

Nominees and candidates for Ig Nobel prizes in linguistics

 Af [Peter Bakker](#) 27. maj 2009 • I kategorien [Sjov](#) •

 [Maskinoversættelse til dansk [her](#)]

In an earlier message we wrote about the Ig Nobel prizes, and the five prizes awarded to linguistic research in the first 18 years of their existence. A mere 2,7 percent of winners have been chosen from the noble science of linguistics. Here are some more nominees. Readers are urged to propose additional candidates and studies.

(1) Peace Price:

Jean-François Sudre for inventing the *Langue Musicale Universelle (Solresol)*, a language based on the seven-scale tone system. With these tones, he formed a vocabulary of 2600 roots. Whereas other artificial languages discriminated the deaf and blind, Solresol was easily expanded to colours, tactile signs and rhythms, providing a truly international language (see Mikael Parkvall's book *Limits of Language*, pages 132-133).

(2) Computer science:

Michael Levit, Richard Huber, Anton Batliner, Elmar Noeth. (Chair for Pattern Recognition, University of Erlangen, Germany). "[Use of prosodic speech characteristics for automated detection of alcohol intoxication.](#)"

(3) Cognitive Science:

Lieberman P., Protopapas A., Kanki B.G. "[Speech production and cognitive deficits on Mt. Everest](#)". Some of the results: "Deficits in speech motor control and in the comprehension of syntax were observed as five members of the 1993 American Sagarmatha Expedition ascended Mt. Everest. We analyzed speech recordings and cognitive test scores of the climbers at different altitudes."

(4) Chemistry:

Watch out, there are two scholars with the name *Edo Nyland* in Canada. One, a natural scientist, has a warning sign on [his website](#) that he does not have anything to do with the other one. The other one is the nominee *Edo Nyland* for proving that Basque provides the key to understanding all the world's languages. The English word *begin* is actually derived from a string of Basque words found in a dictionary: *ibeni egindura inor* "start action someone". His revolutionary method has thus far not attracted a huge congregation of followers. His method is so revolutionary that old-fashioned, brain-washed linguists cannot fathom it. And [here](#) you can read that the author of this item is not enlightened yet.

(5) Biology:

Sarah Grey Thomason for providing the definite proof that people have no memory for languages spoken in previous lives, in the article in *American Speech* and [here](#).

(6) Engineering

David B. Pisoni & Christopher S. Martin. 1991. "Effects of alcohol on speech: I. Durations of isolated words, sentences, and passages in fluent speech." *J. Acoust. Soc. Am.* 90 (4): 2311-2311.

(7) Law

Reinhold Amman for publishing the journal *Maledicta* through several decades. It is the only scientific journal completely devoted to swearing, inappropriate and politically incorrect jokes, ethnic slurs, insults, etc. Not even a prison sentence and personal bankruptcy stopped him from continuing.

(8) Ornithology

Rupert Sheldrake for his [proof](#) that parrots do not only understand human language, but that they also understand human words through telepathy.

Læs også:

1. [Ig Nobel prizes for linguists?](#) [Maskinoversættelse til dansk her] Since 1991, a strange ceremony takes place in Massachusetts, USA. Ten Ig Nobel prizes are given out by Nobel laureates, and organized by the Journal Annals...
2. [The journal titles that the Ministry of Science wants to hide from the public](#) [Maskinoversættelse til dansk

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her] Sproguseet.dk has obtained the ranked lists of scientific journals that the Ministry of Science wants to keep secret. The Ministry had asked hundreds of scientists from...

3. [Språktidningen](#) [Maskinoversættelse til dansk her] Sometimes you get into a kiosk, killing the time when waiting for bus or train, and you see all these thousands of different journals and magazines...
4. [The language of The Julekalender](#) The daily Christmas TVprogram The Julekalender, originally produced in 1991, has become tradition, and is shown again this winter. They speak a mixture of Jutish dialect and English. Such mixed...

Tagget med: [ig nobel](#), [In English](#), [linguistics](#), [nobel](#), [priser](#), [Sjov](#)

2 kommentarer



Ole Stig Andersen

29. maj 2009 • 00:42

I don't think your candidate for the peace prize, Jean-François Sudre, is well chosen. First, he's been dead for 150 years and other (Ig) Nobel prizes have only been awarded living persons, AFAIK. Secondly, there is nothing ridiculous or weird or else about his invention of the language Solresol, as there are with all the other Ig Nobel prizes. Isn't the Ig Nobel prize supposed to make you laugh, then think? What is there to laugh about Solresol?

Svar



Jens S. Larsen

7. juni 2009 • 15:17

Jean-François Sudre may be dead, but the IgNobel peace prize has been won by dead people before — Lal Bihari was awarded it in 2003 “for a triple accomplishment: First, for leading an active life even though he has been declared legally dead; Second, for waging a lively posthumous campaign against bureaucratic inertia and greedy relatives; and Third, for creating the Association of Dead People.”

Solresol may not be that funny, but that's only when you think about it — and the goal of the IgNobel prize is exactly to make us laugh and then think. Personally I think Reinhold Amman would be the best choice, but Sudre seems to meet the criteria.

Svar

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- Ethnologue: Languages of the World
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- LL-Map: Language and Location
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- World Atlas of Linguistic Structures (WALS)

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