussi qu'il est correct de dire que la GU contraint la grammaire de la langue maternelle ou primaire (L1) : de nombreuses études ont mis en évidence cette hypothèse (White, 2003b; Fromkin et al., 2006; etc.). Pour ce qui est de la langue seconde (L2), la dernière décennie a vu maintes investigations effectuées dans le but de comprendre si la GU contraint aussi les grammaires inter langue ("interlanguage grammars") dans l'acquisition linguistique non-

primaire. Autrement dit, les questions principale squ'on pose sont :

peut-on caractériser les grammaires inter langue (IL) en termes des principes et paramètres de la GU et quelle est la nature de la compétence inter langue tout au long du processus de l'acquisition d'une L2, de l'étape initiale à l'étape finale ?

Pour répondre à ces questions, plusieurs hypothèses ont été proposées et testées, au moyen de recherches empiriques, dans le cadre de l'approche générativiste (White, 2003b). Cependant, je ne me penche pas sur les tentatives faites dans le but d'analyser le degré de l'importance de la GU (il s'agit de la bien connue "question de l'accès") pour l'acquisition de L1 et L2 (White, 2003b; Fromkin et al., 2006). Ce travail vise plutôt à rendre compte seulement des généralisations et conclusions qu'on a faites à partir des résultats de ces recherches et à analyser tant leur importance pour l'enseignement de la L2 que les perspectives du développement de la théorie d'acquisition. L'autre question à laquelle ils nous font répondre ici est la suivante :

en ce qui concerne la GU, est-il vraiment nécessaire de l'intégrer

dans le cadre théorique de l'acquisition de L2 au lieu de suivre d'autres approches existantes telles que le behaviorisme (Chomsky, 1957), l'émergentisme (O'Grady, 2003), le connexionnisme (Gregg, 2003), etc., qui, par ailleurs, trouvent toujours beaucoup d'adeptes dans le monde linguistique ?

À cela je réponds en me servant des conclusions faites au sein d'un nombre d'études antérieures : au moyen d'une brève analyse il est souligné que la théorie GU est absolument pertinente pour l'acquisition de L2, car c'est la seule théorie disponible qui aide à expliquer ou à caractériser d'une façon détaillée le vrai état de choses, soit la nature de l'acquisition de L2. Il est à noter en passant que dans l'optique générativiste, à cause du phénomène de transfert, la grammaire L2 initiale se caractérise par la disponibilité de valeurs paramétriques de la grammaire L1 finale; contrairement à l'acquisition de L1, l'apprenant de L2 peut (ou non) régler les paramètres de la langue cible face aux preuves positives (dans l'input). Le réglage de paramètres est un processus progressif et s'effectue par étapes. Les interlangues sont des grammaires possibles. Les principes et les paramètres de la GU servent à contraindre chaque interlangue. Si l'acquisition d'une L1 est garantie, l'acquisition d'une L2 ne l'est pas (Cook et al., 1996).

Étant donné que ma démarche se fait dans le cadre d'une révision critique, d'un traitement logico-inférentiel peut-être, des travaux écrits en général pendant les derniers vingt ans, je ne préconise aucune version de la théorie générativiste en particulier, mais je soutiens qu'elle est plus valable par rapport à d'autres théories moins formelles.

Cette étude est organisée comme suit :

- la Section 2 porte sur la définition et le statut de la GU en linguistique moderne,
- dans la section subséquente (3) j'analyse l'importance de la théorie GU pour l'acquisition de la L2 et ensuite,
- dans la Section 4 (Discussion), je discute de la validité de cette analyse à l'appui de la théorie GU.

2. La définition de la GU et son statut en linguistique moderne

Avant de parler de l'acquisition d'une langue, il faut logiquement appréhender ce que la langue humaine est *per se*. Considérons donc la définition de la compétence qui sous-tend ce phénomène si unique.

Selon l'approche générativiste, la GU est une architecture mentale, une espèce de connaissance abstraite déterminée de façon innée (une dotation génétique) (Chomsky, 1965-2006; Maher, 1997; Hawkins, et al., 2004; etc.), qui contraint et façonne le développement des grammaires spécifiques des langues humaines. La GU, étant une faculté du langage unique à l'humain et génétiquement codée, constitue un bagage biologique et comprend un nombre de principes et paramètres (Chomsky et al., 1993), qui guident les locuteurs de manière inconsciente dans l'expérience de l'usage du langage. La GU est donc conçue spécifiquement pour la tâche d'acquisition du langage humain. Pour ce qui est des composants de la GU, ses principes internes spécifient des traits universaux, invariables, qu'on trouve à travers les langues, cependant, ses paramètres, eux, spécifient un nombre limité de variations (Chomsky, 1975; Chomsky et al., 1993; Myles, 2004). Autrement dit, les principes de la GU s'appliquent à toutes les langues, par contre, les valeurs des paramètres, quant à eux, varient

d'une langue à l'autre, ou bien d'un groupe de langues à un autre. Par exemple, les phrases de toute langue comprennent un sujet (c'est un principe), mais l'ordre de mots et la position du sujet dans la phrase varient d'une langue à l'autre (c'est un paramètre). White, spécialiste en acquisition, dit que le paramètre en GU est un principe variable, et les paramètres ont été construits en options, réglages, valeurs et se proposent comme un compte rendu de la variation linguistique (White, 2003b). On postule que les catégories fonctionnelles constituent le locus de la variation paramétrique (Borer, 1984; Chomsky, 1995a). En d'autres termes, la GU représente un "format spécial" qui est à la base de toute langue naturelle. À remarquer qu'on distingue entre la grammaire universelle et la grammaire particulière. D'après Gregg (2003), une grammaire particulière, soit la grammaire de n'importe quelle langue naturelle spécifique, est en soi un ensemble de principes et paramètres de la GU instancié d'une façon spécifique.

La Grammaire Universelle est donc conçue spécifiquement pour la tâche d'acquisition du langage humain.

Étant donné que nous sommes doués d'un bagage génétique, soit de la faculté du langage, il devient raisonnable de se demander s'il y a quelque chose dans notre cerveau qui nous sert pour apprendre une langue quelconque. Chomsky (1975) a supposé qu'il doit exister un modèle d'acquisition inné ("*language acquisition device*") qui nous fait découvrir les données de la GU. Certains linguistes semblent confondre le modèle d'acquisition avec la GU, d'autres sont d'avis que la GU en fait partie. Dans la section qui suit je touche à cette question en

parlant du mécanisme d'acquisition proposé par Gregg (2003).

Notons qu'il ne faut pas prendre pour acquis tout ce qu'on trouve dans les études critiques en linguistique concernant la description de la GU. Par exemple, O'Grady (2003 : 44) utilise le terme "*grammatical knowledge*" en faisant référence à la GU :

Grammatical nativism contrasts with 'general nativism', which posits an innate acquisition device but denies that it includes grammatical categories or principles *per se*. According to this view (which might be labeled "cognitive nativism" or "emergentism", as is more common these days), the entire grammar is the product of the interaction of the acquisition device with experience; no grammatical knowledge is inborn.

Comme je l'ai mentionné plus haut, la GU n'est pas une grammaire proprement dite, mais une espèce de connaissance abstraite (Chomsky, 2000; Carroll 1999; etc.), comparable avec un logiciel ou un programme (computationnel), car le cerveau humain est programmé selon certains critères, et, au moment où l'enfant commence à être exposé à l'input, cette connaissance spéciale abstraite (la GU) est activée pour que l'enfant puisse régler les paramètres de la langue à laquelle il est exposé. À noter aussi que ce linguiste a utilisé le terme "*grammatical categories*" en caractérisant la GU, ce qui est incorrect : pour décrire la GU on se sert de la terminologie comme "règles", "conditions", "principes", "paramètres". Mais le terme "*categories*" est utilisé plutôt pour décrire un concept qui fait partie d'une grammaire proprement dite.

Pour ce qui est du statut de la théorie GU en linguistique moderne, il faut avouer que le scepticisme à cet égard est répandu. Il y a beaucoup de travaux qui tout simplement

ignorent cette théorie, ou bien qui la rejettent d'une façon ou d'une autre. Par ailleurs, même à l'intérieur de cette théorie il existe maintes versions (Gregg, 2003). Il en est de même pour son application à la recherche sur l'acquisition linguistique. Cependant, la perspective future semble être pleine de positivisme pour la théorie GU, compte tenu de ses forces qui priment sur toutes les autres théories existantes. O'Grady (2003 : 45) explique l'état de choses comme suit :

Most non-UG work is quite casual in its approach to syntax [...]. By contrast, work in the special nativist tradition has not only put forward a theory of learnability (built around an inborn UG) but linked it to a far-reaching and explicit theory of grammar (transformational grammar in its various incarnations).

Examinons maintenant la question de l'importance de la GU pour l'acquisition de L2.

3. Le rôle de la GU dans l'acquisition d'une langue seconde

À cette étape de la présente étude il s'impose une question tout à fait pertinente :

quelle est la portée de la GU dans l'acquisition d'une L2 ?

Cette question a reçu beaucoup d'attention en linguistique moderne. Analysons à ce sujet quelques aspects.

Les chercheurs qui font leurs enquêtes dans le cadre de la théorie GU sont d'accord qu'acquérir une langue veut dire apprendre comment les règles et conditions de la GU s'appliquent à une langue particulière (Cook et al., 1996; White, 2003b; Myles, 2004). On a testé les affirmations suivantes :

1. la GU contraint les grammaires possibles au cours de l'acquisition ;
2. la GU est disponible non

seulement dans le cas de l'acquisition de la L1, mais aussi dans le cas de l'acquisition de la L2.

Pour les chercheurs générativistes la GU constitue l'état initial (S_0) de l'enfant, la connaissance avec laquelle l'enfant est équipé avant d'être exposé à l'input de la langue maternelle cible (White, 2003b). La grammaire d'une L2 a une seconde version des données linguistiques primaires, et elle contient une seconde version des principes, un second ensemble de paramètres, c'est-à-dire, la L2 est en soi un mélange de propriétés grammaticales d'une L1 et d'une L2 (Cook et al., 1996). Les recherches en acquisition, pour la plupart, se sont concentrées sur la nature de la grammaire L2 en cherchant l'évidence pour ou contre l'opération de la GU dans le processus d'acquisition, et sur la nature des grammaires initiales et des grammaires subséquentes. Ce sont les questions de représentation (White, 2003a, entre autres). Ces questions sont liées à l'existence d'une compétence linguistique innée. Mais il s'agit aussi des questions de développement. Si une théorie représentationnelle a pour but d'expliquer ce que les grammaires d'apprenants sont en soi, une théorie de développement doit expliquer comment ou pourquoi ces grammaires se développent d'une certaine manière, et comment une représentation est acquise, comment l'input interagit avec la grammaire existante. Il en découle que la théorie GU n'est pas une théorie d'apprentissage, c'est une théorie de la nature des représentations grammaticales, selon laquelle tous les êtres humains sont doués d'une compétence innée unique, qui les rend capables de parler (Chomsky 1965-2006, etc.), mais qui ne peut pas rendre compte de tous les aspects d'acquisition. Bref, la théorie GU est importante pour l'acquisition, mais son importance

est partagée avec une autre théorie, dont le but est de rendre compte du processus de l'acquisition d'une langue : ensemble ces deux théories nous donnent une image complète de ce que l'acquisition d'une L2 représente.

Dans les années 50-60 certains chercheurs ont remarqué que la langue des apprenants L2 était systémique, qu'il y avait des étapes dans l'acquisition des éléments de tous les niveaux de la grammaire et que les erreurs que les apprenants commettaient sont une évidence du comportement gouverné par un système de règles (Popova, 1958; Zakharova, 1958; Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972; etc.).

White (2003b) a fait un compte rendu des travaux plus récents, qui, à partir de quelques hypothèses sur l'accès des grammaires IL à la GU, ont étudié le processus de l'acquisition de L2 et ont contribué à notre compréhension de ce que les concepts "systématicité", "variabilité" et "grammaires IL" représentent. Leur application de certains concepts de la théorie GU s'est avérée cruciale et a déterminé une nouvelle perspective dans le domaine d'acquisition (Myles, 2004).

Il faut mettre l'emphasis sur le fait qu'à présent il n'existe pas une théorie bien articulée qui puisse tester la plausibilité de la théorie GU ou, autrement dit, une théorie qui puisse rivaliser avec la théorie GU. Vu que cette dernière est la seule théorie capable d'expliquer la systématicité et la productivité de la langue humaine, elle peut appeler aux règles et aux principes qui ont le pouvoir de causer quelque chose (Gregg, 2003; White, 2003a; etc.). Gregg (2003 : 843) exprime cette idée au sujet de la systématicité d'un code linguistique :

[...] the undoubted systematicity of language can be explained if it is nomologically necessary: systematicity (syntacticity) is a

necessary condition on being a natural language.

Certains scientifiques critiquent, pourtant, la théorie GU. Il se peut que certains de leurs arguments aient du poids, mais est-ce qu'ils fournissent pour autant une meilleure théorie ? Gregg (2003 : 850) fait à ce sujet une remarque similaire :

Whether, say, UG exists or not is an open question, of course. But UG is posited not because it's plausible, but because it can explain certain phenomena – phenomena, moreover, about the existence of which there is little dispute. And in science, one normally rejects an explanation only when one has a superior explanation to replace it.

À remarquer aussi que la GU ne semble pas être consistante avec la théorie évolutionniste à cause de l'aspect innéiste dans sa définition (voir Deacon, 1997; Lieberman 1984, 1991). En effet, de nos jours l'évolutionnisme semble être de plus en plus rejeté compte tenu d'un manque important de preuves pour ses hypothèses (Köhler, 1952; Dyson, 1979; Fincher, 1981; Breuer, 1982; Maher 1997; etc.).

Pour ce qui est des autres théories, comme le behaviorisme, le connexionnisme et l'émergentisme, elles ne semblent pas avoir avancé beaucoup la pensée scientifique. Le behaviorisme, ayant à sa source l'évolutionnisme, est bien connu pour son dogmatisme (Chomsky, 1957). Quant au connexionnisme, cette théorie a vu beaucoup de succès dans la dernière décennie, car elle est devenue plus détaillée, sophistiquée et mieux articulée. Ellis (2003 : 95) caractérise l'état actuel du connexionnisme comme suit :

Current connectionist models often use "test-tube" fragments of language and, thus, have low input representativeness. However good their contact with the data, more

research is needed to explore the degrees to which these initial promising results can be scaled up to deal with the complexities of real language.

Or, ainsi que je l'ai constaté précédemment, pour le moment c'est la théorie GU qui l'emporte sur les autres théories grâce à son efficacité explicative.

Il faut voir aussi s'il y a un consensus parmi les linguistes sur ce que l'acquisition d'une L2 représente. Gregg (2003 : 835) est d'avis que la théorie de l'acquisition d'une langue seconde (ALS) n'est qu'une théorie d'apprentissage. Il s'en suit que cette théorie se trouve dans le cadre de la science cognitive, opposée à la science sociale et la recherche liée à l'acquisition de L2 est une discipline internaliste plutôt qu'externaliste (Chomsky, 1986, 1995b). Il est donc logique que la théorie ALS s'occupe des changements internes d'état chez les apprenants de L2 et non de leur comportement en groupes. Gregg (2003) parle de deux types de la théorie ALS : la théorie des propriétés ("*property theory*") et la théorie de transition ("*transition theory*"). Cette proposition est en consonance avec la distinction faite par White (2003a), entre la théorie GU et la théorie de développement. D'après Gregg, la théorie ALS doit expliquer l'état de la connaissance que l'apprenant en L2 possède vis-à-vis d'une L2, c'est-à-dire, elle doit expliquer au moins deux états : l'état initial et l'état final de la connaissance de L2. Cet aspect de la théorie ALS entre dans le domaine de la théorie des propriétés qui vise à expliquer comment la connaissance linguistique responsable de l'acquisition d'une L2 est instanciée dans l'esprit humain. Cependant, la théorie GU ne peut pas rendre compte des processus séquentiels, qui sont le domaine de la théorie de transition. Gregg (2003 : 841-842) spécifie 3 paramètres

centraux que la théorie des propriétés étudie :

1. modularité : la connaissance de la L2 semble être modulaire, car chaque module de la grammaire d'une langue a des structures et des fonctions qui sont reconnaissables de celles d'un autre module ; notre cerveau est capable d'analyser et de faire cette distinction ;
2. innéisme : la connaissance de L2 semble être atteinte ou disponible indépendamment de l'influence environnementale, les innéistes postulent qu'il doit y avoir un composant inné dans le cerveau responsable de l'acquisition de L2, the foundation of language knowledge is UG; and UG is innate and domain-specific. [...] the essence of linguistic knowledge – the principles or mental structures that characterize the language faculty and distinguish it from other mental faculties – is, for UG/SLA theorists, innate;
3. la nature des représentations mentales de la L2 : la connaissance de L2 semble être bien organisée, soit hiérarchiquement ordonnée, et constitue un système de représentations structuré. Quant à la théorie de transition, dans l'optique de l'approche innéiste cette théorie se base sur le besoin d'une espèce de mécanisme mental – d'un mécanisme d'apprentissage, qui peut agir au moment de l'introduction de l'input linguistique pour créer les représentations mentales nécessaires. Cela est, sans doute, un facteur primordial. Un des facteurs secondaires (qui ne peuvent pas, eux-mêmes, traiter l'input langagier) pourrait être la motivation, qui peut directement affecter la quantité et la fréquence de l'input. Bref, une théorie ALS doit rendre compte du rôle de l'input linguistique et fournir une

explication de la façon, dont un mécanisme d'apprentissage crée des représentations mentales à base de l'input linguistique.

Il est pertinent de mentionner aussi que Cook et Newson (1996), eux aussi, ont mis en relief l'importance de la théorie GU et l'ont placée à la base d'une "nouvelle théorie d'acquisition linguistique", soit de la théorie ALS. En plus, ces linguistes ont démontré que, par l'intermédiaire des termes générativistes, tels que la pauvreté du stimulus, le réglage des paramètres, on a pu déterminer ce qui constitue l'acquisition de L2 et la nature de la compétence inter langue de façon plus claire. Par exemple, on a pu expliquer formellement, soit d'une façon technique et limitée, que :

1. la connaissance de L2 n'équivaut pas à celle de L1 ;
2. la pauvreté du stimulus fonctionne différemment chez les apprenants L2 (par rapport aux apprenants L1) : beaucoup d'entre eux n'arrivent jamais à acquérir une L2 de façon plus ou moins complète (Schachter 1990, etc.), bien qu'on soit exposé à la même évidence positive que les apprenants L1 ;
3. le réglage des paramètres chez les apprenants L2 ("parameter resetting") diffère du réglage des paramètres chez les apprenants L1 ("parameter setting") (Cook et al., 1996 ; White, 2003b).

Tout compte rendu de l'importance de la GU dans le domaine d'acquisition linguistique et de ce qu'une bonne théorie ALS doit constituer, passons maintenant à la section finale de discussion.

4. Discussion

À cette étape du développement de la science cognitive, il n'est pas une exagération de dire que pour beaucoup de linguistes l'apport de

la théorie GU est évident et indéniable. De plus, on s'accorde largement sur la validité de cette théorie pour l'acquisition de L1, L2 ou L_n. Ce qui semble continuer de désunir le monde linguistique, c'est la question de l'accès des grammaires IL à la GU dans le cas de L2 ou L_n (Herschensohn 1999, White 2003b, entre autres).

Selon l'approche générativiste, la GU est une architecture mentale, une espèce de connaissance abstraite déterminée de façon innée (une dotation génétique), qui contraint et façonne le développement des grammaires spécifiques des langues humaines.

La présente étude, basée sur les travaux de certains linguistes reconnus, a souligné encore une fois que la théorie GU est cruciale pour l'enseignement de L2, car c'est la seule théorie bien articulée qui explique de façon très détaillée la nature de la langue humaine en termes de principes et de paramètres. La théorie ALS se base sur cette théorie, en rendant compte du processus de l'acquisition de L2 dans l'optique générativiste. Prenons le terme "réglage des paramètres". Ce terme désigne un concept crucial dans la théorie d'acquisition, qui a été défini à partir de la Théorie des principes et paramètres (Chomsky et al., 1993). Bref, il est clair que la portée de la théorie GU n'est pas à sous-estimer. Qui plus est, une grande partie de la recherche en acquisition de L2 se fait suivant l'approche générativiste. Le domaine d'étude de l'acquisition d'une langue seconde est une branche de linguistique relativement nouvelle : elle s'est développée parallèlement avec le générativisme. Les deux sont insé-

parables (au moins, jusqu'à ce qu'on propose quelque chose de meilleur). Autrement dit, la symbiose entre la théorie ALS et la théorie GU nous donne un bon rendement explicatif. Par conséquent, il est absolument crucial que tous ceux qui enseignent une L2, soient familiarisés avec ces deux théories pour mieux cerner ce que le processus de l'acquisition de L2 implique (Hawkins, 2004; White, 2003b; etc.), les étapes qui en font partie (White, 2003b; Hawkins & Franceschina, 2004; Carstens, 2000; etc.), la nature des défis auxquels les apprenants L2 doivent faire face (Birdsong, 2003; Carroll, 1999; etc.), les différences dans l'apprentissage implicite entre les enfants et les adultes (Granfeldt, 2000; Bruhn de Garavito & White, 2002; etc.), les raisons de la variabilité dans la production linguistique (Prévost, 2001; Myles, 2004).

Il y a aussi un consensus entre beaucoup de linguistes (dont le nombre, par ailleurs, semble s'accroître constamment) que la théorie GU a la capacité de répondre à la question qui a inquiété les linguistes depuis longtemps :

Pourquoi la langue humaine est telle quelle est ?

Avec raison on peut conclure que le développement de cette théorie satisfait la demande du temps : elle reflète beaucoup de découvertes faites dans le domaine de la génétique, la neuroscience computationnelle, la psychologie cognitive, etc. (Chomsky, 1986-2006; Gregg, 2003; White, 2003b; Brousseau et Nikiema, 2001; Maher 1997; etc.). Faisant partie de la théorie ALS, le générativisme va dans le sens de ces découvertes, en contraste avec le behaviorisme, qui semble être trop accablé par la tradition dogmatique de l'évolutionnisme.

Cela étant dit, il faut garder en

tête le fait qu'il ne s'agit point d'un "culte de personnalité", comme certains linguistes ont tendance à présenter la réussite des idées chomskyennes (voir Seuren, 2004), mais il s'agit plutôt d'être tout simplement raisonnable et ouvert, d'être capable de reconnaître tout ce qui est le plus valable, même si cela implique le renoncement à certaines convictions personnelles.

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Rostyslav Bilous est présentement candidat au Doctorat en Linguistique française de l'Université de Toronto. Parmi ses intérêts de recherche : la typologie et la transitivité verbale, rapport entre la transitivité



et le marquage d'objet différentiel, réalisations morphosyntaxiques des traits d'individuation sur l'objet direct, modalité et systèmes modaux, variation paramétrique, code linguistique : système vs. structure, économie vs. variation, problèmes de bilinguisme, techniques de traduction, acquisition et apprentissage L1/L2-Ln, attrition et perte de L1, méthodes d'enseignement/apprentissage d'une langue seconde.

Remerciements : Je tiens à présenter mes remerciements au Prof. Charles Elkabas de ses valables commentaires.

Anthony Mollica

Recreational Linguistics: Crossword Puzzles and Second-Language Teaching

Although the crossword puzzle has a very short history, there is no doubt that it is the most popular and widespread of all word games. A quick glance at textbooks and workbooks easily attests that it is the word game favoured by language teachers.

When Arthur Wynn published the first crossword puzzle in the puzzle page of Sunday's *New York World* on December 21, 1913, he probably did not realize the instant success the puzzle was to enjoy. He created the biggest puzzle craze that America had ever seen.

According to Arnot (1981), today 99% of the world's daily newspapers and 677 Sunday newspapers in the United States carry one, and the number of regular solvers is counted in the millions. There is no question that the number of both newspapers and solvers has increased since Arnot made this assertion more than a quarter of a century ago.

Crossword puzzles do not appear only in newspapers but also in hundreds – perhaps in thousands – of magazines dedicated to this puzzle alone.

Roger Millington (1977), one of the first authors to write about the history of the crossword puzzles gives an anecdotal description of the reactions of Arthur Wynne's first puzzle.

Engaged couples announced their good news by composing appropriate crosswords and sticking them in the local paper. The Rev. George McElveen, a Baptist pastor of Pittsburgh, was the first of many preachers to use the crossword puzzle to attract bigger congregations. He announced that a

large blackboard would be placed in front of his pulpit. On it was an original puzzle and the audience was required to solve it before he would begin his sermon. The solved puzzle, needless to say, proved to be the text for his sermon. In Atlantic City, crosswords were distributed in church to stir interest in a current missionary campaign in China and Persia. Churchgoers were requested, however, not to solve the puzzles during the service (p. 20).

In December 1924, unaware the craze was shortly to achieve similar magnitudes in Britain, *The Times* took pity on America. In an article headed "An Enslaved America", it noted that "All America has succumbed to the crossword puzzle." Guessing inaccurately, it continued:

The crossword puzzle is by no means a new thing; in all likelihood it was known as long as the Civil War.

The Times felt that the crossword was

a menace because it is making devastating inroads on working hours of every rank of society.

How devastating? Well, according to their New York correspondent, five million hours daily of American people's time – most of them nominally working hours – were used in unprofitable trifling (p. 21).

What are crossword puzzles?

According to Augarde (1984, p. 52), crossword puzzles

usually consist of chequered diagrams (normally rectangular) in which the solver has to write words guessed from clues. The words are separated by black squares or by thick bars between squares. [...] Crosswords are now usually designed so that they look the same when they are turned upside down. But many early crosswords lacked this kind of pattern or were designed symmetrically, so that the left side as the mirror-image of the right side

The first puzzles created by Arthur Wynne appeared in the shape of a diamond without any "black" squares and was called "word-cross". My theory is that Wynne called the puzzle "word-cross" because he had positioned the words in the form of a cross (which also resembles a diamond). It had the word "FUN" written in it because it appeared in the "Fun" page of the newspaper. Through a printer's error, the puzzle was baptized as "cross-word." (Figures 1 and 2)

The word "cross-word" (first hyphenated and later with the hyphen removed), was an instant success! According to Millington, after the first "crossword puzzle" was published in the *New York World*, the newspaper was swamped with requests and the word puzzle remained a regular feature although several typesetting errors kept creeping in. The problem was eventually solved by taking the proof sheet to the Editor's office for him to solve. In 1920, the *World* decided to hire a young Smith College graduate named Margaret Petherbridge as the solver/proofreader of the crossword puzzle.

As Millington (1974) narrates, a casual request at a dinner at Dick Simon's aunt was to bring him and his new partner Lincoln Schuster of the newly founders "Simon and

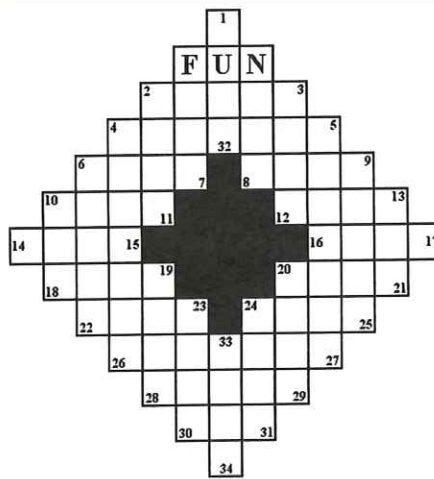


Figure 1
The first crossword puzzle by Arthur Wynne which appeared in the *New York World*.

- 2-3 What bargain hunters enjoy.
- 4-5 A written acknowledgement.
- 6-7 Such and nothing more.
- 10-11 A bird.
- 14-15 Opposed to less.
- 18-19 What this puzzle is.
- 22-23 An animal of prey.
- 26-27 The close of a day.
- 28-29 To elude.
- 30-31 The plural of is.
- 8-9 To cultivate.
- 12-13 A bar of wood or iron.
- 16-17 What artists learn to do.
- 20-21 Fastened.

Schuster, Publishers" a great deal of wealth. Simon's aunt wondered where she could purchase a book of crossword puzzles for her niece who, apparently, had become addicted to solving the crossword puzzles in the *New York World*.

Both Simon and Schuster immediately realized that such a book did not exist and enlisted the assistance of Margaret Petherbridge and two other colleagues of hers, Prosper Buranelli and F. Gregory Hartswick. They soon had a compilation of 50 puzzles but were advised not to publish them under their company name (they were told that the publication would not augur well in the publishing business) and so they published with the imprint of "The Plaza Publishing Company." "Plaza" was the name of the street of the publishing house.

The book, accompanied with a

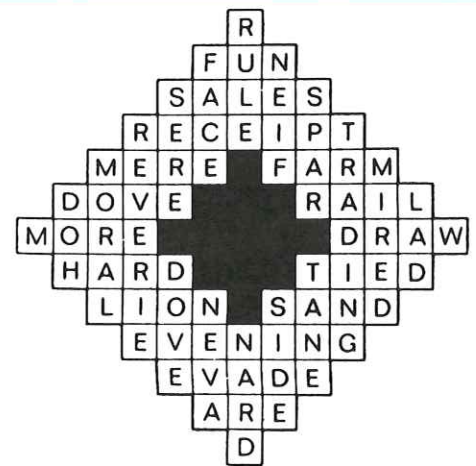


Figure 1
Answers to the first crossword puzzle by Arthur Wynne.

- 24-25 Found on the seashore.
- 10-18 The fibre of the gomuti palm.
- 6-22 What we all should be.
- 4-26 A day dream.
- 2-11 A talon.
- 19-28 A pigeon.
- F-7 Part of your head.
- 23-30 A river in Russia.
- 1-32 To govern.
- 33-34 An aromatic plant.
- N-8 A fist.
- 9-31 To agree with it.
- 3-12 Part of a ship.
- 20-29 One.

Venus pencil and an eraser, sold at \$1.35 per copy, a steep price for a book in those days, but no sooner was *The Cross Word Puzzle Book* published that Simon and Schuster's telephone lines were jammed with requests. In less than three months, they sold 40,000 copies and by the end of their first year of publication, they had published three volumes of puzzles with a total sales of over 400,000 copies.

It did not take long for this new puzzle to cross the Atlantic.

In France, it was eventually referred as *Mots croisés*, in Spain as *Crucigramas*, in Portugal as *Palavras cruzadas*, in Germany as *Kreuzworträtsel*, in Holland as *Kruiswoord*, in Finland as *Ristisana*, in Sweden as *Krossord*, in Romania as *Cuvinte Incruciate*, in Yugoslavia as *Krjz-Lica*. In Italy, it became known as *Parole incrociate*, a term

which was taken over by the less correct *Parole crociate* and by the Latinism *Cruciverba*.

It was again Arthur Wynne who, according to Augarde (1984, p. 54), provided England with the first crossword puzzle which appeared in the *Sunday Express* on November 2, 1924. The *Times* followed six years later, in 1930.

The English crossword puzzle, however, was more difficult than the American version. The latter tended to have more straightforward clues and a larger diagram.

Arnot (1981, p. 3) points out that in Britain, in spite of the shortage of paper, the crossword puzzle still found its place in the four-page condensed newspapers. The reason was that the puzzle was considered a therapeutic diversion during the long hours in air-raid shelters.

In France this new word game appeared for the first time in *Dimanche Illustré* on November 9, 1924 with the name of “Mosaïque mystérieuse”. (Figure 3). When the second crossword appeared the following week, however, the newspaper acknowledged that the first puzzle contained two errors: 12 Across should have read “conjonction” and not “préposition” and 1 Down should have read “mode de verbe” and not “temps de verbe”. History was repeating itself: errors and misprints which plagued the first few crossword puzzles published in *New York World* were now plaguing *Dimanche Illustré*. By December of that same year, the crossword puzzle had undergone another change. It was not longer referred as “Mosaïque mystérieuse” but as “Problème de mots croisés”.

Other dailies such as *Le Gaulois*, *L'Excelsior*, *Le Matin* and *L'Intransigeant* – to name a few – quickly followed suit by inserting crossword puzzles in their publication.

In 1925, Renée David published

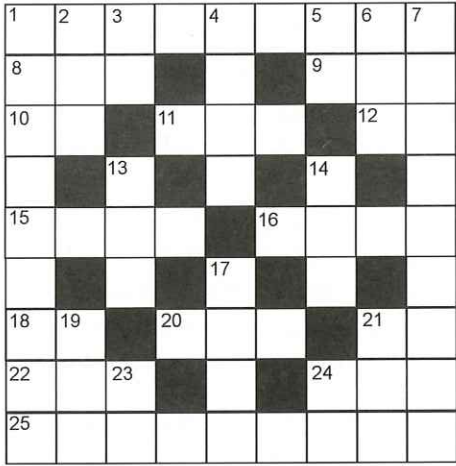


Figure 3
The first crossword puzzle which appeared in France.

Horizontalement 1. Champêtre. 8. Favorable. 9. Chiffre. 10. Note. 11. Arme. 12. Préposition. 15. Fleur. 16. L'égal de quelqu'un. 18. Pronom. 20. Appel. 21. Note. 22. Arbre. 24. Particule d'atome 25. Vive leur.
Verticalement 1. Temps de verbe. 2. Conscience intime. 3. Note. 4. Personnage légendaire. 5. Terme de jeu. 6. Dépôt de liquide. 7. Détruit. 13. Fleuve. 14. Petit animal. 17. Vêtement. 19. Meuble. 21. La terre. 23. Négation. 24. Pronom.

Le journal des mots croisés. That same year he also founded the *Académie des mots croisés*.

In Italy, crossword puzzles appeared for the first time in in *La Domenica del Corriere* on February, 1925 (Figure 4).

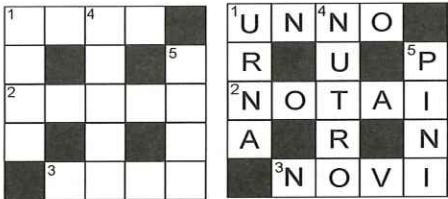


Figure 4

Da sinistra a destra

1. Un tedesco – secondo un francese – durante La guerra.
2. Coloro che stendono atti pubblici.
3. Paese natio di un celebre ciclista.

Dall'alto in basso

1. Recipiente.
4. Do da mangiare.
5. Alberi resinosi

The following Sunday, in the same magazine, there appeared an illustration by the famous artist, Achille Beltrame (Figure 5) It depicts a ballroom scene with a large crossword puzzle on the wall. Couples were asked to solve the puzzle while dancing. Since that time, the crossword puzzle in Italy

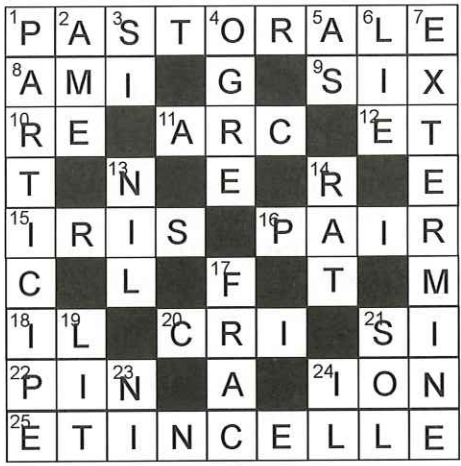


Figure 3
The first crossword puzzle which appeared in France.



Figure 5

enjoyed and is enjoying a great success. There are dozen of publications which can be found in the various newsstands throughout Italy.

That same year, 1925, Mondadori published a book, *Cruciverba*, with a rather lengthy subtitle (Dossena, 1994, p. 245), reminiscent of the title published by Simon and Schuster.

Seven years later, on October 19, 1932, the best-known crossword puzzle magazine was born, *La Settimana Enigmistica* (Figure 6). The magazine has kept the same format since its inception and, unlike other crossword puzzles published in the *World*, in the *Dimanche Illustré*, and in other newspapers, it can proudly and justifiably boast of being free of misprints. *La Settimana Enigmistica* kept the term "parole crociate" instead of the more correct, "parole incrociate". While there are numerous crossword magazines published in Italy, *La Settimana Enigmistica* remains perhaps the most popular.



1. PAROLE CROCIATE

Avvertenza. Sia orizzontalmente che verticalmente le parole hanno inizio dalla casella nella quale è posto il numero di riferimento.

Nelle spiegazioni la cifra tra parentesi indica il numero delle lettere che formano la parola da ricercare e il numero delle caselle da riempire a partire, compreso, dalla casella numerata.

Spiegazioni:
Orizzontali. — 1. (1) Uccello in guerra, sovrano in pace. 4. (4) Riquadrato, e fiume della Francia. 5. (3) La metà di Nicola. 6. (4) In fumo. 7. (3) Di patito, e fiume della Francia. 8. (4) Lettera greca. 12. (6) Riquadrato, e fiume della Francia. 13. (6) Riquadrato. 14. (2) La parte del letto. 16. (3) Davanti al giudizio. 18. (1) Il simbolo di mano degli antichi romani. 21. (4) E. circa e non conosce misura. 23. (1) Ignaro. 25. (2) Beta. 28. (4) Gaudere. 29. (1) Il vero amico. 31. (2) Com-

Verticali. — 1. (3) Nome romano di donna. 2. (7) primo. 3. (13) senza patto o clausura. 4. (3) soffocante. 9. (4) tela. 10. (6) promessi. 11. (3) dei polmoni. 12. (4) letto. 15. (7) rimproverare. 17. (4) sottile. 19. (5) sensazione. 20. (3) andare. 22. (2) Ravenna. 23. (6) inferno. 25. (7) Buon vento appropriato. 26. (3) congiunto. 27. (6) perizoma. 28. (6) sempre. 31. (3) equi morte ed equi vita. 32. (6) a loro della non si ritrova. 33. (4) filamenti cornei. 35. (4) nelle corde. 37. (4) riva. 41. (2) partito, pro-

Parole crociate. — 1. (3) equi morte ed equi vita. 32. (6) a loro della non si ritrova. 33. (4) filamenti cornei. 35. (4) nelle corde. 37. (4) riva. 41. (2) partito, pro-

Vedere nell'interno i grandi concorsi a premio

Figure 6
Cover of the first copy of
La Settimana Enigmistica
published in Italy.

Many attribute the origin of the crossword puzzle to the acrostic and the word square (Parlett, 1995; Amende, 2001) although there are dissenting voices (Dossena, 1994).

To what does one attribute the popularity of the crossword puzzle?

Augarde (1984, p. 61) cites three reasons given by Prosper Buranelli and Margaret Petherbridge for its phenomenal success:

1. the fascination of words common to an articulate race,
2. self-education, and
3. time-killing.

Augarde adds still another factor:

4. the challenge of solving the clues, each of which may be a miniature puzzle or riddle.

Crossword puzzles have also been recognized as a valid pedagogical tool. In fact, the Italian Ministry of Education in a Memorandum, dated July 16, 1999, suggested and encouraged the introduction of crossword puzzles in the Italian school curriculum.

The Crossword Puzzle and Second-Language Pedagogy

It is becoming more and more apparent, both from the psycholinguistic research (Jeffries, 1985) and from the experience of daily classroom routine, that the way into the learner's mind and personality is not through mechanistic, repetitive training techniques, but through those that allow us to enter into the mind's "imaginative" channels. This implies not only the application of "imaginative" teaching in the etymological sense of the word, but also "image or imagistic eliciting" procedures. One device that fell conspicuously into this pedagogical domain was obviously the crossword puzzle.

A great deal has been written on the crossword puzzle in the language class using the printed word as stimulus. Dino Bressan (1970), classifies direct-definition clues into nine different headings:

1. *Generic*. Clue: Pronm. Answer: *Ils*.
2. *Synonymic*. Clue: Tout naturel. Answer: *Inné*.
3. *Antonymic*. Clue: Pas fictif. Answer: *Réel*.
4. *Allusive*. Clue: Échappe au rêveur. Answer: *Réalité*.

5. *Allusive-negatory*. Clue: Bien de gens ne connaissent que sa marge. Answer: *Loi*.

6. *Definitory*. Clue: Dont rien ne vient troubler sa quiétude. Answer: *Sereine*.

7. *Descriptive*. Clue: Rceueillents des malheureux. Answer: *Asiles*.

8. *Punny*. Clue: Il avait vraiment la bosse du théâtre. Answer: *Polichinelle*.

9. *"In" clue*. Clue: Lettres d'amour. Answer: *Am*.

Bressan prefers the crossword puzzle for the obvious contribution it can make from a linguistic point of view and maintains that

A carefully graded selection of crosswords in order of complexity will contribute to the acquisition of new words and phrases as well as the consolidation of knowledge through repetition.

G. Latorre and Gloria Baeza (1975) point out that

The clues are central to the drilling objective of the crossword puzzle, since most of the information the student gets for doing the exercise is found in them. The clue is to the crossword exercise almost what the prompt is to the old pattern drill: it is the stimulus that keeps the drill going. As such, there is no place here for ambiguity, deliberate or otherwise. On the contrary, clarity is essential. By reading the clue, the student must know with a fair degree of accuracy which word is required, since in most cases he is being confronted with a linguistic problem within his capabilities and knowledge (p. 51)

David E. Wolfe (1972) in an article published in *The Audio-Visual Language Journal* acknowledges Bressan's worthwhile contribution and offers a number of examples as perhaps more realizable in the language class, assuming that the crossword puzzle is teacher-prepared and is

based on material previously studied by the student.

One of the examples Wolfe suggests is the picture clue and declares

Any concrete noun which the teacher can draw is appropriate as a clue assuming the noun has been taught.

Mollica concurs with Wolfe and, as he suggested in various publications (Mollica, 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1991a, 1991b, 1995, 2001), the picture clue is an effective way of preparing a crossword puzzle particularly when teachers wish to review or the expand the student's vocabulary dealing with a specific theme. The success of Mollica's publications prompted other publishers to follow suit.

As far as I know, the first suggestion for the insertion of crossword puzzles in Italian second-language pedagogy was proposed by Mollica (1976) in an article published in *A Handbook for Teachers of Italian*.

In agreement with Clifford T. Morgan and Richard A. King (1996) that

most, if not all people, experience images and that images often help thinking, [and that] some individuals have such vivid imagery that they can recall things almost perfectly.

Mollica decided to use the visual stimulus.

Mollica is strongly convinced that at the early stages of language learning, the crossword puzzle can be an alternative to

- translation,
- definitions and
- descriptions,

by relating language to context and by establishing a direct association between language and image.

Firmly believing in the direct association between image and word to facilitate learning, he chose

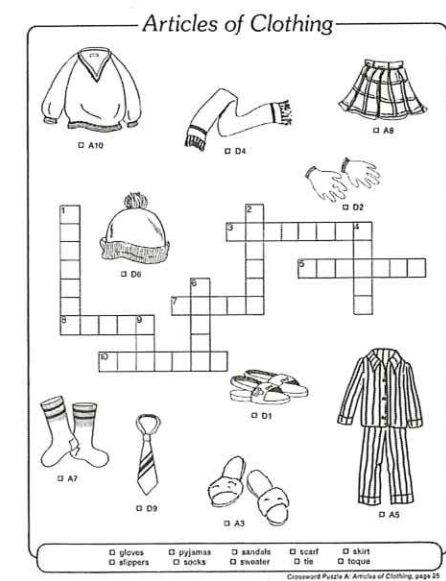


Figure 7
Crossword Puzzle A

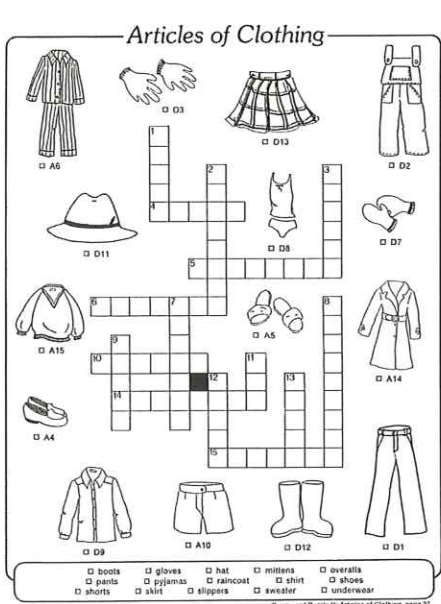


Figure 8
Crossword Puzzle B

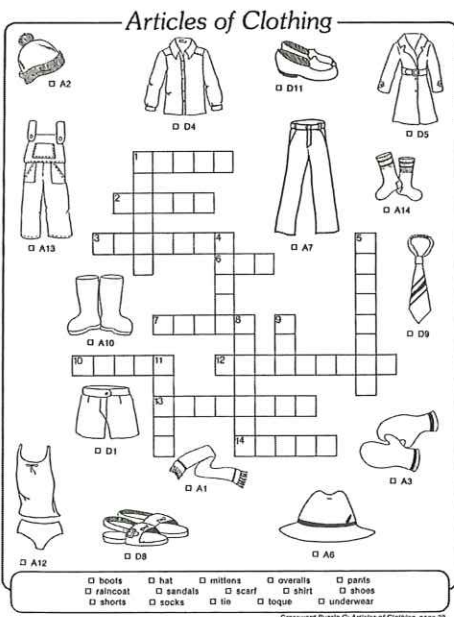


Figure 9
Crossword Puzzle C

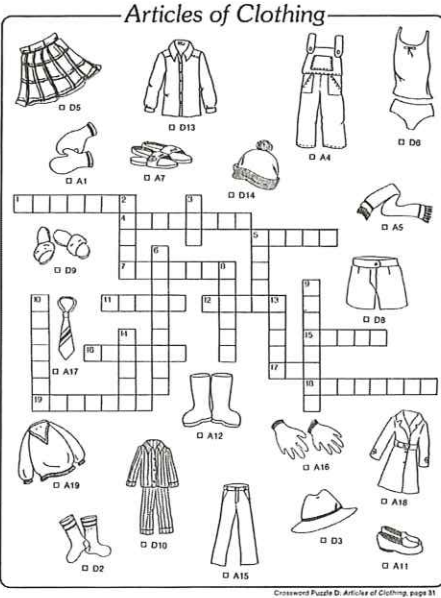


Figure 10
Crossword Puzzle D

10 themes and arbitrarily selected 20 words for each theme. He divided the 20 words into four sections of 5. He then created four different crossword puzzles for the 20 words: Crossword Puzzle A, B, C and D.

Crossword Puzzle A (Figure 7) contains ten illustrations. At the bottom of each page, listed in alphabetical order, are printed the ten words which are required to complete the puzzle correctly.

Students who may not know the meaning of an illustrated word may quite ingeniously discover it by counting the letters of the answer and inserting it in the proper spaces. The activity then becomes an exercise in learning new vocabulary as well.

Crossword Puzzle B (Figure 8) contains the other ten illustrations and repeats five illustrations from Crossword Puzzle A. At the bottom of the page, listed in alphabetical

order, are printed fifteen words which are required to complete the puzzle correctly.

Crossword Puzzle C (Figure 9) repeats the ten illustrations which first appeared in Crossword Puzzle B and repeats the other five illustrations of Crossword Puzzle A not used in Crossword Puzzle B. At the bottom of the page, listed in alphabetical order, are printed the fifteen words which are required to complete the puzzle correctly.

Crossword Puzzle D (Figure 10) contains all twenty illustrations using only the visual stimulus. By the time, the student has seen and written the words twice before solving this last puzzle and the final activity can be considered as a "test" puzzle to verify whether the student has learned all the words of the visual vocabulary page.

Graphically, the process may summarized as follows:

Words	Crossword Puzzle			
	A	B	C	D
5	5	5		5
5	5		5	5
5		5	5	5
5		5	5	5

The aim has been to provide cumulative learning as well as a fun element.

Clearly, teachers are provided with the option of selecting a crossword puzzle activity as required by their students' linguistic ability. They may decide to use the cumulative approach or simply use the last puzzle as a "test" item. Therefore, if students are already familiar with the vocabulary, they may be given the last puzzle which contains only the visual stimulus. Students who may be less familiar with the vocabulary presented may be given the other puzzles.

Mollica suggested that these

puzzles may also be given to students who are not completely familiar with the theme and the activity will become a learning experience for them, since they will have to identify the illustration. Counting the letters of each printed word and inserting them in the proper spaces will provide the solution they seek.

Of all word games, the crossword puzzle is the most popular and the most versatile in language teaching/learning. It is the most useful and multifaceted tool to teach, learn, recall as well as expand one's knowledge of vocabulary. Like the search-a-word, the crossword puzzle is very useful in language teaching/learning, for it complements the students' learning styles: kin-aesthetic, auditory or visual:

- The kinaesthetic learner needs to write down words to determine if they "feel" right.
- The auditory learner may mouth the words silently while reading.
- The visual learner recognizes words by their configurations.

Pedagogical Applications

1. Teachers may wish to highlight keywords of a short story. The keywords in the following crossword puzzle, based on the short story "L'ouvrier modèle" by Roch Carrier (2007) may be used as a mnemonic device to summarize the short story. Teachers may wish to provide the answers for a couple of the clues. (Figure 11).

If students do not know the correct answers, they can always "guess" by counting the number of letters of the word and the number of squares in the puzzle.

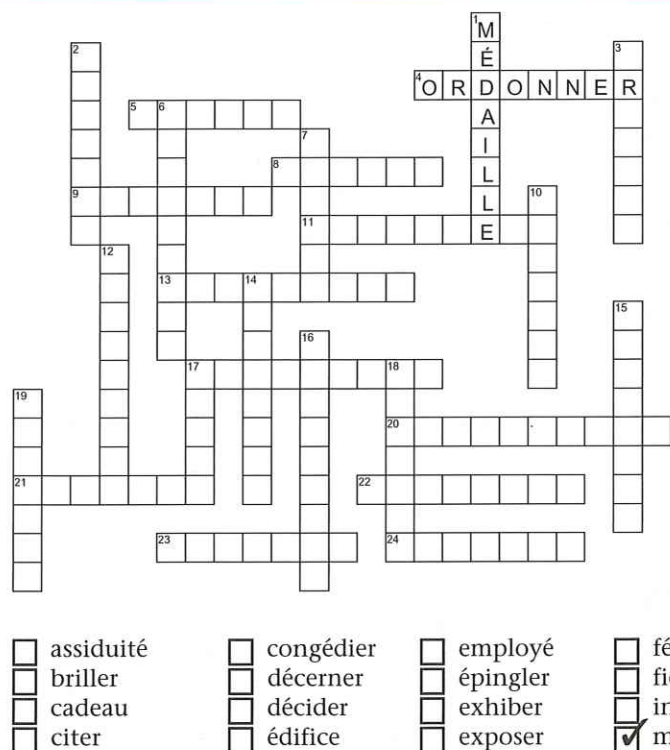
2. Teachers may also decide to provide students with key words of a short story in a crossword puzzle and students are required to provide the

clues. This is obviously the opposite of the activity suggested above. (Figure 12).

This activity forces the students to be creative and provide clues which may not necessarily be the same as the ones provided by other classmates. This activity may be done individually, in pairs or as a group and gives the students the opportunity to "negotiate" the wording of the final definition (i.e., clues). Once all the clues are decided upon, a blank crossword puzzle may be given to other students or to the entire class to solve.

Teachers may wish to focus on one grammatical form (for example, on verbs) and provide the answers of a crossword puzzles focussing on verbs which are the key words in recalling the events of a short story.

3. In order to teach/review association between verbs and nouns, teachers may wish to provide a crossword whose definitions (i.e., clue) is incomplete. The student is asked at the introductory stage to complete the puzzle by selectiong from the list of answers guven. At an intermediate/advanced stage, teachers may wish to give the clues without providing the list of suggested answers. (Figure 13).
4. At the introductory stage of language teaching, teachers may wish to use illustrations to teach/review vocabulary using a thematic approach. To assist the student to remember the gender of nouns, teacher may wish to place the definite article outside the first square which begins the answers of the puzzle as indicated on this Spanish crossword. (Figure 14).
5. Teachers may decide to teach or review grammatical topics. For example, teachers wishing to review/teach the endings of first



Horizontalement

- 4. commander, donner des ordres
- 5. objet que l'on offre à quelqu'un
- 8. qui ne manque pas à la foi donnée
- 9. montrer
- 11. personne qui se met entièrement au service de quelqu'un
- 13. vertu, pureté totale
- 17. dire à quelqu'un de s'en aller, renvoyer
- 20. continuer
- 21. personne qui exécute un travail manuel
- 22. partie du corps humain qui s'étend des épaules à l'abdomen et qui contient le cœur et les poumons
- 23. prendre une décision
- 24. bâtiment

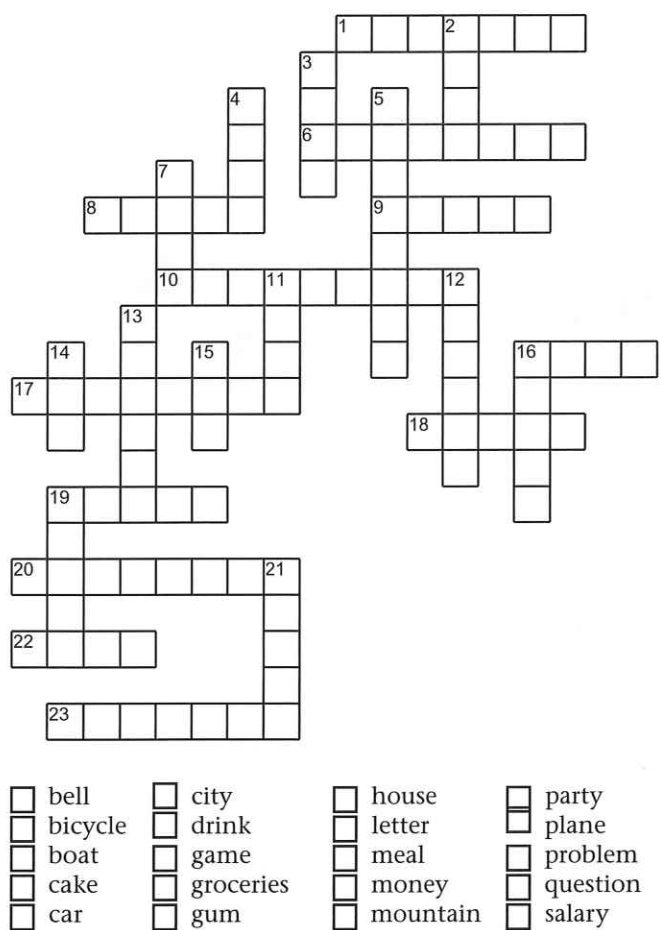
Verticalement

- 1. pièce de métal généralement circulaire frappée ou fondue en l'honneur d'un personnage illustre ou en souvenir d'un événement
- 2. présenter, dire, expliquer
- 3. émettre ou réfléchir et répandre une lumière vive, luire
- 6. application constante, zèle
- 7. attacher, fixer
- 10. personne qui accomplit un acte ou une fonction déterminée sous la direction ou le contrôle d'une autre
- 12. faire de petits sauts successifs
- 14. fixer avec des épingles
- 15. accorder à quelqu'un une récompense ou une distinction
- 16. complimenter
- 17. désigner une personne, une chose digne d'attention
- 18. personne qui travaille pour une autre personne
- 19. frapper légèrement à petits coups répétés

- | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ☐ assiduité | ☐ congédier | ☐ employé | ☐ féliciter | ☒ ordonner | ☐ préposé | ☐ visser |
| ☐ briller | ☐ décerner | ☐ épingler | ☐ fidèle | ☐ ouvrier | ☐ sautiller | |
| ☐ cadeau | ☐ décider | ☐ exhiber | ☐ intégrité | ☐ poitrine | ☐ serviteur | |
| ☐ citer | ☐ édifice | ☐ exposer | ☒ médaille | ☐ poursuivre | ☐ tapoter | |

Figure 11

From: Roch Carrier, *Roch Carrier raconte...* textes choisis per Anthony Mollica, Welland, Ont., éditions Soleil publishing inc., 2007.



Across

- 1. To solve a ...
- 6. To climb a ...
- 8. To tell a ...
- 9. To iron a ...
- 10. To shop for ...
- 16. To cook a ...
- 17. To tour the ...
- 17. To pack a ...
- 18. To pour a ...
- 19. To organize a ...
- 20. To eat a ...
- 22. To ring a ...
- 23. To ride a ...

Down

- 2. To sail a ...
- 3. To play a ...
- 4. To tour the ...
- 5. To ask a ...
- 7. To sing a ...
- 11. To bake a ...
- 12. To earn a ...
- 14. To chew ...
- 15. To drive a ...
- 16. To spend ...
- 19. To fly a ...
- 21. To build a ...

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ bell | ☐ city | ☐ house | ☐ party | ☐ sandwich |
| ☐ bicycle | ☐ drink | ☐ letter | ☐ plane | ☐ shirt |
| ☐ boat | ☐ game | ☐ meal | ☐ problem | ☐ song |
| ☐ cake | ☐ groceries | ☐ money | ☐ question | ☐ story |
| ☐ car | ☐ gum | ☐ mountain | ☐ salary | ☐ suitcase |

Figure 13

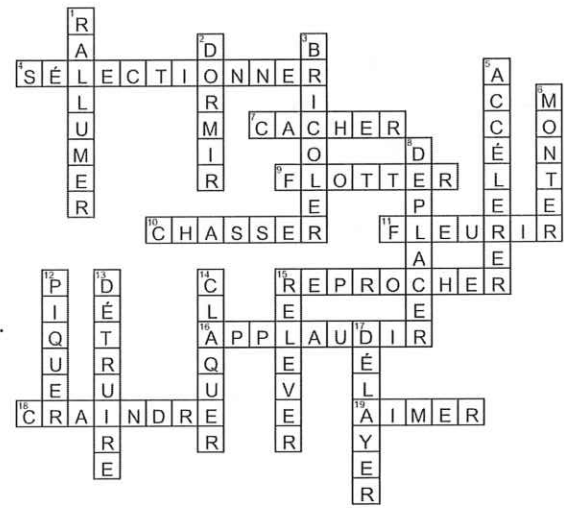


Figure 12

From: Roch Carrier, *Roch Carrier raconte...* textes choisis per Anthony Mollica, Welland, Ont., éditions Soleil publishing inc., 2007

conjugation verbs in French may use the following puzzle by placing the infinitive in the puzzle itself to indicate the verb which is being focussed on. (Figure 15).

- 6. Alternatively, teachers may wish to give the puzzle indicating the verb but omitting the clues. The

students' task will be to complete the puzzle by placing both the clues and solving it (Figure 16).

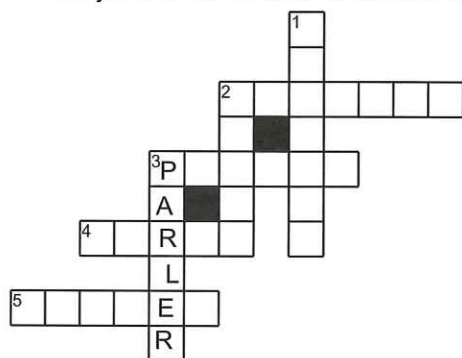
While at first this appears to be an easy crossword puzzle, it isn't. Examine, for example the following.

Students may be tempted to identify V2 as PARLONS. But this cannot be since the "o" of PARLONS would fall on the fifth square of H4 and no other verb ends in "o". Therefore, the answer must be PARLENT. Similarly, V3 must be PARLONS since there is a verb which ends in "s" (tu ...). H3 cannot be PARLES since the final "s" is needed for the ending of PARLONS and PARLES (V3 and H5, respectively; therefore H3 must be PARLEZ. It is hoped that by this activity – while sometimes frustrating – we will compel students

- to think logically,
- to solve the puzzle
- and at the same time to recall the verb endings.

the finished puzzle would look like this (Figure 17).

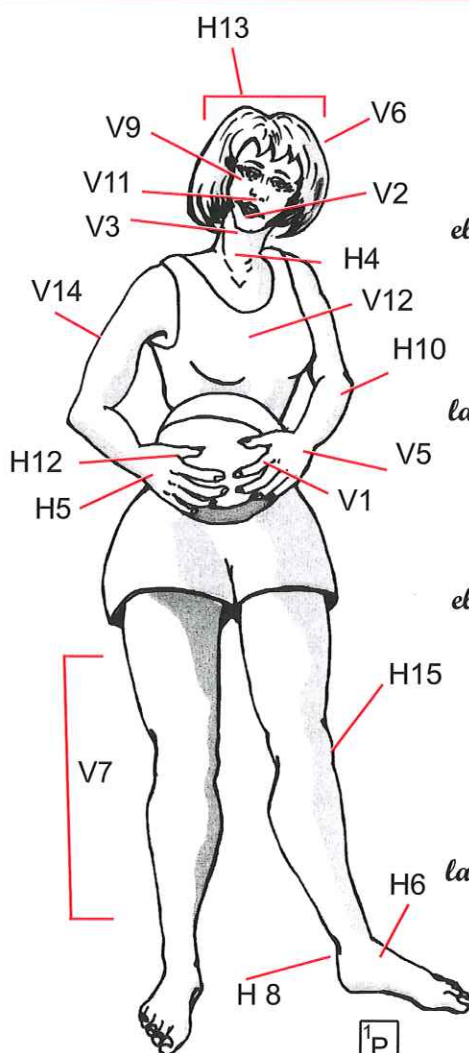
7. Crossword puzzles may be used in conjunction with the game "the intruder" (See Figure 18) to expand the students' knowledge of synonyms and antonyms. The student who finds



Horizontalement Verticalement

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 2. nous ... | 1. ils ... |
| 3. vous ... | 2. il... |
| 4. je ... | 3. PARLER |
| 5. tu ... | |

Figure 15



Horizontalement Verticalement

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 2. _____ | 1. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 3. PARLER |
| 5. _____ | |

Figure 16

the activity difficult can easily solve it by counting the number of squares in the crossword puzzles and find the equivalent number of letters in the

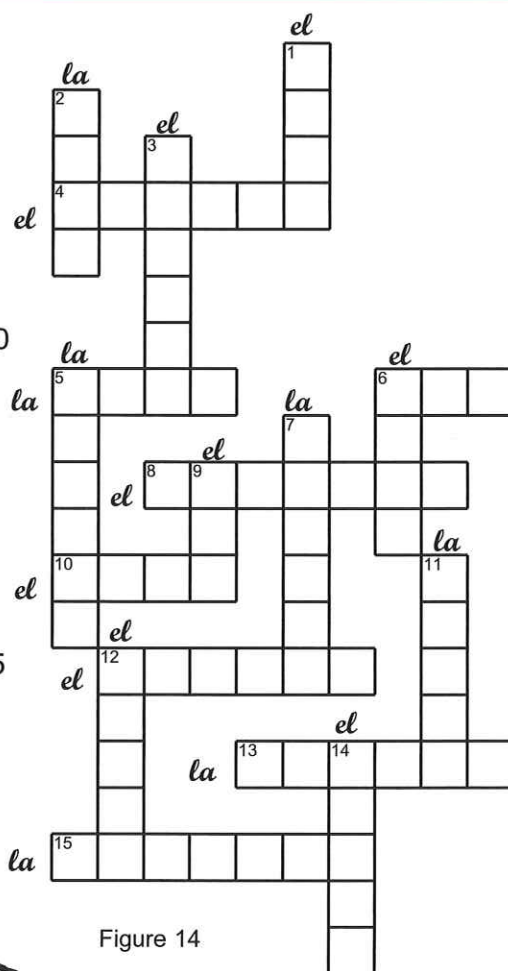


Figure 14

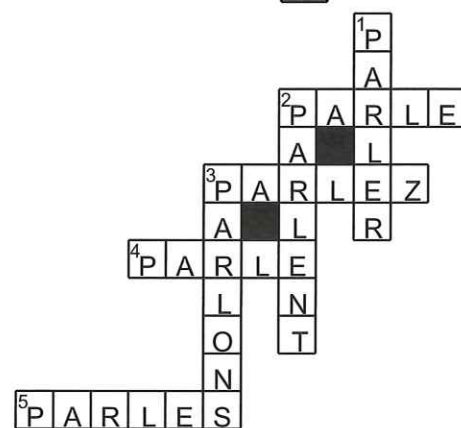


Figure 17

suggested clue. Figure 18 deals with adjectives (antonym/synonyms), but the same activity can be done with nouns and verbs.

8. Teachers may wish to use the crossword puzzles to teach adverbs. In this case, a list of adjectives is given as clues and

students are asked to place the corresponding adverb in the crossword puzzle.

Conclusion

We are convinced that teachers can find other ways of introducing the crossword puzzles with other language activities in their teaching

Crossword puzzles will help students learn, recall or expand their basic vocabulary and, at the same time, provide them with hours of fun and relaxation.*

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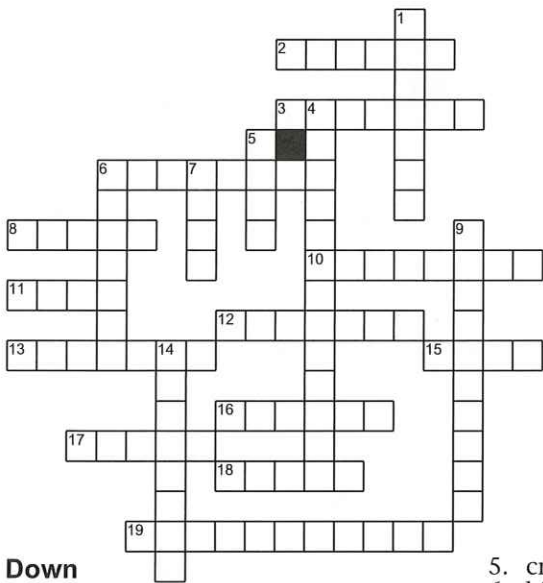
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Down

1. certain, doubtful, uncertain, unsure

4. apathetic, bored, enthusiastic, indifferent

5. crazy, eccentric, mad, sane

6. bitter, content, displeased, dissatisfied

7. dangerous, harmful, hazardous, safe

9. afraid, courageous, timid, timorous

14. adjacent, distant, far-away, remote

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Across

2. barren, fertile, fruitful, productive

3. healthy, ill, sick, unwell

6. constant, intermittent, occasional, sporadic

8. funny, sad, serious, solemn

10. cramped, small, spacious, tiny

11. contaminated, polluted, pure, unadulterated

12. concealed, hidden, obvious, unclear

13. closing, final, initial, last

15. bright, dark, light, shining

16. cruel, gentle, harsh, rough

17. cheap, costly, dear expensive

18. fancy, plain, simple, unadorned

19. dull, ignorant, intelligent, stupid

Figure 18

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***Author's Note:** The essay is a modified and expanded version with different examples of Anthony Mollica, "Crossword Puzzles in Second Language Teaching," *Italica*, 84, 1: 59-78.

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