

MNEMONICS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

GHIL'AD ZUCKERMANN

Adelaide, Australia

When my son Giulio Xingtian Yehuda Zuckermann, a.k.a. Giulio XYZ, was 2 years old he already knew the Israeli word for 'fish': DAG. Due to the general tendency towards final devoicing (see, for example, German *Kind*, pronounced *kint*, or a German immigrant to Israel pronouncing Negev as *négef*), Giulio often pronounced DAG as *DAK*. One day, when I picked him up from the Montessori childcare in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, Giulio was watching a fish in the aquarium and told everybody 'DAK, DAK, DAK!'. An older Aussie girl rebuked him: 'It's not a DUCK, it's a FISH!'

That was a moment of EUREKA! – or Havraká (Israeli for 'brilliance' or 'flash'). I thought to myself that I should try to demonstrate that Israelis already sort-of-know English and that English-speakers already sort-of-know Israeli. The sentences below would thus be of interest to pupils and teachers alike, not only because its specific mnemonics could be used in language classes, but also – more generally – because (1) the bilingual homophonous mnemonic technique can be used to create new mnemonics either by pupils or by teachers, and also (2) the sentences champion the use of unconventional methods in teaching a foreign language, be it recreational linguistics, be it music....

Here is my list, consisting of 120 mnemonics.

1. **Oh hell, the TENT is leaking again!**
(The Israeli word meaning TENT is **להקה**, pronounced just like *Oh, hell*)
2. **There's a FORK in Ma's leg.**
(The Israeli word meaning FORK is **מזלג**, pronounced just like *Ma's leg*.)
3. **QUICKLY, my hair is burning!**
4. **She has said ENOUGH and must speak no more; if she doesn't STOP, I'll die!**
5. **This HOUSE is beautiful; I think I'll buy it.**
6. **He gave her a kiss BECAUSE she put her key in his POCKET .**
7. **As she entered the filthy MARKET, she shook her head in disgust .**
8. **An OX is walking along the shore .**
9. **You must sue Sam over the HORSE!**
10. **Turn off the microwave, the CHICKEN is ready.**
11. **This BOOK is safer.**
12. **You must use a PITCHFORK in order to Kill Sean.**
13. **Every time I step out of a MOSQUE, I miss God.**
14. **Don't play the ROLE of the tough kid too much, it will exhaust you.**
15. **SEPARATE the apples by their colour: half red, half green.**
16. **Give all the flower, not just the STEM.**
17. **Amazingly, she dug out a FISH in her garden.**
18. **He didn't consider the crowd's boos to be CONTEMPT.**

19. You *ought* to learn this LETTER!
20. A *bull* stepped on my STAMP collection.
21. Why *pardon?* asked the BULL.
22. "With this UNDERSHIRT I look *guffy, ya?*" said the German.
I DID *a CT* examination.
4. You POOR child', said *Miss Kenn*.
25. *Till* the ROCKET takes off.
26. Get into the *car*, it's COLD outside.
27. Let's GIVE him something, said *Knee Ten* to Knee Five.
28. "*Par-pardon,*" said the stammering BUTTERFLY.
29. The *tip she* gave me was STUPID.
30. It's not a *he*, it's a SHE!
31. *Laugh, laugh;* he is a NERD!
32. Intriguingly, they found a *key* in his VOMIT.
33. In the living room you can meet Beethoven, but come in to my
KITCHEN and *meet Bach*.
34. You should not be HIDING a *must-tear*, it's a very sad STORY that
ends with Moyshele falling into the *sea; poor child!*
35. His lectures are one big *dim yawn*, beyond IMAGINATION.
36. She is WORRIED about the financial *mood, egg at 10 dollar?*
37. X is a *must tool* if you are ON SOMETHING.
38. It's a DECEIT: instead of tobacco, they put in my cigarette *tar meat!*

39. *She taught* me sexual METHODS.
40. You *must tick* the right box, so I'll give you a CHEWING GUM.
41. Do you ALSO like to chew *gum*?
42. *Harry saw* Tina in the RUINS.
43. I have to send you *off, Noa*. My MOTORBIKE is shaking.
44. Are you deaf, Poo, should I use an AMPLIFIER? Would you like the coffee in a *mug, bear* or in a cup?
45. *Miss Garrett* doesn't understand the FRAMEWORK.
46. Some POLITENESS please, otherwise I'll break you *Knee, moose!*
47. What a STRIPPING this guy with the *ear tool* performs.
48. *Leaf, rock, all* of nature seems TO LET LOOSE.
49. Is *pa ill*? I must be more ACTIVE.
50. The broken STRING *may tarnish* the violinist's hopes of getting the prize.
51. He HIT PA'S HAIR so it *scattered around*.
52. He is always EXPLAINING about Pa's wine and *ma's beer*.
53. *Mom's hair-dresser* is a BASTARD... (He charges her a fortune just to get some blonde lines...)
54. Beware of *Osama's rack* and SYRINGE.
55. Beer-cut Amazon is saying the grace after the meal
56. Don't RACK your mind in *void*.
57. Every GENERATION opens a *door* to the next one.

58. Is it **LIGHT** *or* darkness, I can't tell.
59. Comedian Jon Stewart critiqued the *she Bush* Sara Palin, what a **DISTORTION!**
60. In the **MARGINS** of my dream I saw a *shoe lime*.
61. He never **IGNORED** those who *hit a lamb*.
62. It's a bad **TIMING** to *tease Moon*.
63. *Pa, gosh*, you hit the car's **BUMBER** again!
64. *A sheer* luck made him **RICH**.
65. He **INVITED** his uncle and *his mean* friend for dinner.
66. A coffee and a **SWEETENER** make *mom tick*.
67. *Ma's gear* **BETRAYS** her origin: she is a country-girl.
68. *May you tarnish* the reputation of that **REDUNDANT** worker!
69. *Leave not!*, we need to **BUILD!**
70. *Lit Rome* should **CONTRIBUTE** to electricity reduction.
71. He *hit a mate* and **DEBATED** with the police thereafter.
72. We have to **COUNT** the losses and *lease poor* housing.
73. Boys, remember **IT'S FORBIDDEN** to play near *a sewer!*
74. *Lease balls?* I prefer **TO SUFFER!**
75. He looked at me with disgust and **SALIVA** as if I crawled out from under the *rock*.
76. At **TWILIGHT**, he took a *dim doomsday* view of the economy **DECLINE**.

77. When I hear DRUMS I want TO PEE Many times.
78. He HIT MA'S EGG so it *merged* with the mascarpone/tiramisu.
79. EH, MOVE NAVigator, A MOTHER AND HER SON are crossing the road!
80. That French REBEL must have attended a *poor ecole*.
81. "Israeli, a Beautiful Language" is a *tough, neat* TURN of events.
82. Is this TWO-FACED voodoo *part Sufi* and part Buddhist?
83. We should *leash more* dogs TO KEEP our children safe!
84. You should turn over a new *leaf, roam* the world and try not to UNSTITCH the old wounds!
85. TO DRINK in the Chateau!
86. I THINK I shall go to England today and to Italia DOMANI.
87. Hardeep Singh, sing hard and deep and STOP being a *tough Sikh*!
88. Ahmadinejad has an INDULGENCE of a *tough nuke*.
89. I don't want to *meet bugger* ADOLESCENTS
90. Luciana Bozán Barroso: *Matt's dick*, albeit long, doesn't JUSTIFY his high self-esteem.
91. But he's COOL when he gives me a chocolate *mud lick*!
92. And he doesn't *bare a shitty* ass IN THE BEGINNING!
93. The *bee's booze* is honey mixed with sugar – what a WASTE!
94. What a TIMING – the sun sets at the *tee's moon*!

95. From the **CORRIDOR** I could see the masterpiece of the carpenter:
it was a *pro's door*.
96. The storyteller told us a **TALL TALE** about a *cheese butt*.
97. He wanted **TO COLLAPSE** in front of the *Lee Cross*.
98. To meet the right woman and to be **TURNED ON**, I *need luck*.
99. *Cats run* even faster than a **STENOGRAPHER**.
100. You should have a **NOTATION** of the *sea, moon* and sun!
101. **TO KICK** and *leave otters* helpless is immoral.
102. I saw a *lush on* the pavement, with his **TONGUE** sticking out of his
mouth.
103. I can't stand vegeterrible (vegetarian) Pushkar, I prefer *meat Riyadh*,
and I also like its arid climate: there's never a need for an
UMBRELLA!
104. **OR:** You should *eat Riyadh's* fish rather than a **NOODLE**.
105. That **RASCAL** always wants to **PUSH, TUCK** up his sleeves and hit.
106. I love water. I want to go to a *loch* only **ONE WAY**.
107. **TO STEAL** is a *first-league novelty* for this hitherto-righteous priest.
108. Pig cries and *ram calls* have been heard in the **LOUDSPEAKER**.
109. We should *leash boring nudniks*; otherwise they will manage to
BREAK our spirit.
110. Her **BEATING** husband was so violent that he unfortunately
managed to *mar bits* of her face.

111. *My comb* is not in the PLACE I left it .
112. His coiffure demonstrates *mass recklessness*: it looks as if he has never used a COMB in his life!
113. Luckily we have achieved a *big lull* BECAUSE we compromised a lot when negotiating with their military leaders.
114. The women had a *hen* party. THEY enjoyed it a lot.
115. ‘*All meats votive!*’, said the Buddhist priest after he undertook to fulfil THE YOKE OF THE COMMANDMENTS.
116. It was a stupid *pre-shot* sigh that destroyed the military operation, resulting in a wave of RETIREMENTS.
117. The circumciser exposes his RECKLESSNESS when performing a strange *pre-cut olfactory* ritual. I couldn’t understand what he was trying to smell in the poor child’s little penis.
118. The *key shooting* failed because of the ORNAMENT blocking the sniper’s vision.
119. ‘*NASA perilous!*’, said insightful Ilan Ramon RIP when his effort still BORE FRUIT.
120. ‘The 4WD is for you and the SMALL OPEN TRUCK FOR ME’, said the car-dealer *tenderly*.