

NEW RESEARCH

'PARENTESE' is truly a lingua franca, FINDS GLOBAL STUDY

Parents who use parentese, an exaggerated speaking style, see jumps in their child's vocabulary and conversational skills than parents who use it less often, suggests a study from the University of Washington's Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences.

We've all seen it, we've all cringed at it, we've all done it: talked to a baby like it was, you know, a baby. "Ooo, helloooooo baby!" you say your voice lilting. Baby is baffled by unintelligible warble,

but "baby so cuuuuuute!" Regardless of whether it helps to know it, researchers recently determined that this sing-songy baby talk — more technically known as "parentese" — seems to be nearly universal to humans around the world. In the most wide-ranging study of its kind, over 40 scientists helped to gather and analyse 1,615 voice recordings from 410 parents on six continents, in 18 languages from diverse communities: rural and urban, isolated and cosmopolitan, inter-

net savvy and off the grid, from hunter gatherers in Tanzania to urban dwellers in Beijing.

The results, published recently in 'Nature Human Behaviour' journal, showed that in every one of these cultures, the way parents spoke to their infants differed from the way they communicated with adults — and that those differences were similar from group to group.

"We tend to speak in this higher pitch, high variability like, 'Ohh, heellooo, you're a baay-bee!'" said Courtney Hilton, psychologist and a principle author of the study.

In the study, the sounds of parentese were found to differ in 11 ways from adult talk around the world. To test whether people have an innate awareness of these differences, the researchers created a game — 'Who's Listening?' — that was played online by over 50,000 people speaking 199 languages from 187 countries. Participants were asked to determine whether a song or a passage of speech was being addressed to a baby or an adult.

The researchers found that listeners

BABY TALK



Parentese is a type of speech in which a parent or caregiver mixes proper, yet simple, grammar and words with exaggerated sounds and tones to communicate with their baby. This type of speech is used in virtually all languages and is often characterised by repetition, elongated vowels, high pitch, and slow tempo, which are most effective in face-to-face interactions. Parentese can be spoken to babies as early as six months

were able to tell with about 70% accuracy when the sounds were aimed at babies, even when they were unfamiliar with the language and culture of the person making them. "The style was different, but the vibe of it felt the same," said Caitlyn Placek, an anthropologist who helped to collect recordings from the Jenu Kuruba, a

tribe in India. TNN



Ernest et Célestine

LANGUAGE LAB

LEARNING NEW LANGUAGE

3 CINEMATIC GEMS IN FRENCH TO EXPLORE CULTURE

Cinema can be an immersive experience giving you real-life exposure to foreign cultures. This month's deep-sea dive comes to you in the form of a starter kit that will hopefully make you even more curious about so many more amazing movies from the Francophone world.



ERNEST ET CÉLESTINE (ADVENTURE | ANIMATION | HEARTFELT)

This Oscar-nominated film plays with a hand-drawn, watercolour technique to showcase that friendship doesn't always have to look like you. An unlikely camaraderie between a mouse and a bear is born in a society where any such intermingling is frowned upon.

Tales of big bad wolves are replaced with those of big bad bears among the mice, while the mouse-dentist-in-training, Célestine, refuses to blindly believe such stories. One early morning, a grumpy and hungry Ernest chances upon her and decides to have a little feast. Instead, with a smack to his face, Célestine ends up showing him the better path. "Il faut qu'on parle sérieusement, Ernest! Tu peux pas me manger. C'est dans les contes que les ours mangent les souris." (Take me seriously, Ernest! You can't eat me. Bears eat mice only in fairy tales.)

LA FAMILLE BÉLIER (COMEDY | DRAMA | MUSIC)

In the Bélier family, only the 16-year-old Paula

can hear and speak. She acts as an indispensable interpreter for her parents and brother, especially, in the running of their dairy farm. Upon joining the school's choir, Paula discovers her own talent for the first time. A painful decision awaits them all. She and her family must contemplate the result of her possible move to Paris to train at the Maitrise de Radio France, a vocal elite choir.

A love-hate family drama where you also visit a picturesque countryside of France, a few hours from Paris. Much like a school exchange programme, you get to visit Paula's home, her school, meet her friends and join them in making life-changing dreams and decisions. CODA, winner of 3 Oscars in 2022 was a remake of *La Famille Bélier*.

PERSEPOLIS (BIOGRAPHY | ANIMATION | DRAMA)

A clever, mature and outspoken Iranian girl grows up during the Islamic Revolution of 1978. As a child, she plans to become a future prophet to decrease the suffering in the world. Her commandments are: "Premièrement, tout le monde doit avoir un bon comportement" (First, everyone must learn good behaviour) to "Cinqüièmement, plus aucune vieille femme ne souffrira" (No old lady will suffer ever again). The story retraces Satrapi's growth into a rebellious, Iron Maiden-loving teenager and her move to Europe.

With accounts of members of her liberal-leaning family detained in Iran, this autobiographical history represents the national tragedy of the Iran-Iraq war. Again, a very non-Disney, genre-defining animation film, 'Persepolis' is funny, instructive and thought-provoking. Follow the journey of this 14-year-old in exile, who first arrives in Vienna all by herself.

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SAY IT RIGHT

Fish or fishes?

The noun "fish" has two different, completely acceptable plurals — "fish" and "fishes" — but "fish" is by far the most common plural.

WHEN TO USE FISH

When used as a noun, fish describes as singular fish or multiple fish. It is a common, well-recognised word and does not require the addition of an "s" to make it plural. You can use fish to describe one fish, a school of fish, or a specific fish species. For example:

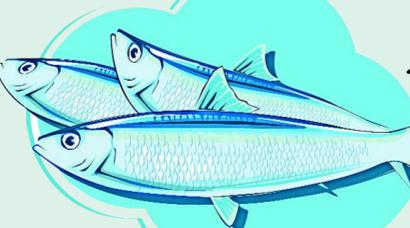
- My fish, Nemo, was all alone in the fishbowl before I bought him a snail.
- We saw three Manta-Ray fish during our glass bottom ocean cruise.

WHEN TO USE FISHES

Scientists use 'fishes'. For example, scientists who study fish (they're called "ichthyologists") — "ichthys" is Greek for "fish" — often refer to different species as fishes.

Also, the majority of quotations using the word "fishes" in the Corpus of Contemporary American English are also from scientific publications. As a noun, fishes is a scientific term that describes more than one species of fish in a group. Fish can be used in its stead, but fishes helps you recognise there is more than one type of fish being referred to. For example:

- The biologist was studying the diversity of the fishes in the isolated mountain lake.
- We saw 15 different types of fishes on our trip.



Queries relating to language skills

Do you find grammar confusing? Do you get stuck with words when writing a letter, an essay or a blog? Do you have a fear of public speaking? Or do you simply want to improve your communication skills? Times NIE is here to help you to master the intricacies of the English language. Just shoot us your queries on toinie175@gmail.com



A lot of people do use the word 'acronym' to refer to an initialism that technically is not an acronym because it's not pronounced as a word

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Any shortened form of a word is an abbreviation, for example, etc. for etcetera and Oct. for October; but acronyms are special kinds of abbreviations, such as ROFL (rolling on the floor laughing) and OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), that can be pronounced as words. This makes them a subset of abbreviations. All acronyms are abbreviations, but not all abbreviations are

10 ENGLISH WORDS that come from OTHER LANGUAGES

VERANDAH

Since there were no verandahs in England because of its cold weather, the word never existed in English before the British interaction with India, where almost every house had one, usually for the family to enjoy the breeze on hot days. Interestingly, the word verandah came to Hindi via the Portuguese.

DUNGAREES

A type of working clothes consisting of trousers with a bib held up by straps over the shoulders, made of calico, denim or similar coarse material. Its usage dates back to the late 17th century. "The Oxford English Dictionary" attributes its derivation to the Hindi dungri, although it is unclear what it means.

ZEN

Zen has a variety of meanings including "a state of meditative calm in which one uses direct, intuitive insights as a way of thinking and acting." The word zen comes from the Sanskrit dhyana, from the verb dhyati "he meditates" (i.e., "sees mentally").

THUG

A descendent of the Hindi word 'thag', meaning a thief or a swindler, it entered the English language early in the 19th century. The thugs were organised bands of notorious robbers who would travel across India, befriending travellers before looting and killing them.

KARMA

Karma is popularly understood as the belief that the actions you take ultimately will come back to you. The word 'karma' comes from the Sanskrit kárman, meaning "act, deed."

CATAMARAN

An early-17th century word that means a yacht or a boat with twin hulls in parallel. It is derived from the Tamil katumaram, or literally tied wood.

CUMMERBUND

The cummerbund, that broad swath of

cloth which serves to somewhat restrict the girth of overweight tuxedo wearers, comes from the Hindi and Urdu word kamarband, which is itself from the Persian words for "waist" (kamar) and "band" (band). In the 19th century, there was a medical view that the cummerbund could serve to ward off numerous ailments, such as dysentery and cholera.

DEKKO

A quick look or glance. Originally used by the British army in India in the late 19th century, this one is a bit easy to fathom. It draws its meaning from the Hindi dekho or look, the imperative of dekhna.

CHEETAH

The Hindi word chita, meaning leopard, finds its origin in the Sanskrit word chitraka, meaning hunting leopard or tiger, which literally translates to speckled or distinctively marked. And that's where the long-legged, big cat from Africa gets its name, from its distinct black spots.

BANGLES

Derived from the Hindi word 'bhangri' which originally meant the coloured glass ring ornaments worn on the wrist by Indian women. The word was introduced in English in the late 18th century.

LOOT

The English word 'loot' has been borrowed from the Hindi word 'lūt', which means to loot or to plunder, and did not feature in the common use of English until after the entry of the British into India.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND INITIALISMS

SO REMEMBER:

Initialisms are made from the first letter (or letters) of a string of words, but can't be pronounced as words themselves. Examples include FBI, CIA, FYI (for your information), and PR (public relations).

Acronyms are made from the first letter (or letters) of a string of words but are pronounced as if they were words themselves. Examples include NASA, NIMBY (not in my backyard), and hazmat* (hazardous materials).

Abbreviations are any shortened form of a word.

acronyms.

Initialisms

Initialisms are another type of abbreviation. They are often confused with acronyms because they are made up of letters, so they look similar, but they can't be pronounced as words. FBI and CIA are examples of initialisms because they're made up of the first letters of Federal Bureau of Investigation and Central Intelligence Agency, respectively, but they can't be pronounced as words. NASA, on the other hand, is an acronym because even though it is also made up of the first letters of the department name (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), it is pronounced as a word, NASA, and not by spelling out the letters N, A, S, A.

