

Parrot Time

The Thinking of Speaking

Issue #24 November / December 2016

SEAMi

Introducing Southeast
Asia in Taiwan

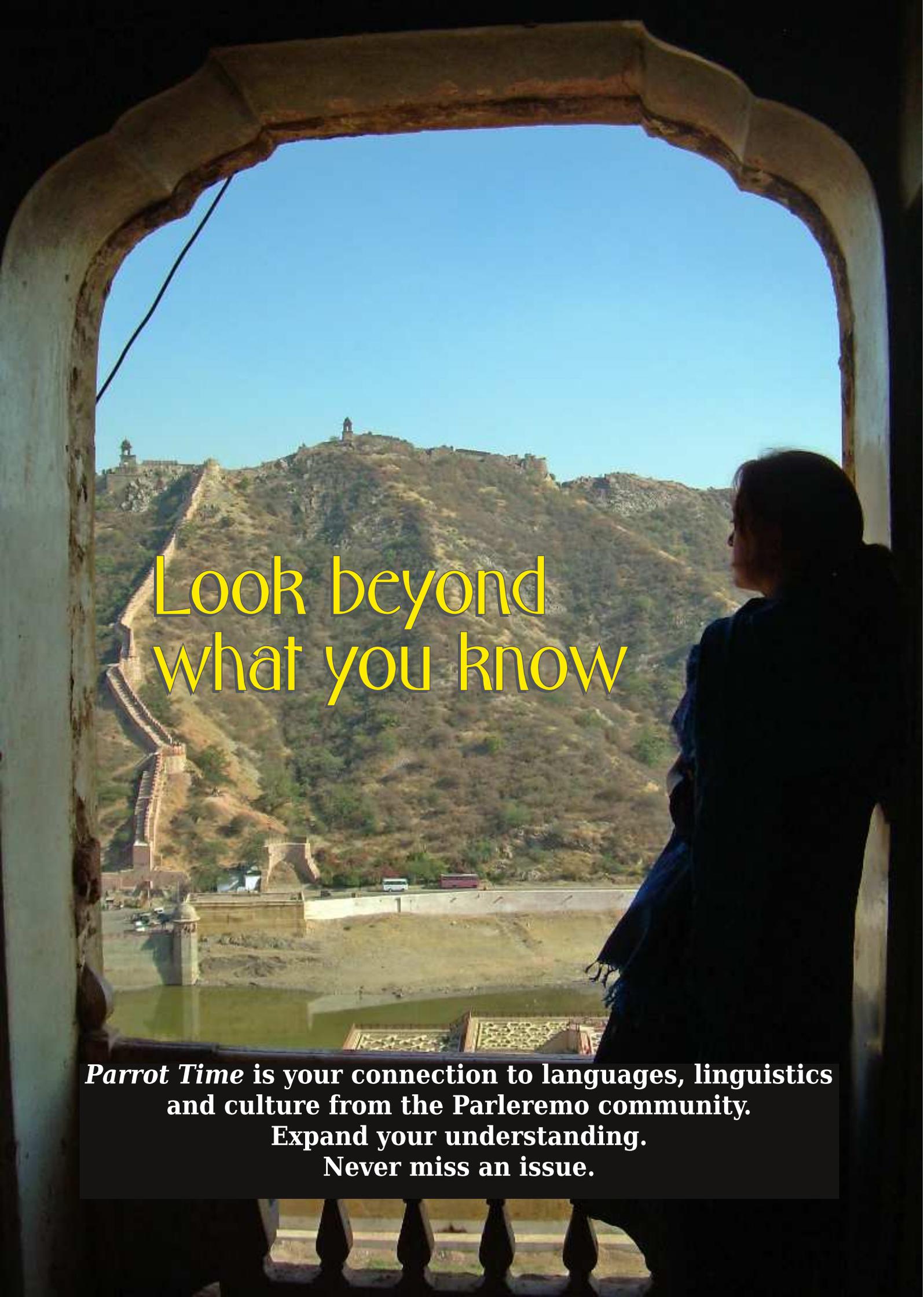
Around the World in
80 Days

Disney does it wrong

Bad Word Dictionary

What every language needs?



A woman in silhouette is looking out of an arched window. The view outside shows a hillside with a fort on top, a long wall leading up the hill, and a dry well in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

Look beyond
what you know

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Editor: Erik Zidowecki
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Cover: Wherever we go, we take our language with us. It is one of the truly universal tools we don't have to pack in our bags.

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When people from several cultures come together, they really need a place to learn about each other. Teddy Nee writes about SEAMi, the first Southeast Asian-themed bookstore in Taiwan, which is uniting the community.



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Traveing the world is a grand adventure, something we can thoroughly enjoy. The same cannot be said of Disney's adaptation of Jules Verne's novel "Around the World in 80 Days".

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Wyt ti'n siarad Cymraeg?

*Learn a language,
Make friends,
Have fun!*

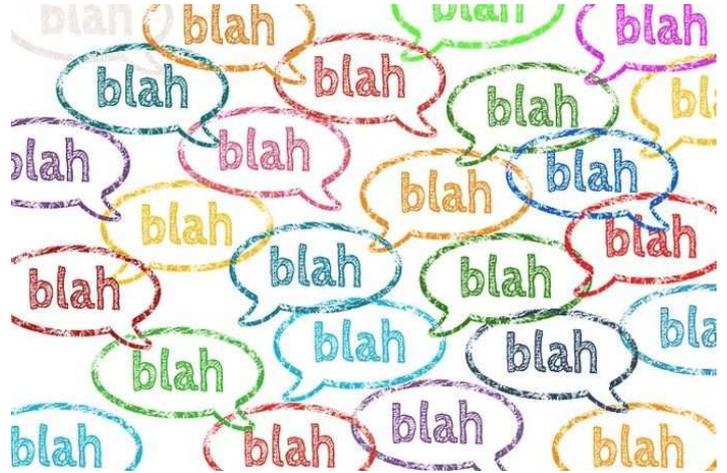
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Saying Without Meaning

People love to talk about how language is the key to communications. We often hear that the main reason for learning a language is to be able to convey our thoughts to others.

While this is true, there is also an ironic part of language we often don't mention when listening to the media, politicians, and other information outlets. That is the way in which how we say something can be used to avoid actual information from being dissimilated.



The most blatant ways of doing can be seen when asking someone a question they don't want to answer. They will give you a reply, but will often start with a phrase like "first of all" or "let me start by saying", which are English linguistic cues that what is about to follow is nothing related to what you asked. The speaker will then transition into another topic, on which they feel they can safely speak at length in the hopes that you will forget what you asked them.

Another method I have seen, which is often done in news or entertainment articles is the repeating of the same information (useful or not) in several ways which are saying the same thing but which are different enough so as the audience doesn't notice. This is a great tool for hiding ignorance or trying to build up a story which has little substance to it.

One of my favorite tricks which has become prevalent with the proliferation of news outlets and blogs on the internet is what I call "referencing info". This is when something gets reported not as fact, but as something said by someone else. For example, if a website announces that the United Nations has voted to only use Esperanto in all its official communications from now on, other websites and news outlets will report the same. However, rather than bothering to confirm the story, as would (or should) normally be done by any professional journalist, their story will contain a disclaimer in the form of "according to ...".

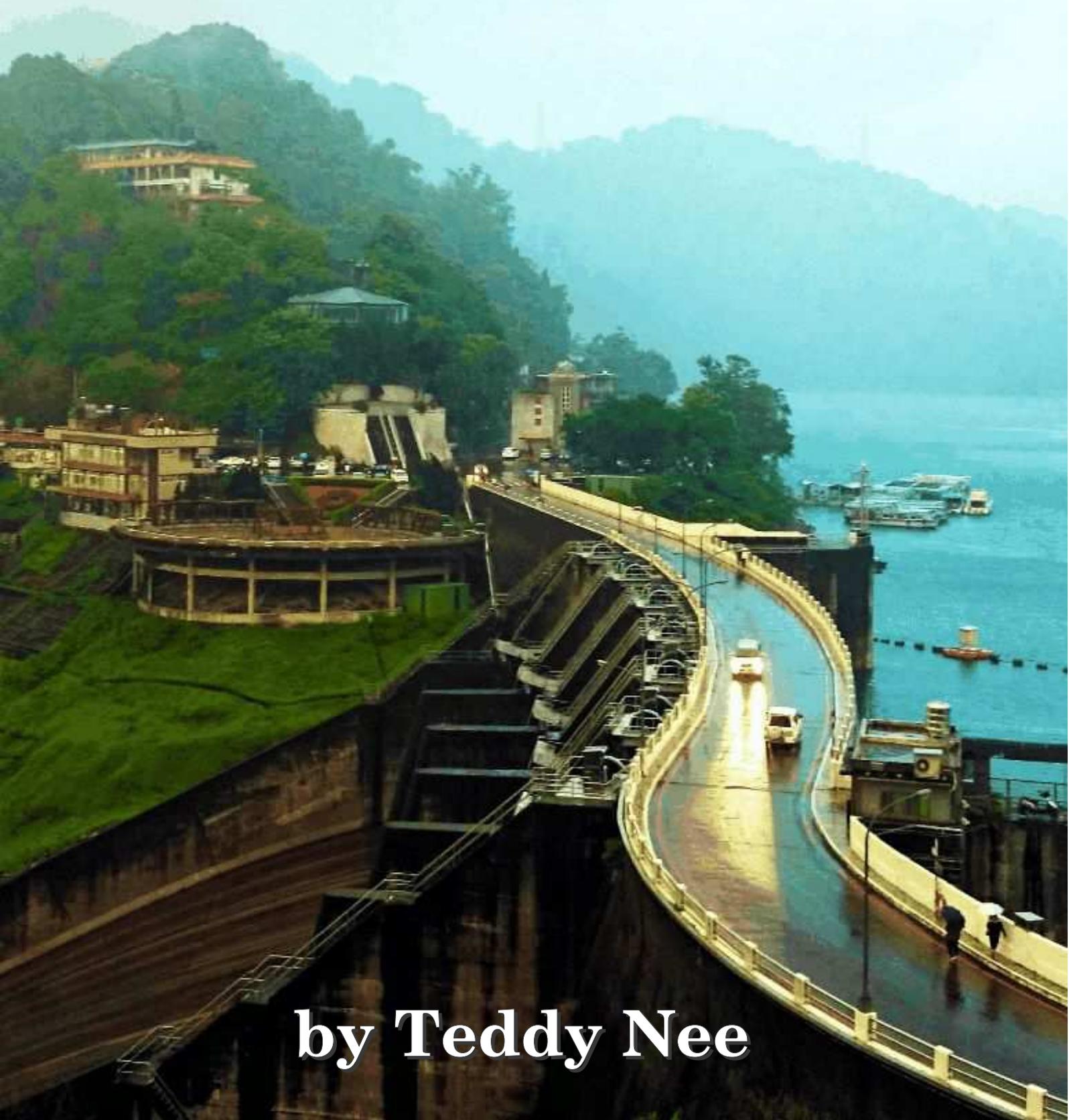
That reference back to the original story is key because it allows the site to basically repeat whatever they want without verifying. They are actually *not* reporting on the story, but rather reporting on what the other website reported on. Clever, eh? In this way, no one can ever accuse them of giving misleading information.

So while you might be trying to communicate with others, be aware that others may be using language to hide or give you false information. This can happen in any language.

Erik Zidowecki

ERIK ZIDOWECKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Introducing Southeast Asia in Taiwan



by **Teddy Nee**



If you have been to Taiwan, you may notice that there are many non-oriental people and foreign restaurants. More than half a million immigrants from more than 160 countries call Taiwan their second home, and nearly 200,000 of them are originally from Southeast Asia. Some are married to Taiwanese people, thus making them an integral part of Taiwan's society.

Four major Southeast Asian countries that contribute the most to Taiwan's development are Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines. Their existence is so significant that the Taiwanese government has taken the initiative to facilitate their integration in order to make them feel like home in

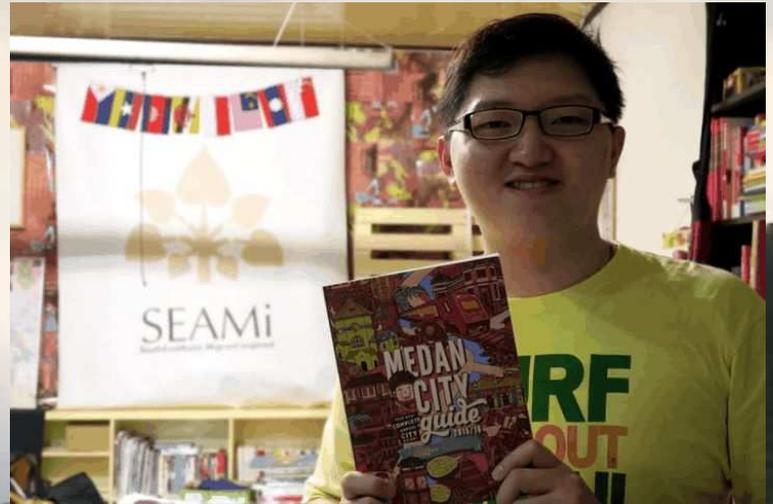
Taiwan. You can easily see announcements written in Southeast Asian languages, and there are also many Southeast Asian shops and restaurants.

There are Vietnamese and Thai restaurants nearby where I live in Taiwan, so it is easy for me to talk in these languages with the native speakers anytime I want. Although there are many Southeast Asians, a lot of Taiwanese seems not to understand much about the culture, people, language, or even showing interest towards Southeast Asia. As a result, stereotypes occurred and it has caused a gap within the society.



Introducing the culture of Batak ethnic from Indonesia

Me posing with a city guidebook from my hometown, Medan city



The founder of SEAMi, Zhou Xi, in the magazine of Department of Cultural Affairs Taoyuan city



A video shoot in progress



Discussing inside SEAMi



Vietnamese books



SEAMi magazine



South East Asian Migrant inspired (SEAMi)

On March 2015, the first Southeast Asian-themed bookstore in Taiwan was opened in Taoyuan city. It is located behind Taoyuan train station, which is a strategic place to attract Southeast Asian people because that is where “Little Southeast Asia” is located. It has become a gathering place for many Indonesian, Vietnamese, Thai, and Filipino, especially on weekends.

This bookstore, called South East Asian Migrant inspired (SEAMi), is owned by an non-profit organization (NPO) that goes by the same name, and is supported by the government. There are books not only in all Southeast Asian languages, but also in English, Chinese,

and even Esperanto (donated by the Taiwan Esperanto Association).

Although it is a bookstore, SEAMi actually has other programs and services, such as a library, language courses, and cultural activities. I have participated in some of their cultural events, like Filipino Migrants’ Day, tasting Malaysian cuisine, introducing Indonesia’s Batak ethnic culture, and celebrating Mid-Autumn Festival in Vietnamese style, just to name a few. I have also taken Filipino, Thai, and Vietnamese language courses, and I have even presented various topics there, mostly about Medan city (my home town), Indonesia and its language, and even language learning.



Filipino Migrants’ Day



Making Vietnamese Mid-Autumn Festival lanterns

SEAMi has contributed so much to the society by providing a platform for Taiwanese people to learn about Southeast Asia and at the same time, for Southeast Asians in Taiwan to know more Taiwanese friends and to take the opportunity to introduce their homelands and cultures. Some overseas and local news media services have covered the story of SEAMi, including [TEDx Taoyuan](#), [National Taiwan University](#) (the best university in Taiwan), and the [Department of Cultural Affairs Taoyuan city](#).

Facebook:

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www.facebook.com/SoutheastAsian-MigrantInspired

Teddy is an avid language learner, blogger, engineer, and a collector. He has a dream to make this world a better place through language learning. Apart from learning languages, he also likes reading and playing ukulele. You can speak with him in Medan Hokkien, Indonesian, English, Chinese Mandarin, Spanish, and Esperanto. Visit his blog at www.neeslanguageblog.com



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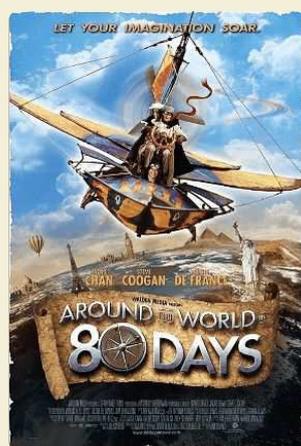
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Around the World in 80 Days

2h
(PG) Action / Adventure / Comedy / Family
16 June 2004 (USA)

Country: USA / Germany / Ireland / UK
Languages: English / French / Mandarin Chinese / Hindi

It tries to be funny, including cameos by various comedic actors doing little parts, but they all tend to fall flat.

If you like to travel, then you have probably heard about or read the Jules Verne classic “Around the World in 80 Days”. You may have seen the 1956 film adaptation of the book.

For those of you who have, it is probably best that you don't see the 2004 film version from Disney starring Steve Coogan and Jackie Chan. I made the mistake of thinking “Travel film, Jackie Chan, and probably a few languages spoken. Sounds great!” and fell into the trap of watching this mess.

The basic storyline of the story for all three versions is that Englishman Phineas Fogg makes a wager that he can travel around the world in 80s day in the late 19th century. He and his new French valet, Passepartout, embark on the journey but are troubled along the way by unforeseen circumstances as well as an English detective who thinks they are related to a bank robbery.

From there, this film version doesn't really attempt to stick to the original, and they did that by design, going for a more comedic approach to this adventure story. The problem is, it fails as a comedy, adventure, or even a children's film. It feels too much like it is trying to be all of them at the same time, which is very difficult to achieve.

The main problem is one that can be found in many of Jackie Chan's films over the past two decades. For those who have never seen a Chan film, they are full of high speed fighting action mixed with Chan's comedic style. When he started working with Hollywood, they decided to stick him with a comedic actor in each film, figuring they would make a great combination. Judging from the popularity, many of them did work well.

However, for me, these films are often hard to watch because they appear to be silly comedies when the comedic actor is doing his stuff, then they turn into Jackie Chan adventures whenever there is a fight scene, giving each film a dual, if not disjointed, personality.

Around the World in 80 Days has the same problem. Chan's Passepartout is being pursued by some Chinese warrior clan to steal



Phineas Fogg and Passepartout preparing to leave



Oh look! It's the Terminator!

back a Jade Buddha which Passepartout stole from the English bank because it was stolen from his village in China. This means that during the trip, there are sudden fighting sequences which don't really fit the rest of the film's tone.

Well, actually, it is hard to determine the film's tone. It tries to be funny, including cameos by various comedic actors doing little parts, but they all tend to fall flat. Some of the "humor" is rather vulgar or just strangely added, especially considering this is a Disney film. Examples include a ship captain pulling up his shirt to reveal that a shark has bitten off his nipples and one of the English gentleman giving an interested smile when Fogg mentions he has worn women's clothing.

On top of that, there are portions of *Around the World in 80 Days* which are very poorly edited, like a sudden shift in a scene that doesn't make any sense. Some entire parts don't make any sense at all, and the ending sequence is dragged out far too long.

There are some positive things to say. The special effects are done well, and the views of



Our heroes looking at something



More star appearances!

"the world" are whimsical rather than realistic, which works for the story. There are also a few different languages heard, including French, Mandarin Chinese, and Hindi. But even these language scenes are wasted opportunities, because somehow, even in a remote China village and on a train in India, everyone including the children speak proper English, over a century before Skype and DuoLingo. The fight scenes are, of course, fantastic and funny, as one would expect from Jackie Chan.

You might also like some of the cameos by actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rob Schneider, Luke Wilson, Owen Wilson, Mark Addy, and John Cleese. All of these appearances take you out of the story because your mind is going "Hey! That's!", though, so I don't consider them as positive additions.

There is even a scene with singer Macy Gray, playing "Sleeping French Woman". The writers actually created a scene of a woman with a child in a room, both of whom are saved by Passepartout when part of the room catches fire, just for her to have a role.

I sat through the entire film and it was entertaining, but only if you have nothing better to do. At the end, I felt cheated, not inspired. If you want to see Jackie Chan in action, watch one of his Chinese films. It will be much funnier than this sad Disney production. **PT**



Suddenly, it turns into a Jackie Chan movie

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Where Are You?

Unlike the cities normally featured here, this one is very new, in the relative scope of history. Although it is the second largest city in its respective country, it was only founded in the early 20th century. As a major tourist centre, it lies on the coast and has been constantly enlarged since the 1980s.

It was settled as a small fishing village in 1905 and got its name from a local plant which grew there since ancient times. What jump started its growth was the discovery of oil in the region in 1913, although actual collection and exportation of it didn't start until 1921.

It then became part of the armed forces and was fortified against attack. It was a target during wars, especially 1973, when an unsuccessful invasion by Israeli forces was repelled.

Since then, it has returned to a more civilian role. The stunning landscape and welcoming climate combine with the long stretches of natural beaches. There are many popular dive sites, and tourists can also visit shipwrecks. So amiable are the temperatures year round that many Europeans spend the winter months, Christmas, and New Year, in the various holiday villages and hotels of the city.

Can you name this location and country?

Last month's answer: Tallinn, Estonia



Book Look

Bad Words Dictionary and even worse expressions

by Voy Sobon

Language: English

Item Rating: ★★★★★

The *Bad Words Dictionary* definitely has its niche in the language resource world. How many of us have been frustrated by not being able to swear, curse, or enjoy some of the more “colorful” words of a language, and found your normal dictionary somewhat lacking in the “vulgar” language? I’ve actually found myself judging a possible new dictionary by how many of those “nasty” words it contains. The more it contains, the more complete it is.

Basically, dictionaries shy away from publishing what might be construed as obscene words. Most would have words for “sex” or “breast” since those have safer meanings. However, your average multilingual dictionary won’t have words for “penis” or “vagina”, and I can guarantee they won’t tell you how to say “fuck off”, “whore”, or “blowjob”.

That’s where the *Bad Words Dictionary* comes in. It gives you hundreds of vulgar words and phrases in English, Spanish, German, French, Dutch, and Japanese. Other volumes of this are supposed to exist for other language combinations, but I haven’t seen them.

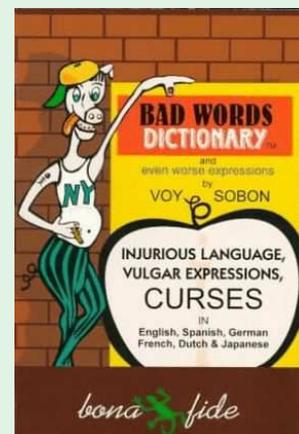
So now, when you are visiting Germany, and some punk on the street tells you to “Verpiß dich”, you can respond back with “Leck mich!”. Or, when that Dutch “dijenkletser” with the big “bloemkolen” winks at you, you can yell “Te gek!” and do some “rondneuken”.

Not all the entries are vulgar. Many are just slang, and some are even positive. You can describe a Spanish couple as “pareja”, even if you are “novato” with the language. There are entries for slang like “inside job”, “groupie”, “dude”, and “rap sheet”.

This book isn’t fancy, to say the least. It’s written in large bold print, and each letter section is preceded by a rather crude drawing of the book’s host, Pete the Pig®, in various activities and poses. In other words, this isn’t a serious dictionary. While the material seems to be accurate, it will never compete with the quality of a Webster’s or Oxford dictionary.

My serious complaint about the dictionary is there is no cross-referencing. The entries are only in alphabetical order by English, so if some French guy calls you “un couillon”, you won’t be able to instantly look up what he said and reply back.

I tried some of these words out with other people, and they seemed to be mostly accurate. One person confirmed the meanings of the German terms I used. One of the Dutch terms I tried seemed to be a somewhat vague translation, but that has to be expected with slang. While I failed to offend anyone of them, they did comment that it was odd to hear such language from me. Looks I need to study this book more. **PT**





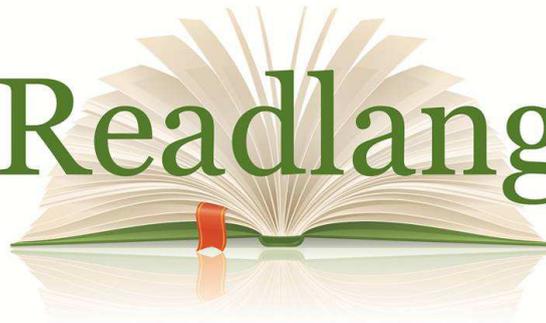
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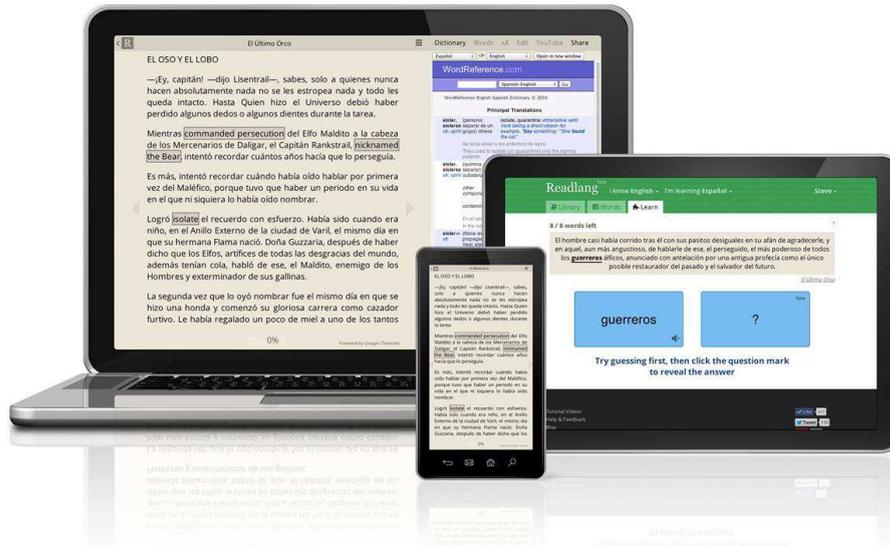


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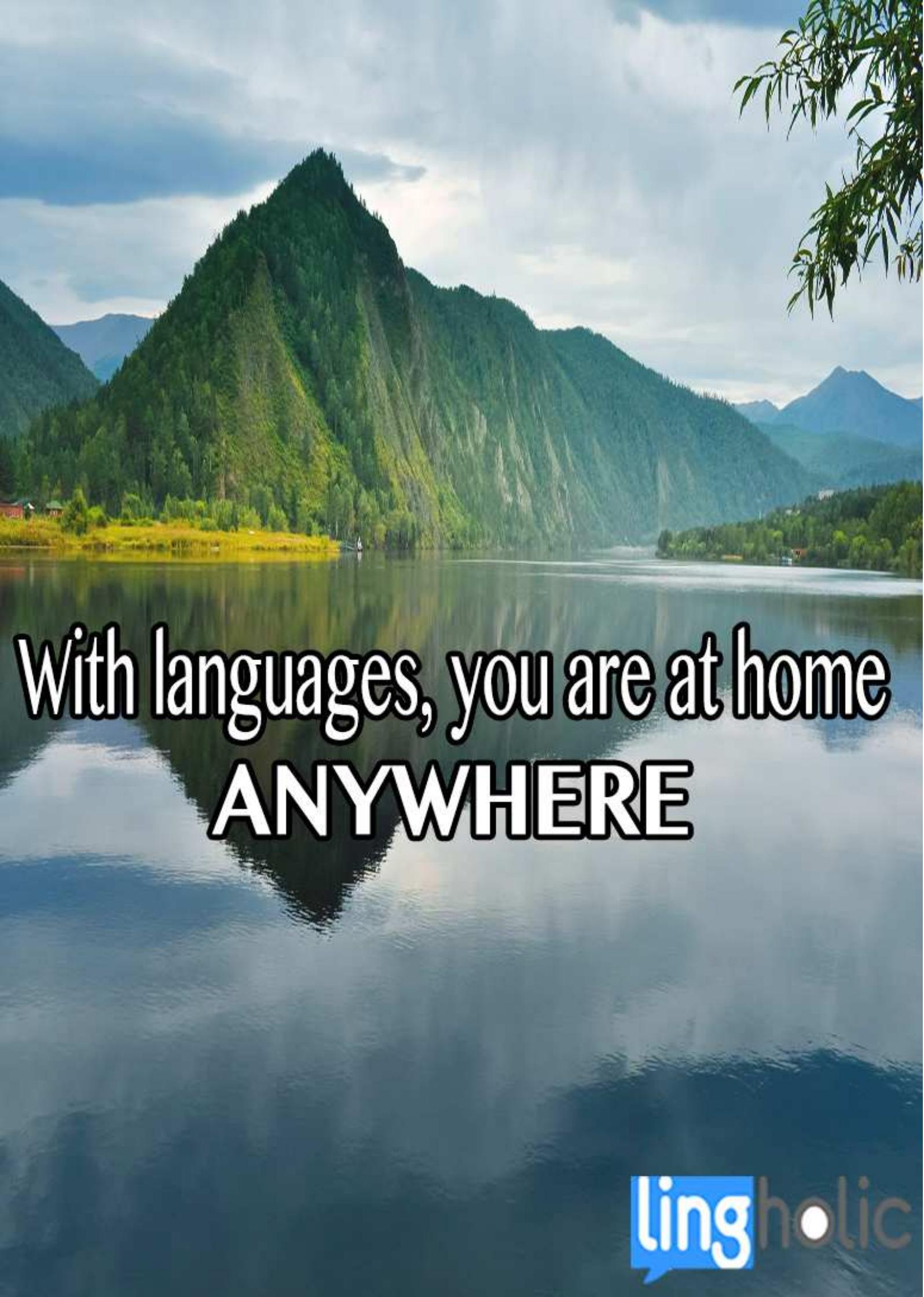
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With languages, you are at home
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Basic Guide to Welsh

Welsh is Celtic languages, spoken natively in Wales by over 3 million residents. It is often very daunting for people to learn it because of the seeming lack of vowels and difference between spelling and pronunciation.

Here are some beginner words and phrases in Welsh for a basic introduction to it.



Good morning.

Bore da.

Good afternoon.

Prynhawn da.

Good night.

Nos da.

Hello.

Helo.

How are you?

Sut ydych chi?

Fine, thank you.

lawn, diolch.

What is your name?

Be' dy'ch enw chi?

My name is ...

... yw f'enw i.

Nice to meet you.

Cwrdd â chi yn foddhaus.

Goodbye

Hwyl fawr

Yes

Ie / Ia

No

Na

Please	Os gwelwch yn dda
Thank you	Diolch
You're welcome	Croeso
I do not understand.	Dw i ddim yn deall.
Where is the toilet?	Ble mae'r toiled?
Excuse me.	Esgusodwch fi.
I beg your pardon!	Esgusodwch fi!
I don't speak Welsh.	Alla i ddim siarad Cymraeg.
I speak a little Welsh.	Rwyn siarad tamaid bach o Gymraeg.
Do you speak English?	Ydych chi'n siarad Saesneg?
Help!	Help!
Look out!	Hendiwch!
Have a nice day.	Cael diwrnod braf.



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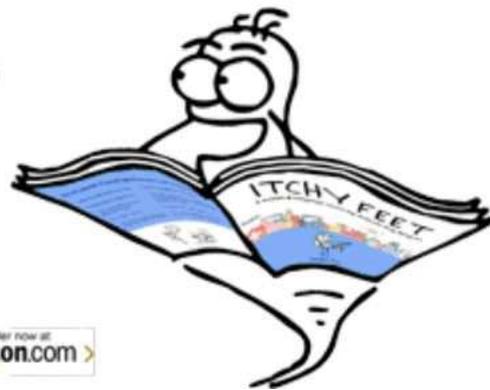
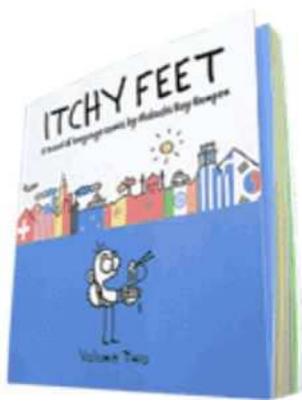
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Why do I bother?
I don't get anything
the teacher says.

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like a drag sometimes, doesn't it?

(But it doesn't have to be.)



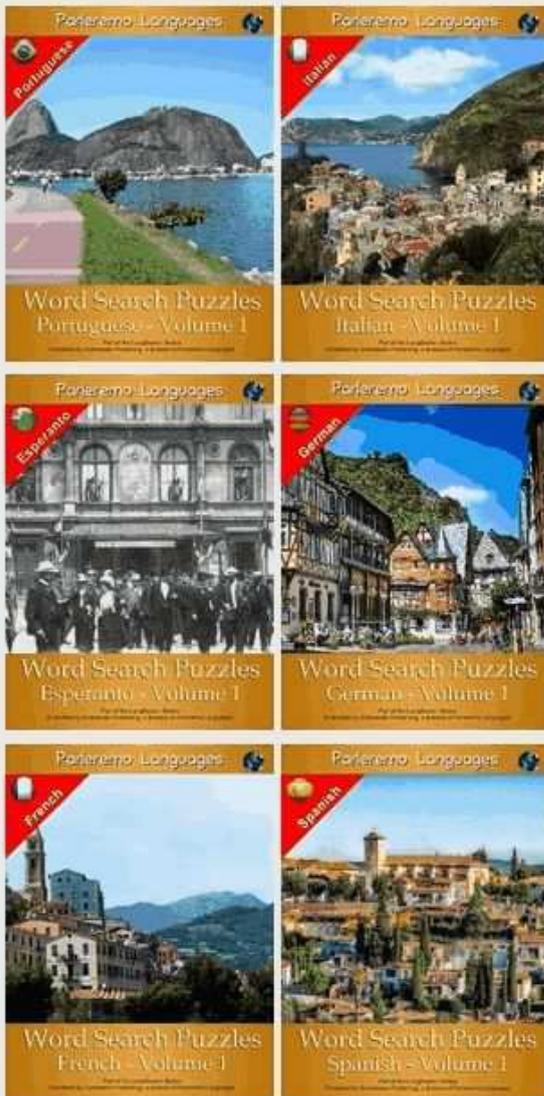
Hi! My name is Siskia, and I'm the crazy mind behind The Polyglotist. I started learning Japanese in my twenties, but not before just about everybody scared me about how difficult it was going to be. I tried learning it every way I could, and failed. Then I started learning it my own way, and **succeeded**.
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Linguistics

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<http://accent.gmu.edu/>



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Tagalog



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Catalan



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Russian



Credits

Letter From the Editor - Saying Without Meaning

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• "Around the World in 80 Days" Internet Movie Database <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0327437/>>

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Associate Editor: Olivier Elzingre

Contributors:

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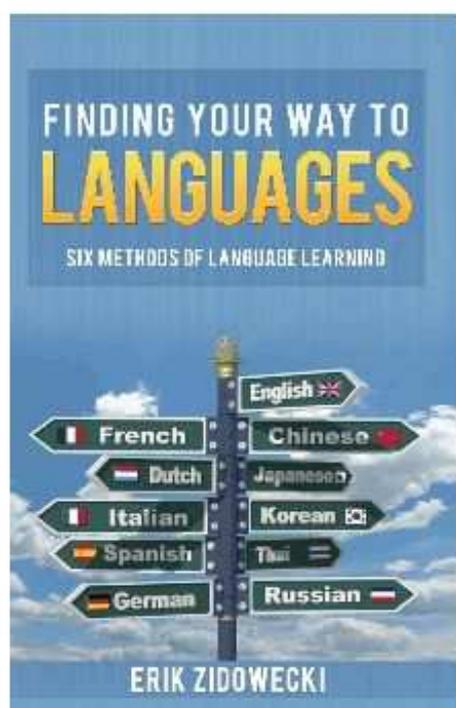


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