

Phonetic correction in Language class with Verbo Tonal

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PHONETIC CORRECTION IN LANGUAGE CLASS WITH VERBO TONAL METHOD

Ludovic Klein

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Japanese

I The development of language and phonetics

Let's go back...



To this state!

1.1 How we develop language(s)

3 stages :

1 Baby Screaming (early age) : mechanic and
inconscious muscle movement transmitting the
reaction of the organism

2 Babbling (from 6 to 12 months) : the babies start
controlling muscle activity

= Period of intense experimentation

What is babbling?

Babbling is an stage of the development where the baby uses all the sounds in the languages of the world. There is no limitation on the experimentation of his or her own voice.

3 Constitution of the phonologic filter

The parents keep addressing to their child in their
own native language

= after a while there is a selection of only the
distinct and meaningful phonemes

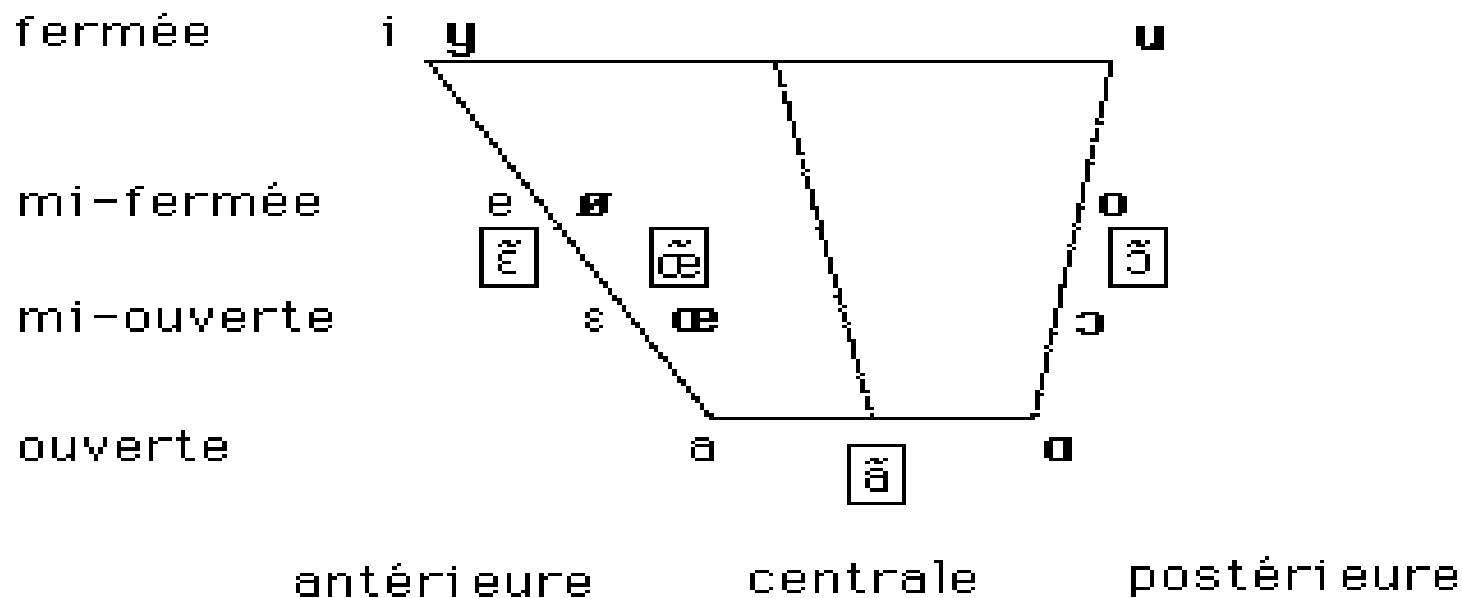
It leads to an impoverishment of the phonetic
possibilities of the baby, and the constitution of a
strict phonetic system

Phonologic filter

An adult listening to a foreign language wouldn't perceive the sounds as a child would do, but through a filter, a phonologic filter (*Troubetzkoy*) that has been established through his/her own phonologic system.

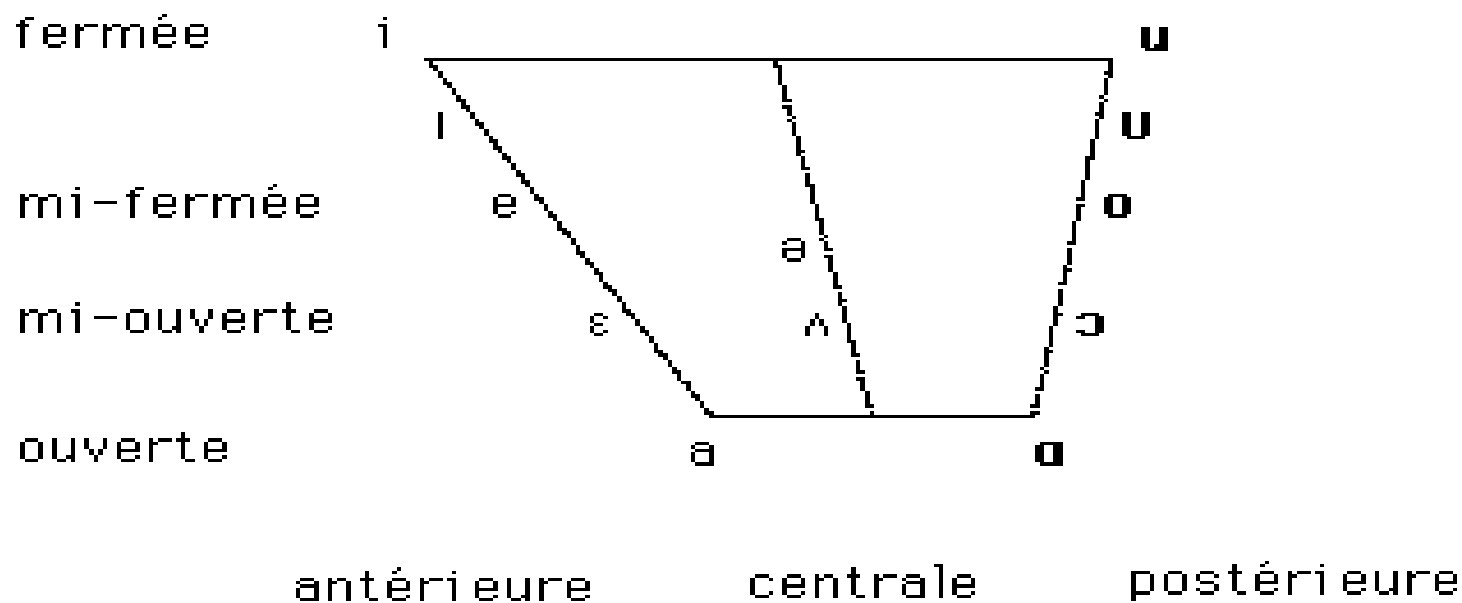
= This filter is definitely set at age 5.

français



n.b.: caractères gras indiquent les voyelles arrondies

anglais



The phonetic system of the mother language

Every phonologic system is the result of the organisation of data under a relatively reduced number of phonetic units (called phonemes) necessary to the communication.

= Blind obedience to the phonologic system.

= To hear a sound means not only detection, but also **identification, selection and decoding**

Constitution of combination and prosodic system

The baby also learns :

- * the combination system (i.e. the possible combination between phonemes, for instance *shi* or *tsu* in Japanese),
 - * the prosodic system (the global intonation and rhythm system)
- = gradual automatisatisation of the linguistic system

4 Phonologic surdity

The last stage (after 1) screaming, 2) babbling and 3) constitution of the phonologic filter) takes place around 11-12 years old. A phenomenon known as phonologic surdity takes place. You become deaf to other languages.

Now it is over, you will suffer to learn foreign languages

1.3 The system of errors

We are mistakenly pronouncing a sentence in a foreign language because we perceive it mistakenly : this wrong perception is the result of the selection habits of the mother language.

= The « foreign accent » is not related to the fact that one cannot pronounce one sound, but that his perception of the sound is wrong.

Three systems

There are three linguistic systems when learning a language : your own system, the system of the other language, and the error system, third system born between the two : the *interlanguage*, or *the system of errors*

= Don't get stuck in!

1.4 Difficulty of speaking

Others disturbing factors are messing with the problem of pronunciation : difference in prosody (intonation, rhythm), gesture, facial expression, surroundings, context, hopes, culture,...

The feeling of danger when speaking another language

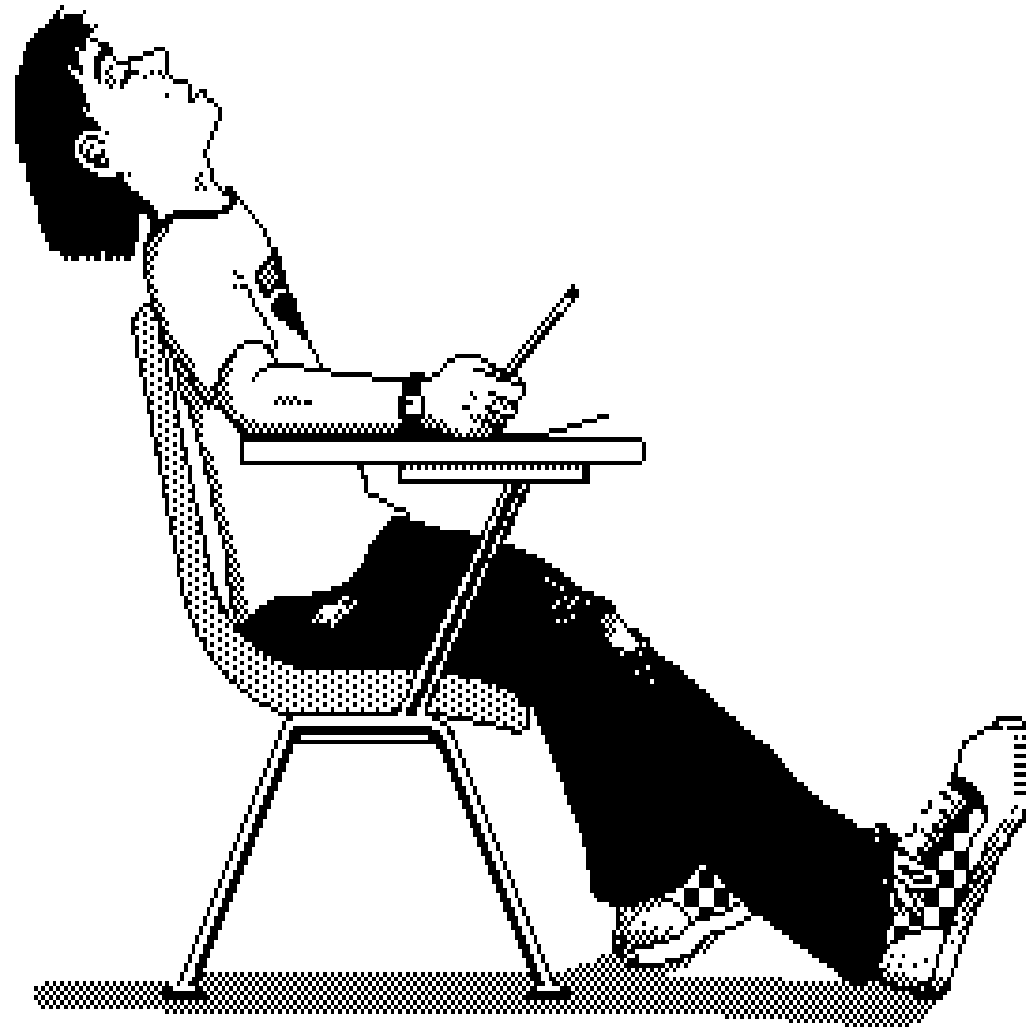
= since speaking is part of yourself (psychically and biologically), feeling of DANGER and uneasiness when learning a language : it affects your very intimate sphere

→ Most simple (and bad!) solution : hearing and pronouncing the sound of the foreign language as if it were your own language.

= Absolute necessity for the student :

you must learn to perceive

II The state of Phonetic correction in Japan



2-1 Students don't speak spontaneously! Why?

Besides global factors as said before, what prevents Japanese students to speak in class :

- 1) Lack of assurance
- 2) Group effect
- 3) Passivity
- 4) Lack of initiative
- 5) Writing is all
- 6) Hypercorrection
- 7) Lack of motivation
- 8) Doziness

= if you want to correct their pronunciation, you need to have them relaxed (but ready!), and have them motivated

2-2 Students don't pronounce well!

Why?

- * Influence of the phonologic filter (as said before)
- * In the traditional language classe, there is absolutely no phonetic correction in class!
 - * Group repetition only
 - * Priority to writing
- * Almost no teaching of prosody, rhythm and intonation
- * Attention only to details, not to the global structure : no *flow*, just words put one after another

Katakana : the arch-enemy

Katakana is a translation of the foreign language sound system into the Japanese one

= instead of adapting to the language, the learners adapt the foreign language to their own familiar phonetic system

= Students never hear, they never work on their perceptions and intuition

What can be done

- * Restricting the use of katakana
- * Starting learning of writing later (if possible)
- * Insistence on prosodic patterns (accentuation, intonation, rhythm)
 - * Putting the stress on audition
- * Multiplicating the roleplaying game and free speech in class
- * The problem is that the error is perceived as a singularity; we must think the error as a manifestation of a system

III Presentation of the Verbo tonal Methodology



3.1 What is the Verbo Tonal Methodology?

.Created by Petar Guberina at Zagreb Univ (1954)

* Used in the teaching of foreign

languages as well as phonetic

correction for deaf children

* The Verbo Tonal Method can

be used with any language,

with any kind of learners



3.2 Basic principles

- * Integration of the phonetic correction in the teaching
 - * Importance of the body and affectivity
 - * Importance given to intonation and rhythm
- * Intuition, no direct analysis of the pronunciation, no use of the analytic consciousness of the learner
 - * Priority to oral rather than writing

3 ways to correct the pronunciation :

3.3 Prosodic correction

(correction of rhythm and intonation)

3.4 Nuanced pronunciation

(correction of phonemes)

3.5 Facilitating surroundings

(correction of vowels)

3.3 Prosodic correction

Prosody is a suprasystem that rules :

- * the syllabic system;

- * the structure of intonation;

- * and the structure of pauses and tempo

= the first thing we notice when listening to a
language

= * Defined in terms of height, time, and intensity.

3.3.1.2) Correction of Accentuation

* There is an accentuation in English on certain syllables of the same word, but not in French and Japanese : ex/

scooter = scootere


* The basic rhythmic group in French language is composed of 3 or 4 syllables, with the accentuation on the last syllable, as in Japanese

* There is also an affective accent : *Oh! C'est bon!*

3.3.1.2) Importance of gestures

The gestures accompanying the voice of the teacher are :

- * A media transmitting the rhythm, the intonation, and the tension of the sound;
- * A visual and affective intermediary : *the eye hears*

 **Warning** : The teacher must control the amplitude of his own gestures : don't go over the shoulder and stay in the chest zone, so that the learner can see the face of the teacher at the same time

3.3.1.2) Importance of gestures (2)

The different gestures the teacher can use are :

1) Melodic movement : *Tu as mangé?* ↗ *Tu as mangé.* ↘

C'est vrai monsieur?

=

=

=

=

2) Syllabic scansion :

Since the rhythm of French is regular, you can beat the rhythm + show the length of the final syllable of the rhythmic group + showing if the intonation goes up or down.

Bonjour / comment allez-vous / ce matin?

3) Syllable count : (when syllables missing)

Count the syllables by groups of 2 or 3 (1,2,3) with
the hand at the height of the chest

(bonjour) (comment) (allez-vous) (ce matin ?)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

→ The student concentrating on prosodic factors
unconsciously “unlocks” his/her perception = less
focus on the difficult sound

= Thus, great interest of songs and nursery rhyme
for the teaching of foreign language

3.4 Nuanced pronunciation (correction of phonemes)

3.4.1) 2 axis of terror

An error of production on a vowel or consonant always occur on one of these two axis :

* Axis of tension (T)

(Tension being the energy needed to make a speech sound)

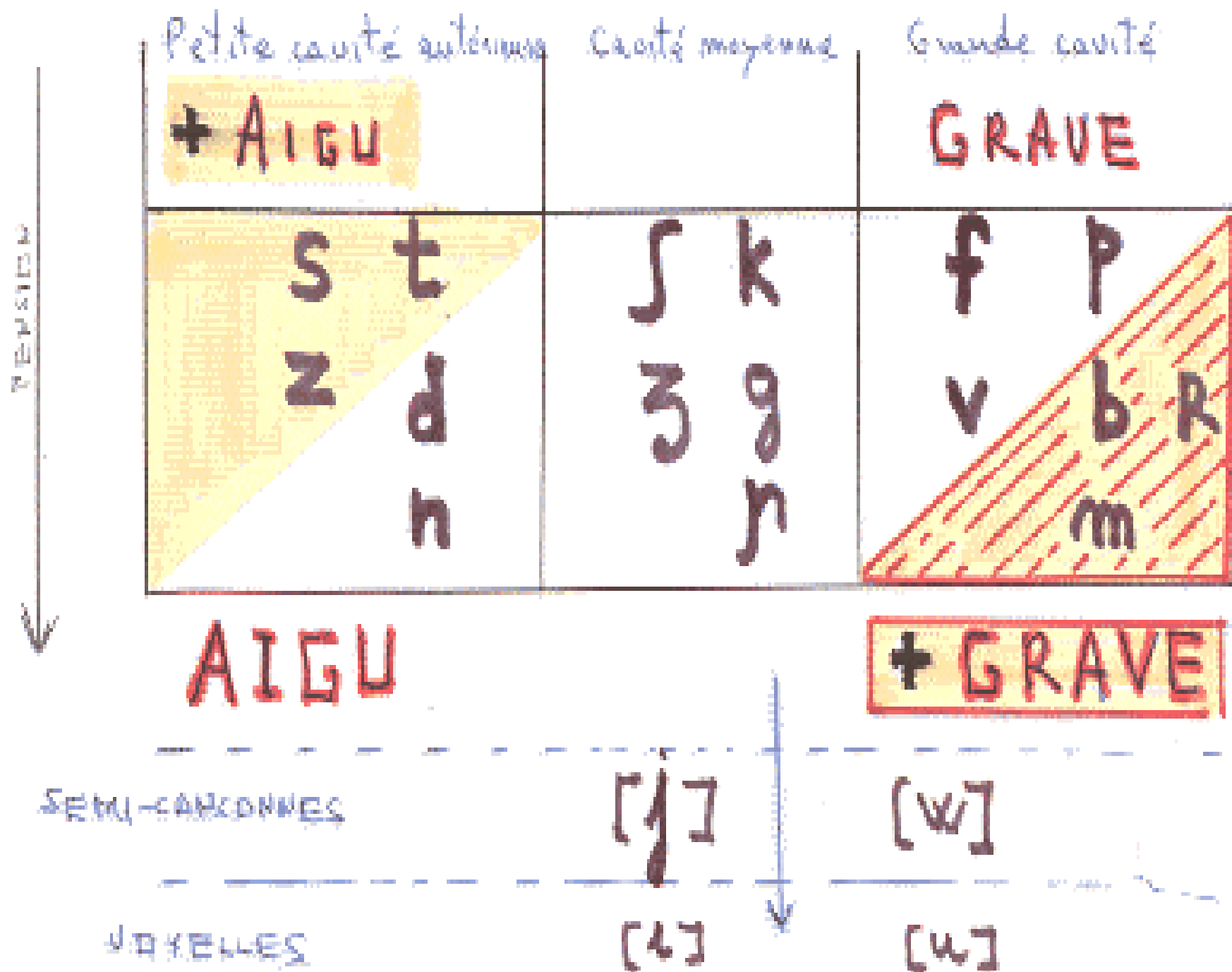
* « Clear » axis (C) / « Low » axis (S)

Clear sound → high-pitched frequency

Dark sound → low-pitched frequency

→ Replacing a consonant by another is always a problem of tension;

Replacing a vowel is always a problem on the C/S axis



AIGU

SYSTEME VOCALIQUE

GRAVE

LANGUE

APPROXIMATE

PROXIMATE

DOUBLES

LEVRES

Retraction

Labialisation

Labialisation

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FERMÉES

MI-FERMÉES

MI-OUVERTES

OUVERTES

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3.4.2) Making good use of tension 😊

When a student is having a pronunciation too relaxed or too tense,

you can play with the tension to get

him/her to pronounce correctly

* To strenghten the tension :

- Speak quickly

- At the end of a question or exclamation

Elle est ici?

Il est sorti?

T+

T+

- At the beginning of a sentence

Qui est venu?

Que vois-tu?

T+

T+

- The first syllable of a word is always stronger.

.To put the tension down : at the end of a sentence,

or in the middle/end of a word

Examples :

*Correction of [dʒuR] instead of « jour » = it is too tense
= to help relax the sound, [ʒ] should be put on final
position : *rouge, bouge, orage, plage...*

* Case of diphthongs : you should shorten the sound.
Ex/ English have a tendency to say [bɔw] instead of [bo]

* English pronouncing [p], [t], [k] too strongly : *Est-ce Paul?, est-ce tard?, est-ce comique?*

* *Le feu dans la forêt* is better than *La forêt en feu*
(pronunciation of the sound [Ø])

High tension and gestures

Link between body and tension : tense body / tense pronunciation, relaxed body / relaxed pronunciation

High tension → head moving up, clenched fists...

Low tension → body moving towards the ground, head down, arms down

Nuancing the pronunciation of vowels

Ex/ J'ai bou un cafe

Make a sound between [y] and [i] so that the learner will tend to the sound [y]

[i] ↔ [y] ↔ [u]

→ To make the student perceive an error he/she cannot perceive because the difference is too subtle, the teacher should exaggerate in the other direction.

Special advice from Aristotle : « We should go boldly in the opposite direction to where we were tending to. When we would have enough distance from the error, we will find the right place in the middle. Likewise the workers mend the bended branches »

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APPROXIMATE

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ouïre

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MI-OUVERTES

OUVERTES

APERTURE

MACHOIRE



AIGU

VOYELLES NASALES

GRAVE



3.5 Facilitating surroundings (correction of vowels)

* In the syllable, the phonemes have a mutual influence :

$$C1 \leftrightarrow V1 \leftrightarrow C2$$

Ex/ J'ai bou un cafe

[ou] is too dark

→ Replace [b] in "j'ai bou un café" by clearer consonants :

"J'ai [ty] un café"

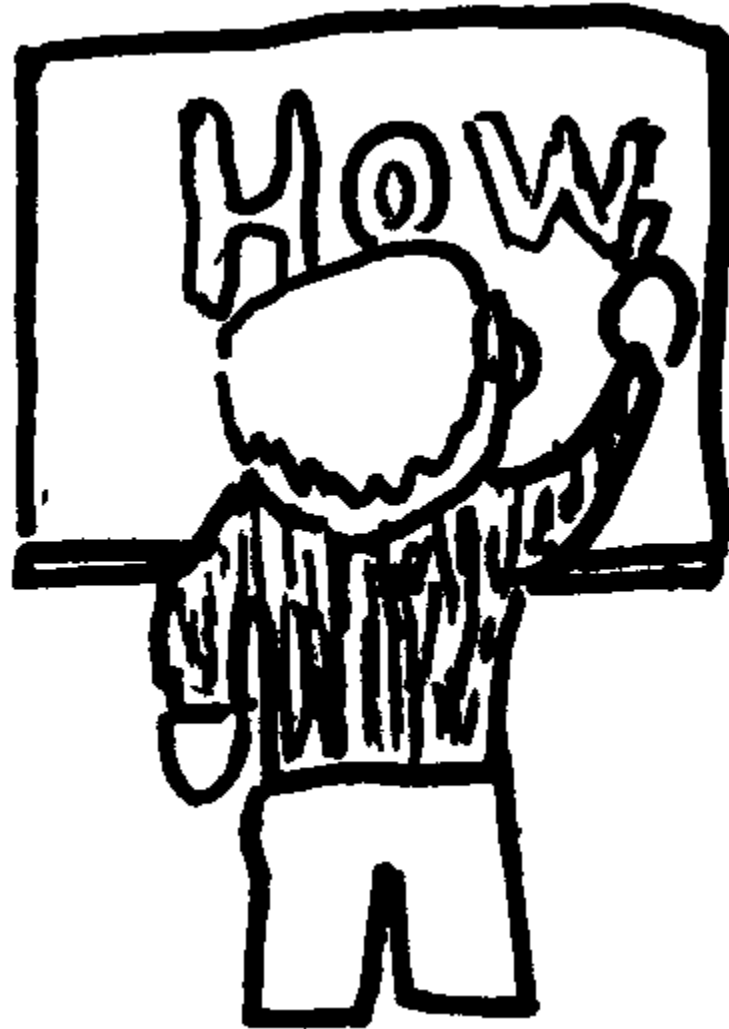
"J'ai [sy] un café"

And gradually come back to the [b]

3 different ways of correcting

- Prosodic correction (correction of rhythm and intonation)
- Nuanced pronunciation (correction of phonemes)
- Facilitating surroundings (correction of vowels)

IV Phonetic correction in french class for Japanese



Examples of use of Verbo Tonal Methodology in class :

- * Alphabet : prononciation of *g/j, h, , q, ll/r, e/u*
- * *é / è*
- * nasal sounds
- * *v/b : je bois / je vois, j'ai bu / j'ai vu*
- * Masculine / feminine : *étudiant / étudiante*
- * Problems of tension (“je suis japonais”)
- * Segmentation of words : *table, livres, septembre*
- * *fleur; cigarettes*
- * Cutting off sequences : *appartement*
- * Gestures indicating : question-affirmation
/ past-present-future
- * Pronunciation of long vowels : *Beaubourg*
- * Clenching the fist

And in English?

- * First is to restore the flow of the english language : have the student repeat in a flow, give the rhythm with gestures
- * Make the accentuation clear with gestures
 - * Give tonicity to consonants
 - * Make the vowels longer
 - *etc.

Conclusion

- * A comprehensive and effective Phonetic correction method
- * Works with any language and any type of learners
- * Use it as you will : you can do intensive training with phonetic correction workshops, or just use it at some occasion in class
 - * Adds up some spice to the class!

* RENARD, R. (1971) *Introduction à la méthode verbo-tonale de correction phonétique*, Didier, Paris

In english :

RENARD, R.,(1975) *Introduction to the verbo-tonal method of phonetic correction*, Didier (Paris)

In Japanese :

<http://www.d2.dion.ne.jp/~vtj-yaqi/vts15.htm>

<http://www.ed.kagawa-u.ac.jp/~nagai/papers/kn1/kn1.htm>

= Articles on verbo tonal method

<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/110003479880/en>

= Use of VTM to teach chinese to japanese