In this study, we developed an explanation of the grammatical concept of voice in French. Intermediate language learners were trained to self-explain or language, exposed to a text with sentences in the active, passive and middle voices in French, and asked to talk their way through an explanation of the concept of voice.

Facts

- In subjects such as science, having learners self-explain complex concepts out loud, using expository texts and diagrams, results in effective learning.
- Languaging, a cognitively complex form of verbalization, is effective in internalizing new knowledge, including grammatical concepts (Swain, 2006).
- High languagers (those who language a lot) learn about the grammatical concept of voice with some depth of understanding.
- Performance on written tests alone may not be enough to demonstrate knowledge of voice in verb tense; the ability to language about why a particular voice was used demonstrates a deeper conceptual understanding.
- Learners should be provided with complete, coherent conceptual knowledge about the second language.
- Conceptual understanding of grammar can guide their subsequent linguistic performance.
- Languaging is a key component of the internalization process and it can productively be introduced into classroom practice.