

Welcome to the 57th BBC Active Tutors' Club Newsletter!

2007 is now in full swing – most of my New Year's resolutions have been broken and I am careering towards yet another birthday. I will be celebrating my birthday at ISMLA on the following Saturday – do come and visit our stand if you are in London on 3rd February! For some reason we have rather a large number of items on Japan this newsletter – this may be related to the fact that on February 11th it is Japan's [National Foundation Day](#). Please feel free to redress the balance and contact me with any items you think other members of the Club would be interested in.

Susie

CONTENTS

To make the newsletter easier to read, I have inserted internal links, so when you press ctrl and click on a subject heading in the contents, it should take you straight to that section.

[News from BBC Active](#)

An article by Steven Fawkes about building confidence in adult language learners, based around his book *Excuse My French!*

[News from the BBC](#)

Next month on the Learning Zone, Mandarin Chinese online taster, romantic phrases to download to your mobile and carnivals around the world

[National News](#)

China and the Olympics; Irish gains recognition; Brits to learn French facial expressions; state schools failing language learners...

[Events](#)

ISMLA conference, AULC AGM, ALL Language World, events for Japanese and Finnish learners, e-learning conferences...

[Resources](#)

Chinese New Year, the latest from Joe Dale, new Adult Learners' website, Go, Dutch language test...

[Surveys and Competitions](#)

European Award for Languages 2007, Wii information required...

[Dutch websites of interest](#)

NEWS FROM BBC ACTIVE

***Excuse my French!* – lessons from the celebrities**

Steven Fawkes

The linguistic and cultural challenges faced by celebrities Esther Rantzen, Marcus Brigstocke and Ron Atkinson for this BBC series reveal a lot about adult learners' concerns and motivations. Filmed against the background of a beautiful Provençal village, the stresses they and their teachers experience could easily have been subtitled '*O my Gordes!*'.

What is a language for? Why do adults want to use it?

Clearly from the exploits of the celebrities they are keen to be joining in with life around them, to be finding things out, to be using their French actively. Clearly also they are often faced with dealing with things they can't predict, and therefore can't pre-learn phrases to cope with. The BBC Active *Excuse my French!* book seeks to identify strategies for overcoming this

frustration and for acquiring language tools which may help with difficult situations (and people).

What problems do they encounter?

The celebrities see them principally as: memory (for vocabulary and functional language), skills (for handling the language and getting out of sticky situations), and grammar (for manipulating).

But, as viewers of the films we see that their success or otherwise is also to do with:

- the learner's confidence
- the relevance they see in the tasks before them
- the adrenalin that comes from a challenge
- their own expectations of how well they should be doing.

Strategies teachers use:

- Give frequent reminders of essentials.
- Reinforce what they do know (confidence).
- Illustrate familiar language in new contexts.
- Explain about language practice activities (relevance).
- Use French wherever possible (challenge).

Confidence emerges partly from a feeling that you know the essentials; for example, that you can find a word you need and then use it. As we know, learners (of any age) don't always recognise the written word even if they know the sound of it very well (or vice versa). The relationship between the grapheme and the phoneme is one of those essentials that repays frequent reinforcement; there is little more frustrating (especially for an adult who normally feels perfectly confident in managing their everyday life) than searching for a word in the dictionary, reading it out and **not** being understood. Unfortunately this can happen easily, especially in difficult circumstances, if you are not attuned to the principles of stress, intonation and pronunciation.

A useful reminder of the significant differences in how words are said can come from thinking of how common English names are mispronounced by visitors from other countries:

- Knaresbrough
- Birmingham
- Aberdare
- Warwick
- Gloucester.

Once sensitised to how easy it is to say something wrong, learners may better appreciate the importance they should give to their own efforts to pronounce words they use frequently, as well as:

- Cities/places
- Famous people
- Football clubs and players' names
- Cultural references (names of wines, food)
- Brands.

Health reminders for adult learners:

- You have communication skills already.
- French won't feel the same in your mouth as English.
- Remember the importance of good Vowel Movements.

Speaking in French uses different muscles and mouth positions, and the *Excuse my French* DVD features a section to reinforce attention to frequent phonemes, and help to overcome the danger of the loose tongue!

The celebrities struggle with 'learning grammar' – Ron in particular spends hours memorizing the paradigm of verbs. Strategies for learners (also explored in the book) include:

- seeing bits of language (grammar) as tools

- generating your own new sentences (Language Wheels)
- learning from the language around you
- thinking about how you learn best, what helps you remember
- being realistic; fluency is a very long-term aspiration.

A Language Wheel takes a useful piece of French as the hub (e.g. Have you ...? Vous avez...?) and then adds a wide range of elements as spokes:

- ... got a telephone?
- ... got any stamps?
- ... got a toilet?
- ... a room?
- ... a town plan?
- ... seen Casino Royale?
- ... eaten at this restaurant?

Conversations with real people are unpredictable and 'random' so all learners need a sense that they can invent their own sentences to cope with the situations they find themselves in. An important part of the Language Wheel Strategy then is to get them to stick their own spokes in! ... even if this involves making mistakes in the first instance.

As well as thinking about how they learn and memorise the language, adult learners need to think about the culture (e.g. etiquette), to know what (and what not) to worry about, to take responsibility for making the effort in a conversation, and to use the communication skills they already have - just as Ron does to excellent humorous effect on the Pont d'Avignon ... (Watch the DVD to see him!)

Steven Fawkes is the author of the BBC Active book/DVD *Excuse my French!*

Test your French at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/excusemyfrench/>. **Excuse My French!** is available to buy online from <http://www.bbcactive.com/languages/french/65.asp>, or from all good bookshops.

NEWS FROM THE BBC

"Who knows the language is at home everywhere."
Dutch Proverb

Ski vocabulary and Valentine phrases for your mobile

Off to the slopes? Get a Quick Fix in French, Spanish, German or Italian on your mobile phone - download essential phrases wherever and whenever you want:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/mobile/>

Or woo your Valentine with our downloadable pulling phrases in French:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/cool/>

Italian:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/italian/cool/>

or German:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/german/cool/>

Real Chinese

Get a taste for Chinese with our lively introduction to Mandarin. Ten short parts with video clips, useful phrases, tips on pronunciation, grammar and cultural notes will get you speaking in no time. Also this month on BBC TWO (please see the Learning Zone schedule below).

http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/chinese/real_chinese/

Carnival Time - try our quiz

This year's Carnival season kicks off at the end of February. Discover how Carnival is celebrated around the world and join the party by quizzing your knowledge of the colourful celebrations and traditions...and what's Fat Tuesday all about?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/carnival/>

Lose yourselves in the enchanting excitement of Venice with Italian Steps, our interactive course for beginners:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/italian/lj/directions/>

Languages on TV - BBC TWO Learning Zone

Languages programmes are on TV throughout the night. Set your videos to long play mode as the complete session of programmes will last approximately 5 hours.

06 February: set video on the evening of Mon 05 February

02:00–06:00 Sueños World Spanish

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/suenos/>

13 February: set video on the evening of Mon 12 February

0200 - 0300 Sueños World Spanish

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/suenos/>

0300 - 0330 Eurografters: Spain

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/forwork/gettingthere/>

0330 - 0400 Working with the Spanish

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/forwork/beingthere/>

0400 - 0600 Make Spanish Your Business

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/business/>

20 February: set video on the evening of Mon 19 February

0330 – 0430 Real Chinese

http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/chinese/real_chinese/

0430 - 0600 Talk Portuguese

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/portuguese/>

27 February: set video on the evening of Mon 26 February

0330 – 0600 The French Experience

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/french/experience/>

NATIONAL NEWS

China to become Olympic-friendly

News of China's attempts to tighten up on English in their menus and road signs in preparation for hosting the Olympics. WARNING: this article does contain a few expletives

<http://news.independent.co.uk/world/asia/article2091871.ece>

Irish given 'official status' by EU

The Irish language has finally been given official status in Europe, taking its place as the 23rd language of the European Union.

<http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article2121668.ece>

Paris Tourist Board helps Britons abroad fit in facially

The Ile de France Regional Committee of Tourism has produced a guide to help visitors to Paris make the most of French facial expressions.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/01/04/wfrench04.xml>

State Schools failing to find the right words

The state sector is failing to produce sixth-formers who go on to study languages, resulting in independent schools 'propping up' university language departments, according to an analysis of admission figures.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/12/03/nexam103.xml>

Scottish star of Stagecoach strives to save Soviet

The millionaire owner of Stagecoach is looking into how to save elaborate Lenin statues and frescoes from destruction as the former Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan rids itself of the last reminders of its communist past. <http://news.scotsman.com/scotland.cfm?id=69332007>

Employers will not pay for migrant English lessons

The government's plan to encourage more employers to fund English lessons for migrant workers is destined to fail unless companies are compelled to do so by law, a union leader claimed this week. <http://education.guardian.co.uk/further/story/0,,1991687,00.html>

Plus Ça Change – book review

Review of the book that charts the history of the French language.
<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/reviews/article2144686.ece>

Tongue-tied students miss out on jobs

Research shows that UK graduates are missing out in a global jobs boom because they lack the languages needed for the EU, Asia and emerging market.
<http://jobsadvice.guardian.co.uk/graduate/story/0,,1994618,00.html>

EVENTS

ISMLA conference

Your final reminder that the Independent Schools' Modern Languages Association annual conference is on 3rd February at the **City of London School for Boys**. The day starts at 0915 and ends at 1630. I hope to see many of you there!
For more details see <http://www.ismla.co.uk/>.

AULC AGM

The Association of University Language Centres (AULC) will be holding their AGM on 8th and 9th February 2007 at the **University of Portsmouth**. More details can be found on their website <http://www.aulc.org/>.

Tales from Old Japan

"Mountains are just like people – they have secrets, mysteries and stories to tell"
Artsdepot & A Thousand Cranes in association with Here, There and Everywhere consortium present enchanting, bewitching and hair-raising stories of magnificent Mount Iwate who blew hot and cold, the humble woodcutter and his beautiful but strange bride and the snorting, burping Ogre of Rashomon Gate. For more details see:
http://www.artsdepot.co.uk/event_details.php?sectionid=children&eventid=355&searchid=current

Employability and Languages Strand at Yorkshire Universities Conference

The Regional Language Network Yorkshire & The Humber are pleased to announce that they are supporting this year's Yorkshire Universities Annual Conference with the theme Europe: Working Together to Exploit Opportunities at **the De Vere Oulton Hall, near Leeds; Wednesday 7th – Thursday 8th February 2007.**

The RLN YH are sponsoring the strand and as part of this have arranged a Mandarin Language Taster Session and a Learning Circles @ Languages Taster session on Wed 7th. For further information about this event visit the [website](http://www.yorkshireuniversities.ac.uk) call 0113 343 1582 or email enquiries@yorkshireuniversities.ac.uk.

e-learning conference

The **University of Southampton** will host an e-learning conference on 1st-2nd February. This will include two sessions of particular relevance to language learners:
Piccolo Mondo: Virtual worlds for language learning: a look at Second Life and Social software for language education
For further details including abstracts of the papers, see <http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/llaseventitem.aspx?resourceid=2654>

e-learning and Japanese language education conference

The booking form for e-learning and Japanese Language education is now available at: http://ah.brookes.ac.uk/index.php/conferences/details/e_learning_japanese_language/

Please note that delegates will need to find for overnight accommodation themselves. Early booking is recommended. For more information contact Suzuko Anai, Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies, Department of Modern Languages, School of Arts and Humanities, Oxford Brookes University Tel : 44 (0) 1865 483628.

Put the Finishing touches on your Scandinavian ambitions

English-speakers can join in the Finnish language Intensive Day that will take place on **Saturday 17 February 2007**. The course is for absolute beginners. Further details and booking information available at: <http://www.finn-guild.org/public/info+booking.pdf>

Head Start - Japanese from Scratch

Designed for Curriculum planners, language teachers and coordinators from UK primary and secondary schools, this free one-day course held on **Tuesday 27th February 2007** will include a Japanese taster experience, sessions on exams and resources, as well as networking opportunities with colleagues who have introduced Japanese successfully.

[Click here](#) for more information. If you have any queries contact Sophie Lane on 020 7436 6698 or sophie.lane@jpf.org.uk

The Second Speech Contest for University Students of Japanese

This will take place **1 pm-6 pm on Saturday February 3rd** at the **Kahalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS**. 11 finalists will be giving speeches to an audience of guests from the Japan world and, of course, the general public. Teachers and students are welcome to attend the event. http://www.jpf.org.uk/language/download/speech_leaflet2007.pdf. For more information contact frespiritpoetry@blueyonder.co.uk

ALL Language World

It is not too early to start planning your trip to Language World, the ALL conference that is taking place **30-31 March 2007** at the **Examination Schools, University of Oxford**. Admission is absolutely free, and if you visit us on stand N64 you can receive a 30 % discount on any orders of BBC Active language products you make on the day!

Visit <http://www.educational-events.com/lw/visitor.htm> for more details

Why not combine it with a visit to **On the fringe - a workshop for teachers of languages in post-19 sectors** on **Saturday 31st March 9.30 to 12.30** at **St Edmund Hall, Oxford**? Focusing on good ideas for teaching languages to adult learners, it will be an excellent opportunity to refresh classroom practice and to exchange views and activities. This workshop will be run by Pauline Swanton (Comenius Network Centre and Chair of the ALL AE Special Interest Group). The keynote speaker will be Steven Fawkes (ALL and author of Excuse My French!).

The workshop will be £15 per person, which will include attendance at the Language World exhibition and access to all lunchtime presentations in the Examination Schools 1245-1420.

To register or to book dinner or accommodation, contact Sheila James on 01788 546443 or at sheilaj@all-languages.org.uk.

A number of courses on **teaching Spanish and French** are coming up in February and March and hosted by Comenius London – see their website for more details:

<http://www.cilt.org.uk/comenius/london/cpd.htm>

RESOURCES

The latest from Joe Dale

Listen to Joe Dale interviewing Esther Mercier about her website À Tantôt, digital video and podcasting at

http://joedale.typepad.com/integrating_ict_into_the_/2006/12/esther_mercier_.html

<http://www.atantot.com/menu.htm>

Visit Esther's website to find out more <http://www.atantot.com/menu.htm>

Alternatively, listen to Joe interview Andrew Balaam about how he uses technology in the classroom and in particular his site Languages Online here:

http://joedale.typepad.com/integrating_ict_into_the_/2007/01/andrew_balaam_o.html

Footage from the Isle of Wight conference is also available to view on Joe's blog:

http://joedale.typepad.com/integrating_ict_into_the_/2007/01/conference_film.html

Het Groot Dictee

'Het Groot Dictee' is a Dutch language dictation test broadcast on both Dutch and Flemish television, where 60 competitors attempt to achieve a score of zero mistakes in this dictation test of about 300 words.

This is no easy dictation! From the 60 selected competitors the average number of mistakes this year was 31 per competitor. This year's winner, Jacques Bettelheim, had only five mistakes. This year's text included many words derived from English and French, making it that bit more challenging!

On the Groot Dictee website you can attempt any of the dictations from the last 17 years. The website is in Dutch. <http://www.volkskrant.com/grootdictee/>

Japanese learners urged to have a Go

Peter Wendes of Zen Machine is encouraging schools to adopt the ancient strategy game of Go. Japanese Departments looking to attract new students, or to enrich the cultural understanding of present ones might consider introducing the ancient strategy game of Go (Igo), which can also be of interest to the Maths, Science and Humanities departments.

If you would like to attend a workshop, they are being held as follows:

18.02.07 Victoria and Albert Museum 10.30-5.00 in Raphael, Room 48a

Visually Impaired + guests

25.02.07 Museum in Docklands 12.00-4.00 020 70019814

06.05.07 Family Day at Arts Depot N12 0GA 07801 269772 contact: Kumiko

Mendl

For more information about workshops and setting up a Go Club at your school, contact Peter Wendes at pwendes@hotmail.com or go to www.zenmachine.co.uk or www.britgo.org.

New website launched for Adult Learners Week

Find lots of information about the Week and how providers, learners and employers can get involved at www.alw.org.uk, or contact the Campaigns and Promotions team on alw@alw.org.uk.

New ALL network in Oxford

There is a new ALL network in Oxford. If you would like to have information about future events contact Rene Koglbauer: rk6701@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk.

New language academy opening in Leith

The Edinburgh Language Academy – a new and innovative school of languages opening in Leith. English as a foreign language, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, French, Greek, Japanese, Polish, Ukrainian and, of course, Russian will be taught for all ages and levels. For more details, contact Alina Dobryden and Olga Haponenka, Edinburgh Language Academy, 0131 555 1221 info@elacademy.co.uk or go to www.elacademy.co.uk/home.htm.

Gung hei fat choi or Gōngxǐ fācái!

As many of you will already know, Chinese New Year begins on 17 February this year. If you are a teacher, this is a great opportunity to share with your class some of the customs and activities that take place at this time in the many cultures who celebrate Chinese New Year. NACELL have put together a few websites that will be useful in planning a lesson or series of lessons at: http://www.nacell.org.uk/resources/online_festivals_festivals.html.

For more information, or to suggest favourite links of your own, contact Sarah Hancock, Early Language Learning Support Officer, CILT, the National Centre for Languages on 020 7395 2506 or 020 7379 5101 ext. 286.

*Don't forget that BBC Active are extending their bestselling **Talk** range to include **Talk Mandarin Chinese** in July 2007!*

SURVEYS AND COMPETITIONS

Wii can work it out!

Ewan McIntosh of Learning and Teaching Scotland Futures has issued a request for information from anyone who has managed to use their new Nintendo Wii as an educational tool.

The Wii apparently works with the same effect as an Interactive Whiteboard. Ewan has asked anyone who uses the Wii in the classroom, or indeed any other games console, to get in touch with him as the MFLE would like to carry some content on this and would be able to commission those undertaking some work in this area.

More information and ideas here:

http://edu.blogs.com/edublogs/2007/01/a_wii_post_on_e.html

You can contact Ewan at ewan.mcintosh@BLUEYONDER.CO.UK or at Learning and Teaching Scotland Futures, The Optima, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow, G2 8DU. For more information see <http://edu.blogs.com> and <http://www.LTScotland.org.uk>.

CILT open European Award for Languages 2007

The search for the UK's top language-learning initiatives began on 11th January as CILT opened the application period for this year's European Award for Languages. Schools, colleges, business and community organisations have until the end of April to provide evidence of creative, motivating and inspirational projects for a chance to win an Award, resources and cash prizes totalling over £3,000.

More details including how to apply and who is eligible can be found at www.cilt.org.uk/eal. The Award is an annual, Europe-wide initiative supported by the European Commission. CILT, the National Centre for Languages, assisted by an advisory group, co-ordinates the Award in the UK. The deadline for applications is Monday 30 April 2007.

BBC Active sponsors the CILT European Award for Languages 2007.

The Times Stephen Spender Prize for translation 2007

Translate a poem from any language, classical or modern, into English, by Friday 25th May and win a cash prize, with all winning entries published in a booklet!

For details and entry forms go to www.stephen-spender.org or contact Robina Pelham Burn, Director, Stephen Spender Memorial Trust +44 (0)1323 452294

DUTCH WEBSITES

Dutch websites of interest

-Peter Large's Dutch Language and Culture Page – for English speakers who wish to know more about Dutch and Flemish language and culture

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/php/abspjl/pjlhp/DutchLinks.html>

-Huis der Nederlanden – cultural centre for Dutch speakers based in Cape Town (in Dutch)

<http://www.hdn.za.net/>

-Radio Netherlands – English site with news and information <http://www.radionetherlands.nl/>

-Radio Vlaanderen Internationaal – Radio Flanders International, available in Dutch, English, French and German http://www.rvi.be/rvi_master/homepage/rvi_homepage/index.shtml

- A guide to basic phrases in Dutch is available from the BBC here <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/quickfix/dutch.shtml>
- Basic facts about Holland including local etiquette <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/netherlands.html>
- A site that includes information on learning the language and the chance to sign up to a newsletter for English speakers of Dutch <http://www.taalthuis.com/>
- A guide to basic Dutch words, phrases and grammar rules can be found here <http://www.ielanguages.com/dutch.html>
- A list of websites for the English learner of Dutch is available here http://www.leren.nl/rubriek/talen/nederlands/learn_dutch/
- Facts, information on the alphabet, Dutch slang and a guide to teaching Dutch are just a few features of this website <http://www.dutchlanguage.info/>
- A website exploding Dutch stereotypes can be found here <http://www.thehollandring.com/dutchculture.shtml>
- Information on Dutch culture, including a guide to Amsterdam, sporting tastes and Dutch policy on drugs <http://www.nlplanet.com/nlguides/>
- Collection of Dutch literature available here <http://www.literatuurlinks.net/>
- An excellent newsletter about the Dutch language can be subscribed to here www.dutchlanguageschool.co.uk
- The ALL Dutch Language Committee http://www.all-languages.org.uk/committee_dutch.asp

Do you have a language or topic you would like this feature to cover? If so, let me know on susanna.jones@pearson.com! All suggestions gratefully received.

What do YOU think?

We want to make this newsletter as useful as possible, so your opinions matter! What would you like to see in the newsletter? If you have any comments or feedback (good or bad!) then please let me know at susanna.jones@pearson.com. It is **your** newsletter – have your say!

NB You can unsubscribe at any time

If you'd prefer not to go on receiving the e-mail club newsletters, please e-mail me at susanna.jones@pearson.com with your full name and educational institution with the message 'Unsubscribe' – or write to: Susie Jones, BBC Active Languages, Mezzanine, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL.