



## IN THIS ISSUE

### CURRENT RESEARCH

- Free Voluntary Reading and Autonomy in Second Language Acquisition: Improving TOEFL Scores from Reading Alone  
by Beniko Mason ..... 2
- A One-Year Study of SSR: University Level EFL Students in Taiwan  
by Sy-ying Lee ..... 6
- Is First Language Use in the Foreign Language Classroom Good or Bad? It Depends.  
by Dr. Stephen Krashen ..... 9
- The Amount of Input Matters: Incidental Acquisition of Grammar Through Listening and Reading  
by Victoria Rodrigo ..... 10

### TEACHER TO TEACHER

- The Art of TPR Storytelling: It's My Story  
by Blaine Ray ..... 15
- Language on the Go: Tuning in to Podcasting  
by Jeff McQuillan, Ph.D. .... 16
-  Concordia Language Villages Makes Arabic Announcement in Washington D.C. ..... 19
- El español de California  
by Jacobo Mir & Carlos Prieto ..... 20
- Letters to the Editor ..... 23

### INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT



- Cameroon, Africa  
by Karen Rowan ..... 24

### LINKS & RESOURCES 31

*Man invented language to satisfy his deep need to complain. Lily Tomlin*

# Free Voluntary Reading and Autonomy in Second Language Acquisition: Improving TOEFL Scores from Reading Alone

by *Beniko Mason*

**Shitennoji International Buddhist University  
Osaka, Japan**

It is reasonable to propose that a goal of language programs is to make students “autonomous,” that is, able to improve their competence in their second language on their own. An obvious way to do this is to introduce students to free voluntary reading, a pleasurable activity that students can certainly do on their own, and that has been shown to have powerful payoffs in increased proficiency in all aspects of literacy (Krashen, 2004). This paper reports an attempt to do this: Students who had completed classes in which they were involved in free voluntary reading of graded readers were encouraged to continue reading on their own in preparation for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Previous research strongly suggests that reading would be good preparation for the TOEFL. One case study (Constantino, 1995) and two multivariate correlational studies (Gradman and Hanania, 1991; Constantino, SY Lee, KS Cho, and Krashen, 1997) have shown that the amount of recreational reading students do is a strong predictor of TOEFL performance.

Showing that just engaging in independent reading improves scores on the TOEFL examination would have strong implications for both theory and practice. On the level of theory, it would confirm that language acquisition is possible from comprehensible input (in this case reading) alone. On the level of practice, it would tell us whether independent study is a viable and practical means of preparing for the TOEFL examination, especially if we can compare students’ progress with those who prepare for the TOEFL examination in more traditional ways.

## Procedure

Subjects were six university level students of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan. All had taken EFL courses that had emphasized extensive reading of graded readers, books written especially for EFL students. The classes the students took before starting the independent reading program included presentation of the theory underlying extensive reading, some of the actual research supporting extensive reading, and a great deal of reading experience.

*Students were advised to begin with very easy graded readers, and read about 70 to 100 pages per week. Accountability was minimal: No book report or summary was required and students were only asked to keep a record of the books they had read. Students were encouraged to read those books that were interesting to them, and were not required to finish every book they started.*

All reading in the EFL classes was selected by the students, who had access to a library of about 4000 graded readers (about 700 different titles). Students were advised to begin with very easy graded readers, and read about 70 to 100 pages per week. Accountability was minimal: No book report or summary was required and students were only asked to keep a record of the books they had read. Students were encouraged to read those books

that were interesting to them, and were not required to finish every book they started. Class-time also included listening to stories.

All subjects volunteered to continue reading on their own, three during their summer vacation, two during the spring break, and one during the academic year (an Arabic major who was taking no English classes at the time). The readers were entirely on their own during this time; they did not meet with the researcher to discuss progress, problems, book selection, etc. All were highly motivated to improve on the TOEFL and were told that reading was an excellent way to do so.

The procedure was simple. Students were given access to the library of graded readers that had been available to them during their classes. In contrast to reading done as part of the classes they took, readers were not asked to keep any records of how much or what they read, although some did so.

*All subjects volunteered to continue reading on their own, three during their summer vacation, two during the spring break, and one during the academic year (an Arabic major who was taking no English classes at the time).*

The instrument used was the ITP (Institutional Testing Program) TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). This test was constructed from previously administered TOEFL tests, and is available from the Educational Testing Service for local use for institutions for placement, awarding credit, as a final exam, etc. It consists of three parts, Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading. Test administration takes about two hours, and multiple forms are available. Reliability of the TOEFL is very high (for the ITP-TOEFL, total reliability = .95; listening comprehension = .90; structure = .87, reading = .88; TOEFL, 2005). (Note: A TOEFL score of 550 is thought to represent enough English competence to study in an American university.)

<b>Table one: Gains on the TOEFL</b>								
Name	Test date	Listen	Grammar	Reading	*Total	Gain	Weeks	**Pts/Wk
Noriko	01/17/01	51	44	41	453			
	04/06/01	51	52	47	500	47	11 wks	4.2
Sumiyo	01/22/03	46	44	42	440			
	04/05/03	50	49	44	477	37	10 wks	3.7
Yoko	07/12/03	44	45	48	457			
	08/06/03	46	49	50	477	20	3.5 wks	5.7
U	07/12/03	46	51	47	480			
	10/25/03	49	50	55	513	33	15 wks	2.2
Yu	07/12/03	44	42	46	440			
	10/25/03	46	44	51	470	30	15 wks	2
Kenji	03/31/05	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	467			
	06/10/05	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	33	10 wks	3.3

\*Total TOEFL scores are arrived at by calculating the mean of the three components and multiplying by ten: e.g., 51 + 44 + 41 = 136/3 = 45.3 \*10 = 453.

\*\*The calculation of points per week may over-estimate the amount of reading done per week because the time period included, in four cases of out six, the final two weeks of the semester during which final examinations were administered.  
n.a. = not available

## Results

Table 1 presents gains made by each subject for each component of the TOEFL, as well as weeks spent reading and the average gain per week. The average gain per student was 3.5 points per week.

We can get some idea of the efficiency of free reading by comparing these results to the progress made by students in a study-abroad, TOEFL preparation program. Swinton (1983) studied the improvements made by international students in a traditionally taught intensive Academic English program at a university

**Table 2: Average Pre-and Posttest Scores by IEP students in the US**

Pretest range	251-300	301-350	351-400	401-450	451-500	501-550	551-600	601-650
Pretest Mean	293.5	327.8	379.5	426.2	469.5	523.5	557	613
Posttest Mean	385	384	441.1	478.5	511.6	570	603	583
Gain	91.5	56.2	61.6	52.3	42.1	46.5	46	-30

From Table 4 in Swinton (1983), p. 10

\*Total TOEFL scores are arrived at by calculating the mean of the three components and multiplying by ten: e.g.,  $51 + 44 + 41 = 136/3 = 45.3 * 10 = 453$ .

\*\*The calculation of points per week may over-estimate the amount of reading done per week because the time period included, in four cases of out six, the final two weeks of the semester during which final examinations were administered.

n.a. = not available

It was not possible to calculate the amount gained per page for all subjects, as only three subjects provided information necessary for this calculation. Yoko reported reading 300 pages, and gained 20 points, a gain of about 1 point for each 15 pages read, and U read 1300 pages, gaining 33 points, a gain of about 1 point for each 40 pages read. Kenji reported that he focused exclusively on the work of Sidney Sheldon and read up to 200 pages per day.

Using U's report as an example, the results are encouraging. If 40 pages results in a one point gain, a student can expect a gain of 100 points by reading 4000 pages, about 40 books.

in the United States. Students were in class four hours per day for five days a week and had two to three hours of homework per day, or about 30 hours per week of study, which amounts to about 390 hours over the 13 week program. In addition, they had access to additional English input in the US in their everyday life.

*The results of this study confirm, however, that it is possible to improve in a second language from input/reading alone, and that the benefits of reading extend to vocabulary and grammar.*

Table 2, from Swinton's table 4, presents average pre and post-test scores on the

TOEFL test for students in his program. Those with beginning TOEFL scores of 401 to 450 gained 52.3 points, or 4 points per week. Those with beginning TOEFL scores of 501-550 gained 42.1 or 3.2 points per week. The readers in the extensive reading study described here gained 3.51 points per week, results that are nearly identical to those of Swinton's students, spending, most likely, far less time, and certainly less money.

## Discussion and conclusions

The subjects in this study were well-educated, experienced language students, were highly motivated, and volunteered to engage in the reading program. It is thus inappropriate to generalize these results to all language students. The results of this study confirm, however, that it is possible to improve in a second language from input/reading alone, and that the benefits of reading extend to vocabulary and grammar. The results also suggest that at least some students can prepare quite well for the TOEFL in their own country. Finally, the results suggest that the courses these students took succeeded in making them autonomous language acquirers. To confirm that this is so, we need to investigate whether these students turn to reading on their own in the future to further improve their English.



[Back to top](#)

## References

- Constantino, R. 1995. The effect of pleasure reading: Passing the TOEFL test doesn't have to hurt. *Mosaic* 3(1):15-17.
- Constantino, R., Lee, S.Y., Cho, K.S., and Krashen, S. 1997. Free voluntary reading as a predictor of TOEFL scores. *Applied Language Learning* 8: 111-118.
- Gradman, H., and E. Hanania. 1991. Language learning background factors and ESL proficiency. *Modern Language Journal* 75: 39-51.
- TOEFL, 2005. Institutional Testing Program, Japan Edition. Educational Testing Service

### *Why Study Arabic?*

*Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. It is the official language of 22 countries and the native language of more than 300 million people. Yet, as of 1998, only 5,500 American college students were studying Arabic, and only a small number of them became advanced enough to use the language professionally. Proficiency in any foreign language, especially Arabic, can advance your career and make you more competitive in the job market. Many Washington, DC-based corporations, organizations, and government institutions (e.g., World Bank, State Department) list proficiency in Arabic as a required or desirable skill for many exciting careers.*

# A One-Year Study of SSR: University Level EFL Students in Taiwan

*Sy-ying Lee*

## National Taipei University

Taiwan has been a productive laboratory for the study of free voluntary reading in school, or “sustained silent reading” (SSR). A series of studies involving university level students in English as a foreign language classes (EFL) studied the impact of time set aside especially for self-selected reading of graded readers, books written especially for students of English (Sims, 1996, Yuan and Nash, 1992, Lee, 1998, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Hsu and Lee, 2005). Except for Yuan and Nash (1992), students participating in these studies have been non-English majors, not taking other classes using English as a medium of instruction, and having little exposure to English outside of school.

Thus far, the results have consistently shown that students in EFL classes that include SSR make similar or better gains on tests of reading and vocabulary as comparison students in classes who do not include SSR, results that are consistent with published studies done elsewhere (Krashen, 2004).

*Thus far, the results have consistently shown that students in EFL classes that include SSR make similar or better gains on tests of reading and vocabulary as comparison students in classes who do not include SSR, results that are consistent with published studies done elsewhere (Krashen, 2004).*

In this study, the duration was a full academic year. This is still not the optimal length (studies longer than one year have produced the best results; Krashen, 2004), but one year was all that was possible due to practical constraints.

The subjects in both experimental and comparison groups were freshman non-English majors who were

taking a required course in English as a foreign language, and they were not taking other English courses at the time of the study.

## Comparison group

To account for at least some individual variation in instruction, three different classes, taught with different instructors, were used as comparison groups. Classes had 40, 45, and 54 students. The comparison classes were randomly selected from 26 freshman English classes at National Taipei University. The comparison groups had traditional instruction, reading, analyzing and discussing texts, student presentations based on issues related to the assigned readings, and direct instruction in language “skills.” There were frequent quizzes and examinations. A MANOVA revealed no significant difference among the three comparison classes on pre-tests, so scores for the comparison classes were therefore combined. The same comparison groups were used in a previous study (Lee, 2005c).

## Experimental group

Students in the experimental group (n = 41) did self-selected reading of graded readers. Students chose from about 1,200 titles varying in difficulty from 300 headwords to 3300 headwords. Students devoted half of the once weekly three hour class to reading, 20 minutes to checking in and out books, and the rest of the class to shared reading, giving short presentations or interacting with group members. Students were required to record what they read (titles, pages, time spent on reading) and write short reflections on what they read in either English or Chinese. These reading logs were handed in each week. Grades were based on participation and students’ logs (time spent reading, pages read, and reflections on reading).

## Measures

The tests used for both groups included (1) a 100 item

cloze test measuring reading ability, developed by Mason (2003), which was used as both a pre and post test; (2) vocabulary tests developed by Schmidt (2000) that test the 2000 level words, 3000, 5000, 10,000 and academic vocabulary levels, with 30 items at each level, also used as both pre and post-tests. Tests were given at the beginning of the academic year and at the end of the year.

## Results

The effect of the in-class SSR treatment was determined by examining differences between gain scores (table 1). At each level of the vocabulary test, the experimental group made better gains, and the experimental group also made superior gains on the cloze test.

**Table 1: Vocabulary Test Results**

	<b>COMP PRE</b>	<b>EXP PRE</b>		
	<b>means (sd)</b>	<b>means (sd)</b>		
<b>2000</b>	27 (3.3)	26.4 (3.8)		
<b>3000</b>	22.1 (5.7)	20.6 (5.7)		
<b>5000</b>	17.5 (6.0)	17.3 (5.6)		
<b>10000</b>	4.6 (4.1)	3.8 (3.2)		
<b>ACADEMIC</b>	20.6 (5.5)	19.7 (6.2)		
<b>TOTAL</b>	91.7 (20.3)	87.8 (20)		
	<b>COMP POST</b>	<b>EXP POST</b>		
	<b>means (sd)</b>	<b>means (sd)</b>		
<b>2000</b>	27.6 (2.4)	27.8 (2.3)		
<b>3000</b>	23.5 (4.9)	24.8(4.3)		
<b>5000</b>	19.4 (5.6)	21.6 (4.7)		
<b>10000</b>	6.0 (4.6)	8.1 (3.1)		
<b>ACADEMIC</b>	22.4 (5.5)	22.6(4.1)		
<b>TOTAL</b>	99 (18.7)	104.8 (14.7)		
	<b>DIFF pre/pst</b>			
	<b>COMP</b>	<b>EXP</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>2000</b>	0.66	1.32	-1.39	0.08
<b>3000</b>	1.47	4.22	-3.74	0.00013*
<b>5000</b>	2.0	4.35	-3.26	0.0007*
<b>10000</b>	1.37	4.27	-4.46	0.0000083***
<b>ACADEMIC</b>	1.76	2.85a	-1.31	0.10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7.23</b>	<b>17.02</b>	<b>-4.90</b>	<b>0.0000018*</b>

\*:  $p < .008$  (see text)



**Table 2: Cloze Test Results**

	PRE	POST	DIFF	t	p
comp	46.9 (10.1)	51.8 (9.8)	4.9	-7.92	0.00000
exp	44.4 (8.2)	58.9 (7.9)	14.5		
N of comparison group = 139		N of experimental group = 41			

Because multiple t-tests were used, the alpha level, the level of significance necessary to achieve statistical significance, was adjusted using the Bonferroni procedure (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1984). Using the adjusted alpha of .008 (.05/6), the experimental group significantly outperformed the comparison group on the combined vocabulary test, on the cloze test, and on three levels of the vocabulary test.

## Discussion

In this study, readers easily outperformed comparison students. A factor that may have contributed to the success of the study was the fact that students had access to a substantial amount of reading material, approximately 1000 different titles (compared to 570 titles in Lee, 2005b, and 700 total books in Sims, 1996). In addition, the study lasted one academic year; as noted above, this is not the optimal length but in this case it was clearly long enough to produce a positive result.

What is clear from the entire group of studies from Taiwan is that free reading works. In addition to its value in increasing test scores, reading results in increased knowledge of the world and subject matter knowledge, and is regarded by students as more pleasant than traditional instruction (Krashen, 2004).

## References

- Hsu, Y. Y. & Lee, S. Y. 2005. Does Extensive reading also benefit junior college students in vocabulary acquisition and reading ability? The Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference in English Teaching and Learning, pp.116-127. National Taiwan Normal University, June 4, 2005.
- Krashen, S. 2004. *The Power of Reading*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. Second Edition.
- Lee, S. Y. 1998. Effects of introducing free reading and language acquisition theory on students' attitudes toward the English class. *Studies in English Language and Literature* 4, 21-28.
- Lee, S. Y. 2005a. How robust is in-class sustained silent reading? *Studies in English Language and Literature*, Vol. 15, p. 65-76.
- Lee, S. Y. 2005b. The robustness of extensive reading: Evidence from two studies. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 1(3): 13-19.
- Lee, S.Y. 2005c. Sustained silent reading using signed reading: Is comprehensible input enough? *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 1 (4): 10-12
- Rosenthal, R. & Rosnow, R. 1984. *Essentials of Behavioral Research: Methods and Data Analysis*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Schmitt, N. 2000. *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sims, J. 1996. A new perspective: Extensive reading for pleasure. *The Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on English Teaching*, pp. 137-144. Taipei: Crane.
- Yuan, Y. P., & Nash, T. 1992. Reading subskills and quantity reading. *Selected papers from The Eighth Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China*, pp. 291-304. Taipei: Crane.

[Back to top](#)



# Is First Language Use in the Foreign Language Classroom Good or Bad? It Depends.

*Dr. Stephen Krashen*

Contrary to semi-popular opinion, the Comprehension Hypothesis does not forbid the use of the first language in the second language classroom. It does, however, provide guidelines. It predicts that the use of the first language will help second language development if it results in more comprehensible input, and will hurt second language development when it results in less comprehensible input.

## **Providing Background Knowledge**

The first language helps when it provides background knowledge that functions to make second language input more comprehensible. This can happen in several ways:

It happens when the first language is used to provide background knowledge through discussion or reading. When teachers know that a topic needs to be discussed in class that is unusually complex or unfamiliar, a short presentation or set of readings in the first language can be of great help. A few minutes or a page or two on relevant aspects of the history of Mexico, for example, can transform a discussion of Cortez from one that is opaque to one that is transparent. This kind of background is, of course, most useful when teachers know that all or nearly all students will require it.

Bilingual education relies on the same principle: In bilingual programs, students are given background knowledge in the first language in order to make subsequent instruction delivered in the second language more comprehensible (Krashen, 1996).

The first language can also help when it is used during a lesson as a quick explanation. Comprehension difficulties can arise in unpredictable places and students differ in their need for background knowledge. The first language can be used as needed for quick explanations in the middle of discussions when some students are having trouble, and when it is not easy to paraphrase and use other means of providing context.

There is also nothing wrong with providing a quick translation for a problematic word that is central to a discussion. Providing the translation may or may not contribute very much to the acquisition of the meaning of the translated word, but it can help make the entire discussion more comprehensible.

The first language is misused when teachers provide so much information that there is no reason to continue the discussion in the second language.

It is also misused when teachers provide so many brief explanations and translations that it is difficult to keep track of the message. If this intervention is considered to be necessary, the topic may not be right. It has been hypothesized that the acquirer needs to be so interested in the message (or “lost in the book”) that he or she temporarily “forgets” that the message is in another language. When translations are excessive, the spell is broken.

*Dr. Krashen is professor Emeritus, University of Southern California and a published author and speaker on second language acquisition, reading and bilingual education. [www.sdkrashen.com](http://www.sdkrashen.com).*

[Back to top](#)

## The amount of input matters: Incidental acquisition of grammar through listening and reading

*Victoria Rodrigo, Ph.D.*

Associate Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at Georgia State University

Several studies in second and foreign language, whether implementing intensive, extensive, and/or self-selected reading, provide evidence for the claim that grammar can be acquired incidentally through reading (e.g. Lee, Krashen & Gribbons (1995), Stokes, Krashen, and Kratchner (1998), Lee (2002),

exposed to has an effect on the acquisition of grammar when there is no focus on form.

### THE STUDY

#### Participants

The data were collected from ten intact fifth semester classes of Spanish during five consecutive semesters. The study had a sample of 183 subjects from which 53 were excluded due to students a) missing either the pre or post-test, b) attending classes irregularly, and c) taking a grammar class at the same time as the study was being conducted. Thus, only 130 students were included: 78 in the experimental group and 52 in the control group.

As shown in Table 1, the control and the experimental groups were very similar demographically. Most of

[Table 1]

	Gender		Age		Major		Years Spanish			Traveled	
	Fem.	Masc	18-25	26-up	Spanish	Other	Under 22	-4	4.1-up	No	Yes
Control N=52	76%	24%	76%	24%	65%	35%	13%	37%	50%	45%	55%
Experiment. N=78	69%	31%	82%	18%	44%	56%	13%	30%	57%	49%	51%

Table 1. Descriptive statistics. Percentage of students by gender, age, major, years of study, and traveled abroad. Control: n=52, experimental: n=78.

Rodrigo, Krashen, and Gribbons (2004)). In addition, both foreign language and second language students perceive reading as more pleasurable and beneficial than grammar instruction (Dupuy (1995) McQuillan (1994).

A number of studies confirm that methods that focus on providing aural comprehensible input produce superior results when compared to traditional methods (e.g. Asher, 1977, Krashen, 2003), and Rodrigo (2004) has demonstrated that “narrow listening” results in superior development of listening ability. The goal of this study was to determine the effect of a combination of narrow listening and extensive reading on grammatical competence for intermediate students of Spanish as a foreign language at the university level. The central hypothesis tested here was whether the amount of written and aural input the students are

the subjects in the two groups were female students, between 18 and 25 years of age, with more than four years of instruction in Spanish, and had spent some time in a Spanish-speaking country, especially in a study abroad program. For unknown reasons, there were more Spanish majors or double majors (Spanish and Business) in the control group than in the experimental group.

#### Procedure

Both the experimental group and the control group followed a content-based-approach, i.e. focusing exclusively on meaning and information. The students were expected to do assigned reading, listen to their teacher and classmates, participate in class discussions, and write about specific topics. No explicit instruction on grammar was provided for either group.

As shown in table 2, students in the experimental group were asked to do narrow listening (NL) activities and extensive reading. Narrow listening was first used as individual self-instruction material (Krashen 1996) and then adapted to be used as part of an FL curriculum in Spanish (Rodrigo 2005). Since NL is a relatively new concept, a brief explanation of its rationale seems to be appropriate here.

NL is based on the concept of extensive listening and the principles of *re-listening* --students listen to the same passage as many times as they consider it necessary--, *topic familiarity* --students select topics of their own interest--, *authenticity* --students listen to unrehearsed and unscripted messages--, and *focus on content* --students react and discuss the speakers' points of

view or experiences-- (for a full account of this approach see Rodrigo, 2003). In doing NL activities, students listen for information about topics of their

interest. These topics are collected in an audio-library containing 24 topics. Each topic is discussed by three native speakers elaborating on their points of view or experience about the specific subject.

At the end of the semester each student in the experimental group had listened to 16 topics (48 listening passages). Although students were encouraged to listen to the topics as many times as they considered it necessary, they listened to each passage an average of three times per speaker. Since each topic had three speakers and the duration of each passage had an average length of two minutes, students in the experimental group listened

to an extra seven hours and 20 minutes of meaningful and comprehensible aural input.

The experimental group was also required to read two novels by Miguel Muñoz (2000) ---*Viajes Fantásticos* and *Ladrón de la mente*--, and discuss them in class. The reading of the novels was done following an extensive reading modality, that is, students read to enjoy the reading, for content and general understanding.

The extra exposure to listening and reading by the experimental group was done outside class and done as an assignment. The control group, however, did not have these extra assignments as part of the curriculum.

Unfortunately, no information was recorded for either group about the students' exposure to Spanish outside the classroom (e.g. contact with friends who spoke Spanish, or TV viewing or radio listening in the target language).

The *grammar test* used was

a grammaticality judgment test for Spanish (Ortega 2000) that requires students to judge the grammaticality of 100 statements involving ten

different grammatical structures. For each structure, four grammatical and four ungrammatical statements were included together with two distractors. Students had to indicate whether the statements appeared to them as grammatical or ungrammatical and how confident they felt about their assessment on a 1-4 scale,

where 1 = definitely ungrammatical, 2 = probably ungrammatical, 3 = probably grammatical and 4 = definitely grammatical. The reliability of the test was

[Table 2]

	Control group	Experimental group
<b>Listening</b>	Teacher and student input	Teacher and student input <i>Narrow listening</i>
<b>Reading</b>	Intensive reading	Intensive reading <i>Extensive reading</i>

Table 2. Input component in each group.

**T**his study supports the claim that extensive reading and extensive listening, through the practice of narrow listening, are effective means to helping students develop a 'feeling' of the language and a sense of accuracy.

[Table 3]

Groups	N		Mean	Sd	Gain
Control	52	Pre	315.03	24.73	5.05
		Post	320.09	24.35	
Experimental	78	Pre	303.20	24.20	12.44
		Post	315.65	25.63	

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the pre and post Grammar test. Experimental and control group. Mean, Sd= Standard deviation; The maximum score for the test was 396.

high, .829 (Cronchach's alpha). The same test was used as a pre- and post-test.

## RESULTS

As shown in Table 3, both groups improved their scores at the end of the semester, but the experimental group improved more. A one-way within-subjects (repeated-measures) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between the pre-test, the post-test, and treatment (i.e. amount of input):  $F(1,128) = 4.292$ ,  $p < .05$ , confirming that the extra comprehensible input had a positive effect on the students' grammar performance. The effect size, calculated from the F ratio, was  $d = .30$ , a modest effect.

## CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

This study confirms that grammar can be acquired incidentally at the intermediate level through extensive exposure to listening and reading, when language acquirers do not focus on form. The experimental group, which did extra listening and reading, obtained far better scores. These results are consistent with the input or "comprehension" hypothesis, which claims that a language can be acquired through comprehensible input and that the more exposure to the target language the more opportunities for the learner to acquire it (Krashen 2003).

This study supports the claim that extensive reading and extensive listening, through the practice of narrow

listening, are effective means to helping students develop a 'feeling' of the language and a sense of accuracy. It does not, however, tell us which of the two was more potent. It is, however, unlikely that all the gains were due to reading two modest-length books.

The pedagogical implications of this study are clear. If grammar can be acquired incidentally through listening and reading, it is the practitioner's responsibility to provide and implement a rich written and aural input component in the language curriculum. Thus, the process of acquisition of the target language can be made more expeditious. Finally, since students

can be trained to build up their reading and listening abilities (Rodrigo, 2004a, 2004b; Wolvin, A. & C. Coakley, 1982), language programs should give them the tools they need to accelerate their acquisition process by providing them with interesting reading and listening material, and by making it part of the language curriculum.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my thanks to Don Segal from the Educational Research Bureau at Georgia State University for his advice in the statistical analysis of the data. The author is responsible for any inaccuracy.

## Notes

1. Originally the test had 100 items but, due to a typographical mistake, a distracter was discarded. Only 99 items were finally used in the analysis.

*Victoria Rodrigo, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at Georgia State University.*

[Back to top](#)

## Reference

- Asher, J. (1977). *Learning another language through actions: The complete teacher's guidebook*. Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks.
- Dupuy, B. (1995). Voices from the classroom: Intermediate-level French students favor extensive reading over grammar and give their reasons. *Applied Language Learning*, 8(2), 285-293.
- Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lee, J. (2002). The incidental acquisition of Spanish. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 55-80.
- Lee, Y. O., Krashen, S., & Gibbons, B. (1995). The effect of reading on the acquisition of English relative clauses. *I.T.L.: Review of Applied Linguistics*, 113-114, 263-273.
- McQuillan, J. (1994). Reading versus grammar: What students think is pleasurable for language acquisition. *Applied Language Learning*, 5(2), 95-100.
- Muñoz, M. (2000). *Viajes Fantásticos*. McGraw-Hill
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000). *Ladrón de la Mente*. McGraw-Hill
- Ortega, L. (2000). Understanding syntactic complexity: The measurement of change in the syntax of instructed L2 Spanish learners. Doctoral dissertation; University of Hawaii.
- Rodrigo, V., Krashen, S., & Gibbons, B. (2004). The effectiveness of two comprehensible-input approaches to foreign language instruction at the intermediate level. *System*, 32, 53-60.
- Rodrigo, V. (2005). *Biblioteca auditiva. Narrow Listening Library to Accompany 'Opiniones'*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2004a). Assessing the impact of narrow listening: Students' perceptions and performance. In Cherry, M., and Bradley, L., (Eds). *Assessment practices in foreign language education: DIMENSION*, Southern Conference on Language Teaching, 53-65.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2004b). Aproximación teórica y respuestas pedagógicas al desarrollo de la audición en español intermedio. *Hispania*, 87(2), 311-323.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2003). Narrow listening and audio-library: The transitional stage in the process of developing listening comprehension in a foreign language. *Mextesol Journal*, 27(1), 9-25
- Stokes, J., Krashen, S., & Kartchner, J. (1998). Factors in the acquisition of present subjunctive in Spanish: The role of reading and study. *I.T.L.: Review of Applied Linguistics* 121-122, 19-25.
- Wolvin, A. & Coakley, C. (1982). *Listening*. Dubuque, IA: Brown.

[www.SusanOhanian.org](http://www.SusanOhanian.org)

“...for English class I was assigned to Miss Ruth Stevenson who closed the classroom door and said, ‘Ladies, let’s have ourselves a hell of a good time!’

“And we did, reading Austen, Dickinson, Eliot, Woolf, until we understood we’d come to train--not tame--the wild girls into the women who would run the world.”

—Julia Alvarez,  
from *Abbot Academy*

[www.SusanOhanian.org](http://www.SusanOhanian.org)

[Back to top](#)

# RESEARCH PAPER SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The IJFLT invites short papers and replications. We think we can better serve the profession this way.

Short papers serve both the reader and the writer. When a paper is long and rich in detail, it is difficult to keep the salient findings in mind. When a paper is simply long without important information, it is a waste of the reader's time. Short papers also stimulate intellectual development: writers can spend their time creating new knowledge, rather than reviewing the history of the profession for readers who already know it, or speculating in excessive detail about possible implications of a finding or endlessly repeating and summarizing within the same paper. We recommend papers of five pages or less, and remind readers that Watson and Crick's paper that announced the discovery of DNA and won a Nobel Prize was only one page long (Watson and Crick, 1953).

We also see a need to encourage the publications of replications of important results. It has been established that many journals discourage replications, feeling that they aren't newsworthy. This results in publication bias, with only significant results being submitted and published. This runs the danger of giving an inaccurate picture of research. Replication also influences statistical significance. If two studies are published, an original and a replication, and each reports a significance level short of accepted levels of significance, the combined significance level may easily exceed accepted levels (Rosenthal, 1990).

We also urge authors of papers with statistical analysis to include measures of effect size as well as statistical significance.

Papers should be submitted to [IJFLT@tprstories.com](mailto:IJFLT@tprstories.com) by March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1 for review.

R. Rosenthal, 1990. Replication in behavioral research, *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 5: 1-30.  
Also published in: Neuliep, J. (Ed.) 1991.

Replication Research in the Social Sciences. Newbury Park: Sage 1991. Watson, J. and Crick, F. 1953. Molecular structure of Nucleic Acids. *Nature* 171, 737-738



# TEACHER TO TEACHER

## The Art of TPR Storytelling: It's My Story

by Blaine Ray..... 15

## Language on the Go: Tuning in to Podcasting

by Jeff McQuillan, Ph.D ..... 16

## Concordia Language Villages Makes Arabic

Announcement in Washington D.C..... 19

## El español de California

by Jacobo Mir and Carlos Prieto..... 20

Letters to the Editor..... 23

## The Art of TPR Storytelling: It's My Story

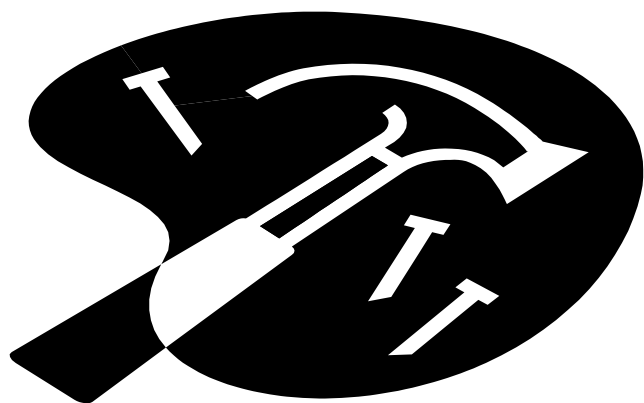
by *Blaine Ray*

One skill of TPRS that is essential is the idea that it is the teacher's story. Without this idea firmly entrenched in the mind of the teacher, much of the magic of TPRS can't happen.

The TPRS fantasy is hard to pull off without the explanation that it is "my story." (emphasis on *my*). Since it is *my story*, I can include any detail whether it is believable or not. The students have to believe because, after all, it is the teacher's story. Since it is a story, whether the detail is fact or fiction doesn't matter because anything is possible in a story. That is what stories are all about. No one questions a pig building a house of bricks because it is the author's story so we must believe.

"It's my story" also easily allows the use of the past tense in the questioning process. For example, "There was a girl. Was there a girl? Was there a boy?" All of these past tense questions don't seem quite as natural unless of course it is *my story*. Since it is *my story* and of course since I know all of the details of my story, asking these questions in the past tense is quite natural and also believable.

"It's my story" allows the teacher to maintain control of the story and of the class. The teacher is best qualified to determine the number of necessary repetitions and the pace of the story. The teacher can decide how repetitive to make the story. S/he can decide whether to be very repetitive if that is what the class needs by adding details to the story.



*The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards.*

*Anatole France*

## Language on the Go: Tuning in to Podcasting

by Jeff McQuillan, Ph.D.

Senior Research Associate  
Center for Educational Development

Phillipe is improving his English, but he doesn't go to school or study with a textbook. Instead, he just hops on the Paris Metro and flips on his iPod. Ear buds firmly in place, he selects an audio program that he's subscribed to via the Internet and that gets delivered to his computer every morning. He listens, follows along with the script that appears on his iPod screen, and by the time he's arrived at his station, he's got 15 more minutes of English under his belt. And the best part is: It's all free.

Welcome to the world of podcasting, the latest technological innovation to hit language teaching and learning. Podcasting (and its cousin, video podcasting) is a technology that is fast replacing blogs as the next Big Thing in Internet communication. In the view of some, it promises to reshape how (and when) students acquire languages.

### What is podcasting?

A podcast is like a syndicated radio program, only it's distributed over the Internet. It consists of an audio file (usually an MP3) that you can download on your computer and listen to on an iPod (hence the name, podcast) or any other MP3 player. But what makes podcasting so different is that you can subscribe to a program just like you might a newspaper or a magazine, with the help of some simple, free software. Once subscribed, you get the podcast programs (that is, the audio files) automatically delivered to your computer each day or week a new episode appears. A "vidcast" works on similar principles, only with video.

Although not even two years old, the number of these free audio and video programs has exploded. The most popular software available to download podcasts, Apple's iTunes (available for both Mac and Windows), started syndicating podcasts in the summer of 2005.

The teacher is also best qualified to determine the content of the story. Giving students the power to decide what goes into the story can make it very difficult in the end to continue with TPRS. If students can control the story, they can take it anywhere they desire. They can put in offensive content that would never be acceptable in a school situation. They can also say hurtful things about other students. With time, as students see more and more the teacher's firmness on the story, they will not even try to interject details that don't match the goals of the class.

"*It's my story*" allows the teacher to say positive things about the students. The teacher can say a student is the best looking in the entire universe or the smartest in the world and it is very believable since it is the teacher's story.

With the concept of "*it's my story*" firmly established from day one, the year will go better, stories will be more interesting and the teacher will have the control needed to make the class stay the course with TPRS.

*Blaine Ray is the inventor of TPR Storytelling, Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling.*





At the date of this writing, there are close to 20,000 podcast programs in the iTunes catalog.

Where are all these programs coming from? While some of the major media outlets (BBC, CNN) have their own podcasts, the vast majority of podcasts are “consumer generated content”—that is, they come from a techie sitting in her basement with a microphone, recording her thoughts and sending them out to the rest of the world. Like blogging before it, podcasting has been a bottom-up phenomenon. Average users are recording, producing, and uploading their files to the Internet for all to hear. Anyone who downloads the free iTunes software and clicks on the Podcast category can browse and subscribe to a program.

It wasn't long before the potential of these freely distributed, home-generated audio files began to get the attention of some tech-savvy language teachers. Teachers such as Graham Stanley and his EFL Blog ([www.pod-efl.com](http://www.pod-efl.com)) pioneered and started to publicize the use of English language learning podcasts, and others soon followed suit. There are now a few dozen “Englishcasts” or free podcasts for learners of English, and the list grows daily. Several podcasts are now available for French, Spanish, Chinese, and several other languages. Most podcasts for language learners are produced by teachers for their own and other students, although there are a few commercial enterprises that have begun podcasting.

### **What Can I do with a Podcast?**

The most obvious use of podcasting is to give students additional listening material outside of class. The first step is letting your students know that these podcasts exist, and are available for download. Suggest that they download the free iTunes software ([www.iTunes.com](http://www.iTunes.com)), and look for the Podcast link. There are also a variety of other free programs they can download, such as Ipodder ([www.ipodder.org](http://www.ipodder.org)). There they can search under the language of their choice and find the podcasts that are available in the catalog (some are listed under the “Education” section, some under the “International” section).

Teachers can use podcasts just like any other sort of listening materials, including as a jumping off point for further discussion. But while these more “traditional” uses of podcasting will suit some

teachers, the real fun of podcasting comes from being able to exploit its portability. Students can now listen to their second language anywhere, and the results can only be beneficial.

Of course, the use of podcasting is only as good as the podcast. Many (if not most) language podcasts have essentially taken the traditional language laboratory, with its discrete point focus and skill building activities, and exported it onto an iPod. But other podcasts have broken free of the traditional route to provide students with comprehensible, interesting material that can be listened to for its own interest. One website, [Englishcaster.com](http://Englishcaster.com), lists several popular podcasts that students can subscribe to and listen to, mostly at the intermediate and advanced levels.

### **Getting into Podcasting**

Although I'm not what you might call a true techie, I got interested in podcasting in the spring of 2005, when I read an article on the web about it. Of course, I immediately went to Google and found a half a dozen tutorials on how to put one together. I started off recording some files with just my little computer mic and the recording software that came with my Mac (Garageband). Within a few weeks, “English as a Second Language Podcast” was born ([www.eslpod.com](http://www.eslpod.com)).

But there were certainly some growing pains in the process. While recording a podcast is relatively painless, getting the podcast “on the air” is another matter. There are still some daunting technological challenges to be met, and although new software to help you create a podcast is now available, it's not quite ready for the average user to start podcasting. (Some websites, such as [www.Podcast411.com](http://www.Podcast411.com), provide detailed tutorials on the process.) Fortunately, teachers do not have to produce a podcast themselves to take advantage of the podcasts out there already. In fact, I would recommend to any teacher interested to go to the iTunes directory and look at the current offerings. Chances are they will find something that suits their needs.

The format I follow for my “shows” is very straightforward. I begin with a short dialog or discussion three to five minutes long and read somewhat slowly so as to be more comprehensible.

This is followed by a detailed explanation of and expansion upon the phrases and ideas included in the initial dialog. The podcast concludes by repeating the dialog or story, only this time at a native speaker rate. The whole “show” runs no more than 15 to 20 minutes—enough for a short commute or morning jog. I provide listeners with a script of the short dialog or discussion on my website, and for those with iPods, on the screen of their MP3 player. They can then follow the script as they listen, if they choose. There are no activities or quizzes, just interesting, comprehensible English aimed at intermediate and advanced students. Other Englishcasters have taken to providing more extensive teaching support for their programs, such as Breaking English News Podcast ([www.breakingenglishnews.com](http://www.breakingenglishnews.com)).

After I submitted the show for syndication on iTunes in late July, 2005, I waited to see if anyone would listen. To my great surprise and delight, the number of listeners steadily grew, and at this writing it is one of the top ranked podcasts in several European countries and Japan. More recently, I’ve launched the TOEFL Podcast ([www.TOEFLPod.com](http://www.TOEFLPod.com)), where students can listen to short conversations and lectures similar to the ones they’ll encounter on the Test of English as a Foreign Language.

### **The Future of Podcasting: Bridging the Intermediate Gap**

Podcasting provides teachers with a potentially unlimited amount of second language listening material delivered directly to their computer. The promise of podcasting is that it will provide individuals outside the publishing industry with a chance to deliver alternative types of listening content

directly to students and teachers. But as with all technology, there are also some potential pitfalls. Perhaps the greatest of these is what we might call the “old wine into new skins” problem. The temptation will be to replicate the often dull, largely unsuccessful listening material that predominates the current market in the podcasting venue.

I see podcasting as the key to helping second language students who have reached an intermediate level of fluency through taking a few courses in school, but

The promise of podcasting is that it will provide individuals outside the publishing industry with a chance to deliver alternative types of listening content directly to students and teachers. But as with all technology, there are also some potential pitfalls. Perhaps the greatest of these is what we might call the “old wine into new skins” problem. The temptation will be to replicate the often dull, largely unsuccessful listening material that predominates the current market in the podcasting venue.

whose progress has stalled well short of proficiency. This problem, well documented in foreign language programs by Beatrice Dupuy at the University of Arizona, exists in large part due to a dearth of materials (and subsequent instruction) that are interesting and comprehensible to intermediate students. Students come out of their years of formal study with some basic communication skills, but often with

insufficient proficiency to access native-speaker texts and materials. By providing lots of easy, intermediate listening material that students enjoy, podcasting can take those students to a more advanced level. What’s more, it can provide input in a large variety of specialized ways. Interested in computers? Golf? Music? Podcasting can fill any niche imaginable.

Of course, once students are at the advanced level, sources of native speaker listening material are readily available (CNN has its own podcast, for example). Podcasting is a bridge to those higher levels of proficiency.

[Back to top](#)

## Concordia Language Villages Makes Arabic Announcement in Washington D.C.

### Hal tatakallam al-'Arabiyya? Do you speak Arabic?

Arabic is the fifth most spoken language in the world. More than 300 million people around the world speak Arabic. Countries, in which Arabic is the official language, stretch from Morocco in the west to Oman in the east.

Sen. Norm Coleman, on behalf of Concordia Language Villages, announced the addition of Arabic, the Villages' 14th language, Oct. 6 in Washington, D.C. Coleman was joined by Ambassador Hussein Hassouna of the League of Arab Nations, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for

Academic Programs Thomas Farrell, Concordia College President Pamela Jolicoeur and Concordia Language Villages Executive Director and CEO Christine Schulze. "Concordia Language Villages uses the magic of Minnesota's north woods as a perfect setting for immersing children in a foreign language," Cole-

man said. "Over the years, Concordia has exposed countless children to strategic languages ranging from Russian to Chinese to Korean and Spanish, and languages like Swedish and Norwegian that are strategic for Minnesotans. What better way for Concordia to continue this wonderful tradition than by giving children exposure to the next strategic language – Arabic." Starting in July 2006, students at the Arabic Language Village, Al-Wāha (The Oasis,) will immerse themselves in the study of the language and culture through a variety of activities, including singing, dancing, arts and meals. [www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org](http://www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org)



*Image by Kaveh Sardari.*

Sen. Norm Coleman speaks about the benefits of teaching children second languages, while Concordia College President Pamela Jolicoeur and Concordia Language Villages Executive Director Christine Schulze look on during Thursday's Arabic Language Village announcement in Washington, D.C.

[Back to top](#)

# El español en California

por *Jacobo Mir y Carlos Prieto*

Centro Español de Recursos de la Oficina de Educación del Consulado de España en Los Angeles,  
Universidad del Sur de California

1. Primera obviedad: el español de España y el de América son diferentes.
2. Segunda obviedad: existe también una gran variedad lingüística entre los países de América.
3. Tercera obviedad: todas esas variantes lingüísticas son “correctas”.
4. Cuarta obviedad: en las zonas fronterizas en las que coexisten dos idiomas hay siempre un riesgo mayor de contaminación lingüística.
5. Quinta obviedad: el español de México (una de esas correctas variantes lingüísticas) hablado en California constituye un claro ejemplo de lengua fronteriza.

En este pequeño artículo pretendemos abordar el tema del español en California para:

1. Reflexionar sobre las diferencias existentes entre el español de la Península y el de México<sup>1</sup>.
2. Reflexionar sobre cuál debiera ser la actitud—y el método—del docente (procedente de España) a la hora de enseñar en español a unos niños/as en su mayoría de origen mexicano y residentes en California.
3. Analizar la situación del español hablado en California, lengua en permanente contacto con el inglés, y motivo de preocupación entre muchos estudiosos de la lengua<sup>2</sup>.
4. Presentar una lista incompleta, a modo de glosario, de algunos de los términos más alejados de nuestra acepción española, bien por ser de origen mexicano, bien por ser calcos y/o adaptaciones del inglés.

Algunos términos lingüísticos:

1. No resulta sencillo definir lengua y dialecto\*. En la actualidad, los lingüistas tienden a buscar un concepto de lengua que englobe aspectos políticos y sociolingüísticos. Desde esta perspectiva, se puede definir lengua como el conjunto formado por una variante estándar y todos sus heterónimos (dependientes de esa variante). La clave está en el concepto de estándar, que es la variante dialectal que se selecciona como referencia para la elaboración de la norma. En el caso del español, la RAE incorpora a la norma elementos de las diferentes variantes latinoamericanas a través de las distintas academias de cada país. ¿Podría entenderse entonces el concepto de lengua española como un concepto unificador de las distintas variantes dialectales, cada una con su propio estándar?
2. Dialecto se define entonces como la variante lingüística asociada a un grupo social determinado (ya sea un grupo de edad, sexo, clase social, religión o una determinada zona geográfica). Esta definición englobaría, por lo tanto, los conceptos tradicionales de variante geográfica y sociolecto. No incluiría ni la variante individual (idiolecto) ni el concepto registro, variantes de un mismo individuo en situaciones comunicativas distintas.
3. Diglosia: coexistencia de dos lenguas en un espacio común.
4. Isoglosa: línea imaginaria que en un atlas pasa por todos los puntos en que se manifiesta un mismo fenómeno lingüístico.
5. Lingua franca: lengua híbrida, o mezcla de lenguas, utilizada en una amplia extensión territorial como lengua de comunicación o de comercio entre hablantes de distintas lenguas.

\*Agradecemos las aportaciones de Sergi Balari (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) y Margarita Ravera (Centro Español de Recursos, Los Angeles) para tratar de definir lengua y dialecto.

<sup>1</sup> Quizás sería este el momento de reflexionar sobre el papel y la legitimidad de la Real Academia de la Lengua Española, que en su intento por velar por el español en el mundo es muchas veces atacada por no recoger en toda su extensión la variedad lingüística de los países de América Latina (a pesar de que todos ellos tienen un miembro que los representa).

<sup>2</sup> En noviembre de 1973 se estableció en Nueva York la Academia Norteamericana, correspondiente de la española, responsable de velar por el español hablado en los Estados Unidos.

## 1. EL ESPAÑOL DE LA PENÍNSULA Y EL DE AMÉRICA: CUESTIONES PREVIAS

“La gran comunidad de hispanohablantes es un gran árbol, en el que cada persona es una hoja”.

Octavio Paz <sup>3</sup>

- Ser de España y hablar español en California supone una elección y una renuncia permanentes: de nada sirve imponer nuestra variante dialectal sobre la de aquí. Aquí vivimos y aquí debemos ser entendidos.
- Ser maestro de España en California y enseñar en español a alumnos mexicanos supone un constante esfuerzo de adaptación y de asimilación a su realidad lingüística: es su modelo del que debemos partir, para mejorarlo, porque ésa es la labor de cualquier docente. Pero no mejorarlo comparándolo y asimilándolo al nuestro, sino tratando de acercarnos a la variante más culta del español de México.
- Ser maestro, en cualquier país y de cualquier disciplina, consiste en participar activamente del proceso de aprendizaje de los alumnos, tratando de generar en ellos la suficiente confianza y entusiasmo para que ese proceso culmine con éxito. Para ello valoraremos siempre positivamente lo que ellos aporten porque sólo así, partiendo de su valoración personal, conseguiremos que compartan nuestro entusiasmo.
- La lengua es nuestro principal rasgo de identidad. Pretender modificarla constituye un atentado contra esa manifestación esencial del género humano.
- Enseñar a leer y a hablar correctamente, en cualquier lengua, constituye un permanente proceso de nivelación: partimos de la realidad lingüística de nuestros alumnos y tratamos de mejorar su expresión, su pronunciación, su escritura. No para cambiar su lengua: la que ellos nos aportan es válida, sólo pretendemos pulirla, engrandecerla, dotarla de sus máximos recursos.
- No comparemos dos modelos lingüísticos distintos (el de aquí y el de allí). Si verdaderamente queremos contribuir al proceso de formación de nuestros alumnos, tratemos de aproximarnos a su realidad —con respeto, con interés— para que nosotros (formadores y pedagogos al fin y al cabo) guiemos a estos niños y niñas en el aprendizaje de su lengua. Para eso sí estamos preparados: para sistematizar, para dotar de estructura a la realización imperfecta de una lengua. No olvidemos que, en torno a los cinco años, el niño posee ya y conoce su sistema lingüístico: es la escuela quien le ayuda a reflexionar sobre esa realidad que ya conoce. Pretender modificarla de raíz (“eso no se pronuncia así”; “eso no existe en español (¡!)”; “esto está mal”) es otra cosa. La conquista ya pasó. Es la hora del respeto y del reconocimiento.

Al estudiar la realidad lingüística de América, no podemos olvidar ni los rasgos procedentes de las lenguas indígenas, ni el hecho de que durante siglos haya sido una lengua impuesta el vehículo de comunicación entre varios millones de hablantes. A modo de recordatorio, éstas son las principales lenguas indígenas, la mayoría de las cuales todavía perviven:

1. Arahuaqueño, en las Antillas.
2. Náhuatl, en las altiplanicies mexicanas.
3. Maya, en la Península del Yucatán.
4. Quechua, en Perú y norte de Chile.
5. Aimara, en Bolivia.
6. Guaraní, en Paraguay y Paraná.
7. Mapuche, en el sur de Chile.

<sup>3</sup> “Nuestra lengua”, artículo publicado en La Jornada, México, el 8 de abril de 1997

**“Idiomas bajo acoso”**, artículo de Carlos Montemayor Zacatecas, publicado en *La Jornada* el 9 de abril de 1997.

Recojo a continuación algunas de las ideas publicadas en el citado artículo:

1. En el nuevo siglo, México será probablemente la mayor nación hispana del mundo, y probablemente Estados Unidos será la segunda nación hispanoparlante del planeta.
2. La castellanización de América, vista como una forma agresiva de destrucción cultural. La lengua española como lengua impuesta, de cultura, de trabajo y de prestigio social.
3. Paralelismo entre el español y las lenguas indígenas, y el inglés y el español en Estados Unidos. Muchas familias no quieren que los hijos aprendan la lengua indígena; quieren que hablen español porque así estarán mejor preparados para sobrevivir. Muchas familias de hispanohablantes en Estados Unidos, por la misma razón, no quieren que sus hijos hablen español.
4. Rechazo a la idea de que el español que se habla en Castilla es la norma del español que se habla en el mundo. “Hoy es imposible entender nuestra lengua española a partir de lo que sólo ocurre con los escritores, lingüistas o hablantes de España”.

Si bien algunas de las ideas aquí vertidas pueden resultar algo sorprendentes para algunos, ofrecen un punto de vista interesante, que invita a la reflexión.

### 1.1. Rasgos del español de América:

La lengua española que se habla actualmente en América ha evolucionado mucho con respecto a la que se implantó con el descubrimiento. Sin embargo, comparándola con la peninsular actual, y pese a las diferencias, sigue sorprendiendo por su unidad y uniformidad con respecto a la lengua hablada en España. Las diferencias son más evidentes en el nivel léxico que en el morfosintáctico o fonético. Es decir, la lengua culta hablada en América presenta una gran homogeneidad con respecto a la de España; las variantes lingüísticas aparecen en otros niveles de lengua: en el familiar, en el popular o en el coloquial.

De todos es conocido que muchos de los rasgos de la pronunciación del español de América son rasgos propios de las regiones meridionales de España. Muchos de estos rasgos están ya atestiguados a finales del siglo XV en el sur de la península; asimismo, se sabe también que la mayoría de los emigrantes españoles que pasaron a América procedían de la actual Andalucía, y los que no procedían de esa zona, probablemente pasaron mucho tiempo allí antes de poder embarcar para el largo viaje que había de llevarles a las Indias, asimilando así rasgos propios de la región. Eso explica muchos de los rasgos que a continuación vamos a presentar. Aparecen con (\*) los rasgos más característicos de México.

[Back to top](#)

[Click here](#) to download this 45-page document in its entirety from el Centro Español de Recursos de la Oficina de Educación del Consulado de España en Los Angeles, Universidad del Sur de California

Re-printed with permission, courtesy of Jacobo Mir., Asesor Técnico / Education Advisor, Embajada de España / Embassy of Spain, Chicago Public Schools.

## Letters to the Editor

In regard to The Teddy Story, printed in the Winter, 2005 edition, published in December.

As you may be aware by now, this story is a work of fiction (which should be credited to the appropriate person) that has turned into an urban legend.

Please see these references for confirmation:

<http://www.post-gazette.com/columnists/20010929roddy0929p5.asp>

[http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl\\_teddy\\_stoddard.htm](http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_teddy_stoddard.htm)

<http://www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/t/teddy.htm>

“The story was written by Elizabeth Silance Ballard and published in Home Life magazine in 1976. It was not represented as being a true story but rather as a piece of fiction. It was later republished in the magazine in 1976 with the notation that it was one of the most requested stories in the magazine’s history.”

“For the record, the only Stoddard connected with Iowa Methodist Hospital in Des Moines was John D. Stoddard, an engineer and cancer victim, after whom the John Stoddard Cancer Center was named. He died in 1998.”

It is certainly a heartwarming story, and as such deserved inclusion in the online journal in its original and correctly credited form.

Katie Carter

\* \* \* \* \*

The Teddy Story has been widely circulated among teachers, and not checking its urban legend status was an error we regret. We found the original work of

fiction by Elizabeth Silance Ballard at: <http://urbanlegends.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.pattishomepage.com/read/teddy.htm>

On a personal note, the disillusionment that this revelation represents is tragically disappointing.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention and for helping us to give appropriate credit to the author.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank-you for the look into the journal. I just wanted to comment about your article “Please Rock the Babies”. My parents used to live in Bucerias and they often go to Vallarta...I don’t think they know about the orphanage but now that this has been brought to my attention they might be able to lend a helping hand as well as make some donations....I will too when I decide to go to Vallarta again.

Thank-you,

Nadina Dodd  
LSI Marketing  
Vancouver, Canada



[Back to top](#)

# INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

## Cameroon, Africa

by *Karen Rowan*

There is a used clothing market in Cameroon, Africa that is informally referred to by residents as “The Dead White Man’s Market” where, often, clothing that was donated in the United States to second hand stores is re-sold. The Dead White Man’s Market earned its nickname because the purchasers can’t believe that clothing in such good condition could possibly have been given away by people who are still living.



The Chief and his first wife in Keleng, West Province, Cameroon, pictured with David Benson (center).

David Benson (center of photo), former resident of Cameroon, returned in December for a visit, which covered 6 villages in 5 provinces. He was photographed here in traditional dress with the Chief of Keleng and his first wife (he has twelve). While in Cameroon, he distributed clothing and toys he had collected in Colorado Springs, Colorado, US to children in three of those villages. In spite of the generally warm climate, winters can be as cold as 40 or 50 degrees. Jackets and warm clothes are badly needed.

Benson had been living in Cameroon since 1992 and began teaching with the School for International Training in 1996. After five bouts of malaria, David is now living in the United States in Colorado teaching history at The Colorado Springs School. He is also the Dean of the French Voyageur Camp, part of Concordia Language Villages, in Bemidji, MN and returns each summer to direct that program.

“Christmas-time in Cameroon is family time,” Benson says. “I wanted to return to spend time with the families who had ‘adopted’ me.” Collecting

Cameroon is slightly larger than the state of California and is located in Western Africa. The population is 16,380,005, a number which explicitly takes into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected



The children of the Chief of Keleng in Foto, West Province, Cameroon wearing new clothes from Colorado.



(July 2005 est.). <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cm.html> Nearly 7% in Cameroon suffer from AIDS. By contrast, .6% of residents of the US suffer from the same disease.

Many of the photographs below are labeled by region.

There is a 30% unemployment rate in Cameroon and 48% of all residents live at or below the poverty line.

Benson has built a home in the village of Keleng and plans on finding a way to split his time between Colorado and Cameroon in the future.



Yemele children before and after receiving their Christmas clothes. Dschang, West Province, Cameroon.





Clearing the road on the way to Campo-Ma'an National Park, South Province, Cameroon. The National Park is located near Kribi on the map.



Playing Dreidel with the Tsamo children in Dschang, West Province, Cameroon. Western Cameroon is located near Bafoussam on the map. It is the capital of the West Province.



Typical roads in the rainforest region. Progress is made at the rate of about 10K per hour.



Nnane children in Dschang, West Province, Cameroon on Christmas.



Sabga, Northwest Province, Cameroon. They are semi-nomadic, cattle herding people (Fulani). Sabga is located near Bamenda (see map) and is the capital of the Northwest Province.



Tsamo children playing with their Christmas presents, sponge toys that grow in water.



Teenagers of Fongo Tongo with Christmas clothes from Colorado. Collins "Kuete" (middle) is the second in command to the Chief of the same village.

This hours-old newborn baby lies on a bed in a hospital in Dschang next to her mother.





Fongo Tongo.  
Tsamo children on  
one of the Bambou-  
tos mountains.



Children at the Chief's palace pose with their plastic cell phone Christmas presents.



[Back to top](#)

*Pictures may not be used without express permission of the photographer. Please contact [dbenson@cord.edu](mailto:dbenson@cord.edu). For information about Concordia Language Villages, see article, page 19. For information about The School for International Training, please go to [www.sit.edu/](http://www.sit.edu/). For information about The Colorado Springs School, please go to [www.css.org](http://www.css.org).*

# Fluency Fast

**Get on the Bus!**  
**The EXPRESSway to New Worlds**

**\$149**

Fluency Fast Language Classes  
[www.FluencyFast.com](http://www.FluencyFast.com) 1-866-WWW-FLUE(ncy)

DATES	CITY	LANGUAGES
May 4,5,6	Colorado Springs, CO	Spanish
May 8 - 12	Murfreesboro, TN	Spanish
June 8, 9, 10, 11	Denver, CO	French, Spanish
June 26,27, 28,29	Chicago, IL	French, Spanish
June 27-30	Minneapolis, MN	French, Spanish, Russian
July 11-14	Burlington, VT	Arabic, French, German, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish
July 24 -27	Jacksonville, FL	French
July 31 -Aug 3	Costa Mesa, CA	French, Spanish
August 8-11	Colorado Springs, CO	French, German, Spanish

*Learn a language in 3-4 days through TPRS!*



# Language Assistants Language Assistants



educación  
exterior



in Spain



- ✓ Are you in your last year of university or a recent graduate?
- ✓ Do you have an intermediate to advanced level of Spanish and would like to learn more about the language and culture of Spain?
- ✓ Would you like to have a language teaching experience in Spain? If so, you can apply for one of the ca. **482 grants** offered by the Ministry of Education and Science in collaboration with several Regional Governments of Spain.

This **Language and Culture Assistant Program** offers you the possibility of working in an elementary or secondary school from **October 2006 to June 2007**.

This **Language and Culture Assistant Program** is open to last-year university students or recent graduates, with an intermediate to advanced level of Spanish and interested in acquiring experience as language teachers abroad.

Assistants work for **12 hours** a week helping English language teachers with conversation and cultural activities.

Assistants receive **631 euros/month** + teacher training, medical insurance and a certificate of participation in the program among other benefits.

For more information, please visit the website of the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain

<http://www.sgci.mec.es/usa/AC/indexing.shtml>

e-mail: [norteamericanos@mec.es](mailto:norteamericanos@mec.es) Tel: 202 728 2335 Fax: 202 728 2313

**Apply now!**

**Application deadline: April 16, 2006**

## When teachers die.....

What happens when teachers die?

A teacher dies and goes to Heaven. When she gets there she meets St. Peter at the pearly white gates.

St. Peter says to her, "Welcome to Heaven. Let me give you an orientation first."

So, St. Peter takes her to some beautiful mansions. The teacher asks, "Who lives here in these beautiful houses?"

"These are for doctors. They did a lot of good on Earth so they get a nice mansion," replied St. Peter. St. Peter takes the teacher to some more mansions. These were more magnificent than the first.

"Wow, who lives here?"

"These mansions are for social workers. They did a lot of good on Earth but didn't make a lot of money so they get a better house."

St. Peter took the teacher to some more mansions. These were the most gorgeous homes she had ever seen. They had huge columns, well manicured lawns, beautiful stained glass windows, the works!

"These are the most beautiful homes I have ever seen," exclaimed the teacher "who lives here?!"

"Teachers live here," said St. Peter, "they did much good on Earth and received very little money so they get the best houses in all of Heaven."

"But where are all of the teachers?" inquired the teacher.

St. Peter answered, "Oh, they'll be back soon. They're all in Hell at an in-service."

*(Forwarded by email. Unknown origin.)*

[Back to top](#)

## LINKS & RESOURCES

### Subscribe to IJFLT

To subscribe to *The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, a free, on-line quarterly journal, go to:

[www.ijflt.com](http://www.ijflt.com)

[1st quarter, Winter, 2004](#)

[2nd quarter, Spring, 2005](#)

[3rd quarter, Summer, 2005](#)

[4th quarter, Fall, 2005](#)

To submit articles for review, send them by attachment to [IJFLT@TPRStories.com](mailto:IJFLT@TPRStories.com)

### FORMATTING CHANGES:

Please be advised that the second year of IJFLT, volume 2, begins with Winter 2006 and was published in the first quarter of 2006. Spring, Summer and Fall issues will follow quarterly

**Found a helpful link or interesting web site that should be shared with other teachers? Have an idea for an article or something that works in your classroom? Want to let teachers know about upcoming state language conferences, workshops or trainings? Send us an email, [IJFLT@TPRStories.com](mailto:IJFLT@TPRStories.com).**

### ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

<http://www.gwu.edu/~slavic/actfl.htm>

### National Standards (U.S.)

<http://www.cas.usf.edu/languages/whystudy/standard.htm>

### National Association of Bilingual Educators (U.S.)

<http://www.NABE.org>

## Download Free Question Word Posters in:

French-<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20French1.doc>

German-<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20German.doc>

Spanish-<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20Spanish.doc>

or English-<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20English.doc>

[www.FluencyFast.com](http://www.FluencyFast.com)

## Fluency Fast Language Classes

Learn beginning Spanish, French, Russian, German, Mandarin or Arabic in 4 days through TPRS

Summer 2006

### Editor:

Karen Rowan

### Editorial Board:

Kyung Sook Cho, PhD

Busan National University of Education,  
Busan, Korea

Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth, Ph.D.

New York University  
New York, USA

Timothy John Ebsworth, Ph.D

Education, College of New Rochelle, NY

Stephen Krashen, PhD

University of Southern California (Emeritus)  
Los Angeles, CA

Sy-ying Lee, PhD

National Taipei University  
Taipei, Taiwan

Beniko Mason, PhD

International Buddhist University,  
Osaka, Japan

Steven R. Sternfeld, PhD

University of Utah  
Salt Lake City, Utah



[Back to top](#)

Subscribe to The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching at [www.ijflt.com](http://www.ijflt.com). IJFLT is a free, quarterly, on-line journal.