

Parrot Time

The Thinking of Speaking

Issue #27 May / June 2017

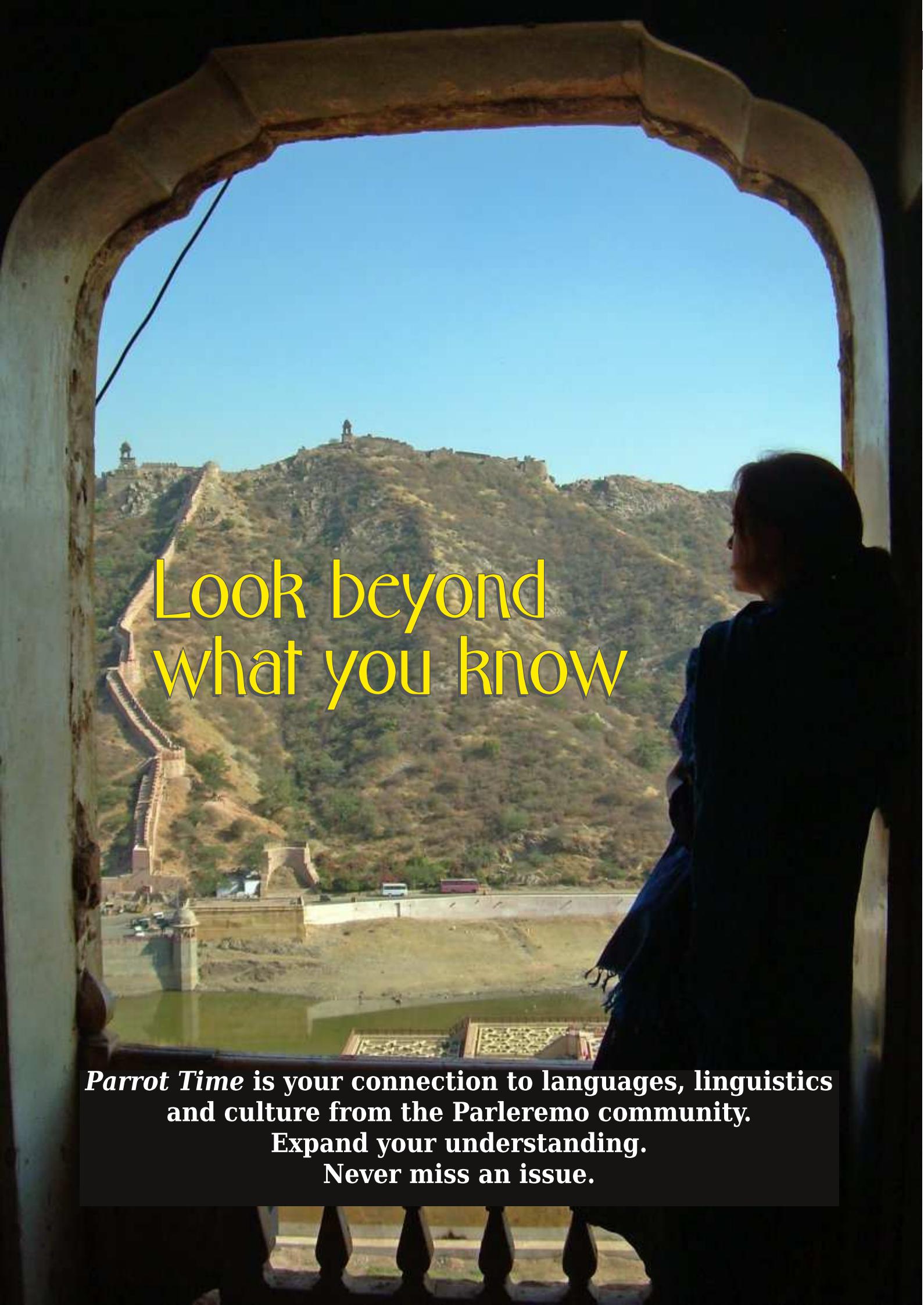
Cognates, Telling
Real from Fake
More about cognates than
you ever wanted to know

A Peek into Pinyin
The Romanization
of Mandarin Chinese

Inspirational
Language Art
Maximilien Urfer's piece
speaks to one of our writers

The Learning Mindset
Language acquisition
requires more than study





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what you know**

Parrot Time is your connection to languages, linguistics
and culture from the Parleremo community.
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Parrot Time

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It is published by ScrivereMo Publishing, a division of Parleremo, the language learning community.

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Published by ScrivereMo Publishing, a division of Parleremo.
 This issue is available online from <http://www.parrottime.com>

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Cover: One of the great things about learning a language is that not only can it go with you wherever you go, it can open doors (and planes, and busses, and taxies, and trains) to you as well.

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Vai jūs runājat latviski?

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Make friends,
Have fun!*

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In This Issue

Read, read, read. Study, study, study.
Learn, learn, learn.

Sometimes it seems as if all you are doing is trying to cram all the grammar rules and vocabulary of a language into your skull, hoping your head doesn't explode in the process, as you already have a few other languages taking up space in there as well.

Even after you have learned as much as your head can hold, you will make mistakes, and that can make you scared to try again. In this issue, Kendal Knetemann offers some advice on getting and keeping the right mindset when you are learning a language.

But what about different writing systems? Those can make learning a language even trickier. Tarja Jolma takes us on a journey through history to find out how one system to help bridge that learning gap was created for Chinese, with Pinyin.

We also need to take some time and explore some of the other aspects of a language, since it is never all just "grammar and vocab". John C. Rigdon has us look at how languages sometime interact with each other, leaving behind shared words, and how in some cases, those similar words are actually not related at all. Confused? John will sort it out.

And finally, how does language affect us, on a more emotional and intellectual level? Sure we need it to communicate, but is there a deeper connection? Oliver Elzingre tells us how a language performance piece affected his way of thinking.

Enjoy another packed issue of *Parrot Time!*



Erik Zidowecki
ERIK ZIDOWECKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF



News Brief

Turkish Added to the Library of Languages

Aurora, Colorado, May 16, 2017– LingoHut, a free language website, has added Turkish to its repertoire of languages it teaches through its online learning platform. LingoHut helps by making basic language skills available to travelers and immigrants moving from one country to another as well as those that are simply interested in learning a new language. With the world becoming more interconnected, free and assessable language platforms, like LingoHut, are necessary.

As Turkish speakers emigrate from their homes, they, like all immigrants, will be confronted with language barriers wherever they go. LingoHut makes sure people have a place to start with basic conversational skills and phrases. Any Turkish speaker can now learn how to communicate in German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Dutch, English, Chinese, or Japanese. Click here to see an example lesson for Turkish speakers to learn German.

On the other hand, people moving to Turkey may need to become more proficient in Turkish. LingoHut helps people get started on their journey to learn Turkish from their native language and become productive. Click here to see the languages we offer Turkish to.

LingoHut provides the opportunity to build fundamental communication skills in a new language, and since it is completely free, all those with an internet connection can access it. Strong language skills are an asset that promotes a lifetime of success. We present over 50 languages, helping a wide scope of immigrants and travelers assimilate or gain understanding by developing new skills.

Maori Language and Dance Fight Dementia, Report Says

We all know that learning a new language and participating in other cultures can broaden your mind, but could it possibly also be saving your mind?

Perhaps not every language and culture, but new research suggests that participating in *kapa haka* and speaking *Te Reo Māori* may help older Māori stave off dementia.

The Life and Living in Advanced Age: a Cohort Study in New Zealand (LILACS NZ), conducted by the University of Auckland with \$1.8 million in Government funding, provided several reports about Māori and non-Māori health needs and made comparisons to investigate potential disparities.

There appear to be no significant differences in the prevalence of dementia between Maori and non-Maori, the results show, even though the Maori have poorer lifestyle factors, such as limited access to education and healthcare services.

So what could be preventing the rise in dementia the health experts would expect? Researchers have speculated that part of the this may have to do with being bilingual, with the Maori speaking both their native Te Reo language and English. They also think their greater involvement in cultural activities, like the *kapa haka*, may be a factor.

The *kapa haka* is a performance of various choral song and dances, many of which have complicated moves and require good coordination.

“Other risk factors for dementia, such as cardiovascular disease and smoking, are also higher among Maori,” the report says.

“On the other hand, bilingual status is associated with a lower risk of dementia.”

Mark Your Calendar

Polyglot Gathering 2017

**May 31 - June 4 2017
Bratislava, Slovakia**

Polyglots are reuniting again for 5 wonderful days to practise all languages they have ever learnt or wish to learn yet! Join several hundreds of language lovers for an amazing event in Bratislava, Slovakia, this June and hang out with like-minded people who don't think learning languages is a chore but a great hobby to have.

The main program of the event consists of talks related to language learning, languages as such, the life of a polyglot, language policy etc. and social program in the evenings . The Polyglot Gathering has been organized three times in Berlin and this year it comes to Slovakia. Participants stay in hotels, hostels, airbnbs etc. according to their choice.

*For more information and tickets visit
www.polyglotbratislava.com.*

Montreal Language Festival

**August 25 – 27, 2017
Concordia University,
Montreal, Quebec**

The Montreal Language Festival, or “LangFest” for short, is North America’s premier celebration and conference for language learners and enthusiasts of all levels. LangFest 2017 will take place at Concordia University’s downtown campus in beautiful, eclectic, multilingual Montreal, Quebec.

LangFest attendees learn from and gain access to world-class language gurus, entrepreneurs, educators and industry professionals. You will be introduced to cutting edge tools, techniques and technologies to inform and inspire how you learn and use languages or teach them to others.

*For more information and tickets visit
montreal.langfest.org*

The Language, Data and Knowledge Conference (LDK 2017)

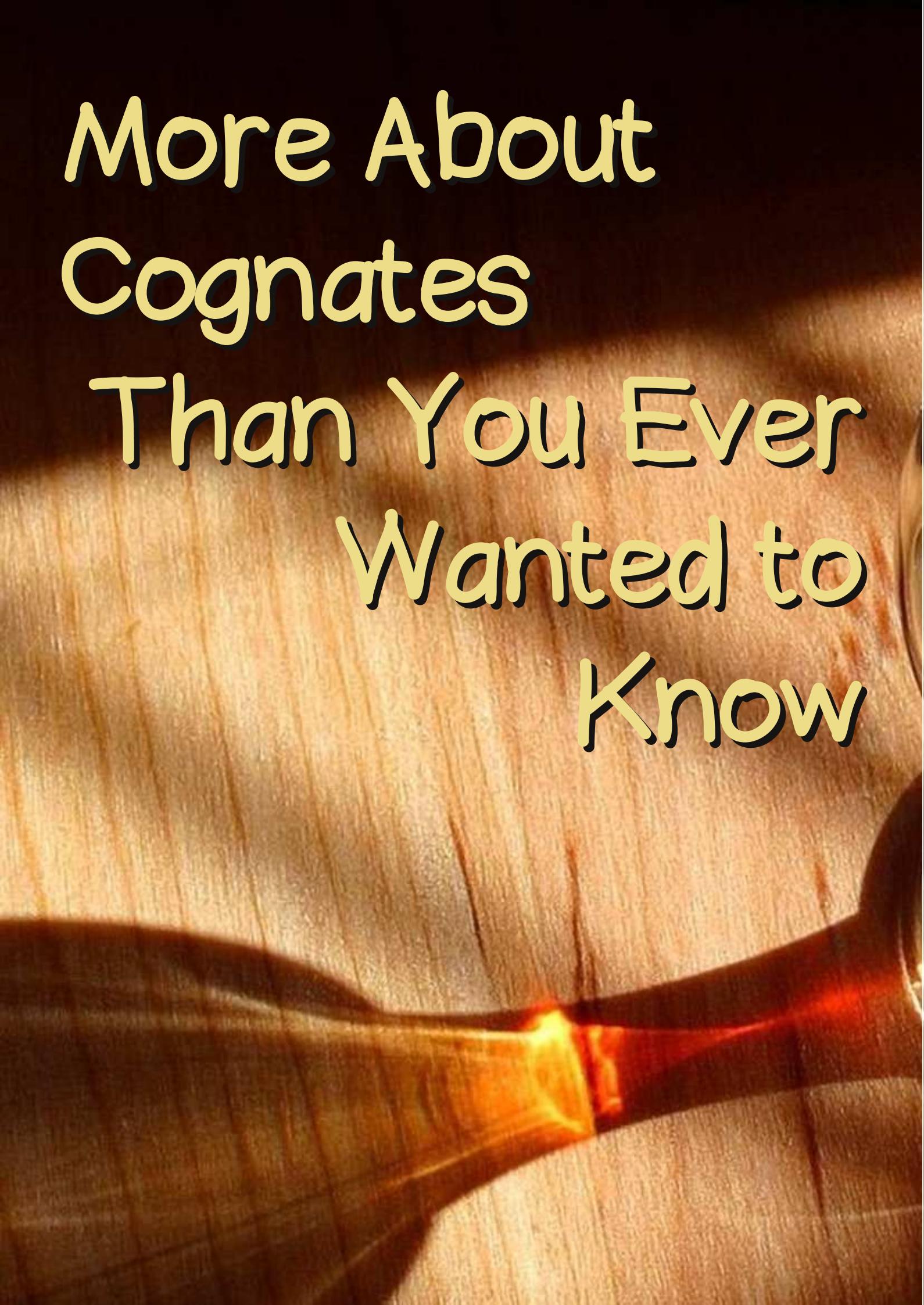
June 19 - 20, 2017, Galway, Ireland

The new biennial conference series on Language, Data and Knowledge (LDK) aims at bringing together researchers from across disciplines concerned with the acquisition, curation and use of language data in the context of data science and knowledge-based applications.

Language, Data and Knowledge 2017 (LDK 2017) is a conference bringing together Natural Language Processing and Data Science. The first edition, LDK 2017, will be held in Galway (Ireland) with a second edition planned for 2019 in Leipzig (Germany).

*For more information and registration visit
<http://ldk2017.org/>*

More About
Cognates
Than You Ever
Wanted to
Know





by John C. Rigdon

More About Cognates Than You Ever Wanted to Know

Before you endeavor to tackle a new language, a fine selection of cognacs – uh cognates should be at the top of your agenda.

So just what is the meaning of cognac anyway?

From Webster's Dictionary...

a brandy from the departments of Charente and Charente-Maritime distilled from white wine.

As any connoisseur of fine French words and wines knows, Cognac is 40% alcohol by volume and as smooth as any brandy you'll ever enjoy.

So there you have two fine French words, cognac, and connoisseur which are in common use in English, mean the same in both languages, and are pronounced in very similar ways. Some may argue that these are loan words, not cognates, but for our discussion that is best left to linguists who enjoy arguing such things and is in my opinion, a distinction without a difference.

One thing any student of linguistics learns quickly is that linguists can never agree on the definition of anything as the following discussion excerpted from Wikipedia illustrates.

Cognates Across languages

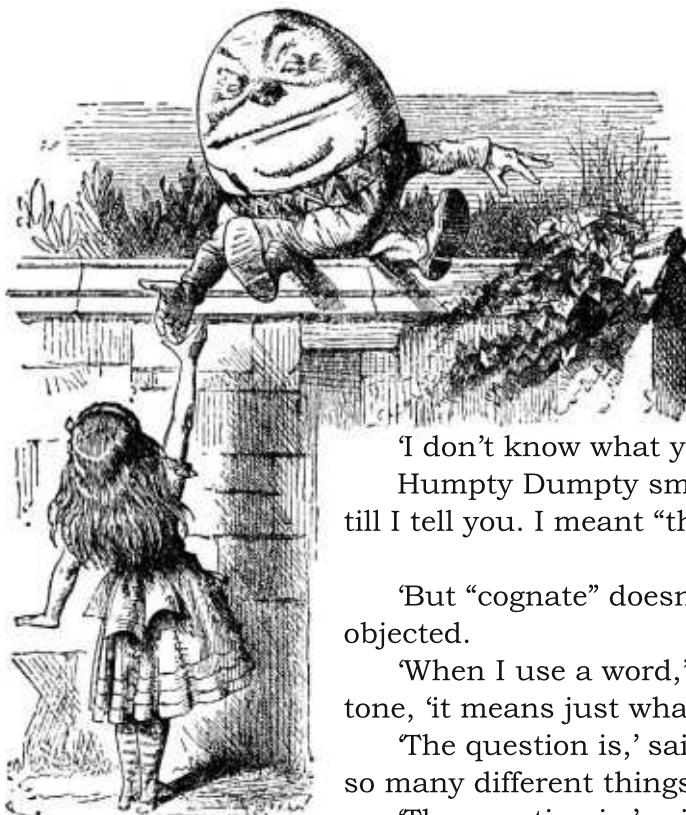
Examples of cognates in Indo-European languages are the words night (English), nuit (French), noche (Spanish), Nacht (German), nacht (Dutch), nag (Afrikaans), nicht (Scots), natt (Swedish, Norwegian), nat (Danish), nátt (Faroese), nótt (Icelandic), noc (Czech, Slovak, Polish), ночь, noch (Russian), ноќ, no (Macedonian), нош, nosht (Bulgarian), ніч, nich (Ukrainian), ноч, noch/no (Belarusian), no (Slovene), no (Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian), νύξ, nyx (Ancient Greek, νύχτα/nychta in Modern Greek), nox/nocte (Latin), nakt- (Sanskrit), natë (Albanian), nos (Welsh), nueche (Asturian), noite (Portuguese and Galician), notte (Italian), nit (Catalan), nuèch/nuèit (Occitan), noapte (Romanian), nakts (Latvian), naktis (Lithuanian) and Naach (Cognian), all meaning "night" and derived from the PIE *nókʷts, "night".

Another Indo-European example is star (English), str- (Sanskrit), tara (Hindustani and Bengali), tora (Assamese), astre/étoile (French), ἀστήρ (astēr) (Greek or ἀστέρι/ἀστρο, asteri/astro in Modern Greek), astro/stella (Italian), aster (Latin) stea (Romanian and Venetian), stairno (Gothic), astl (Armenian), Stern (German), ster (Dutch and Afrikaans), Schtähn (Cognian), starn (Scots), stjerne (Norwegian and Danish), stjarna (Icelandic), stjärna (Swedish), stjørna (Faroese), setāre (Persian), stoorei (Pashto), seren (Welsh), steren (Cornish), estel (Catalan), estela (Occitan) estrella and astro Spanish, estrella Asturian and Leonese, estrela and astro (Portuguese and Galician) and estêre or stêrk (Kurdish), from the PIE *h₂stér, "star".

The Hebrew שָׁלוֹם shalom, the Arabic سلام salām, the Assyrian Neo-Aramaic shlama and the Amharic selam ("peace") are also cognates, derived from Proto-Semitic *šalām-.

Cognates may often be less easily recognized than the above examples, and authorities sometimes differ in their interpretations of the evidence. The English word milk is clearly a cognate of German Milch, Dutch melk, Russian молоко (moloko) and (Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian) mljeko. On the other hand, French lait, Catalan llet, Italian latte, Romanian lapte, Spanish leche and leite (Portuguese and Galician) (all meaning "milk") are less obviously cognates of Ancient Greek γάλακτος gálaktos (genitive singular of γάλα gála, "milk"), a relationship more evidently seen through the intermediate Latin lac "milk", as well as the English word lactic and other terms borrowed from Latin.

At times, cognates may be semantic opposites. For instance, while the Hebrew word חutzpah chutzpah means "impudence," its Classical Arabic cognate حصافة haṣafah means "sound judgment." English black and Polish biały, meaning white, are cognates with opposite meanings, both deriving from the PIE *bʰleg-, meaning, "to burn or shine."



So, to borrow from “Alice in Wonderland” and “Through The Looking Glass”: ¹

‘I don’t know what you mean by “cognate”,’ Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. ‘Of course you don’t — till I tell you. I meant “there’s a nice knock-down argument for you!”’

‘But “cognate” doesn’t mean “a nice knock-down argument”,’ Alice objected.

‘When I use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.’

‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you can make words mean so many different things.’

‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master — that’s all.’

And so, our definition of cognate is:

Words which look the same and mean the same in two languages – neither more nor less.

Having said that, realize that just as in any family, there are identical twins, twins, brothers, sisters, cousins, adopted family and the kid down the street. True cognates are confined to immediate family at best. As you try to match up characteristics with cousins and “true friends” the similarities become less obvious to the casual acquaintance.

Then there are always “false friends” – those words which look the same or similar, but mean something entirely different. Sometimes these “false friends” engender funny connections and other times they can just serve to embarrass you. A funny example of a “false friend” is the English term “pet” which doesn’t mean at all in French what we generally mean when we say “We love having pets in the house.” Look it up! The French word

for “fart” is *pet*, so telling a French girl about your pets may serve to embarrass you. On the other hand, “fart” means “wax” in French, so talking about “fart candles all around the house” isn’t such a juvenile humor phrase.

Examples of Nouns with Identical Spellings

Un garage, une table, une nation, un tennis, un budget, une suggestion, une influence, une ambulance, une automobile, une cuisine, une correspondance, une machine, un sofa, un restaurant, une route, etc. In every one of the above examples, there are major differences of pronunciation between English and French words.

Examples of Nouns with Small Differences in Spelling

In the following list, despite small differences of spelling, one can see the resemblance with the corresponding English word : *une victime*,

More About Cognates Than You Ever Wanted to Know



un hôpital, un hôtel, un diplôme, une université, une liste, une différence, une maladie, un docteur, un réfrigérateur, un intérêt, une banque, une monnaie, un policier, un conférencier, un appartement, un développement, etc.

Before you start slinging French cognates around, here are four essential things you must remember:

1. The French pronunciation is different. True French-English cognates may look temptingly identical, but they always sound different. If you simply say the word as you would in English, you are not speaking French – you’re speaking English! And you risk not being understood. So, remember to use the proper French pronunciation for each word.

2. The French usage may differ. Even though true cognates are spelled the same and have the same meaning, sometimes the words have a different connotation in one or both of the languages. For example, take the

cognate “carafe.” In a restaurant in France, you might ask: “*Puis-je avoir une carafe d'eau, s'il vous plaît?*” (May I have a carafe/bottle of water, please?) By saying this, it is implied that you want tap water, not commercially bottled water. To communicate the same thing in English, you would need to say: “May I have a bottle of tap water, please?” The difference in usage is something you will have to learn through exposure to native French speakers.

3. Some true cognates are actually “semi-true” cognates. A semi-true cognate is one where the French and English word are spelled the same and part of the meaning is the same, but part is different. For example, the French word “*porc*” shares a definition with “pork” in English in that it refers to the flesh of a pig. But *porc* also refers to the animal itself, whereas in English you’d have to say “pig.”

4. Be wary of false cognates. False cognates (or “*faux amis*”) are French words that look identical or extremely similar to English – but have an entirely different meaning (e.g. coin: in English: a form of currency; in French, a corner).

There are many words that are very similar in English and French. Thanks to William the Conqueror (or as the French call him: Guillaume le Conquérant) and his invasion of England nearly a millennia ago, French and English share thousands of similar words. Some are identical in spelling and meaning (e.g., *impossible*); some have the same meaning and slightly different spelling (e.g., *adresse* /address) and some have slightly different spelling and a partially different meaning (e.g., *porc*/pork). These words are known as cognates.

It is estimated that 29% of the words in modern English are from French². But, it also works in the other direction: a lot of French terms come from English. Another 29% of the English words come from Latin including many scientific words. Many are TRUE friends, or almost: they have the same or similar meaning, and are written in the same way. Our **French and English Cognates**

contains these “True Friends” or cognates. But beware, there are many words which look similar in French and English, but they’re FALSE Friends, because they do not have the same meaning.

Finally, know that if the spelling is similar, pronunciation is almost always totally different between languages.

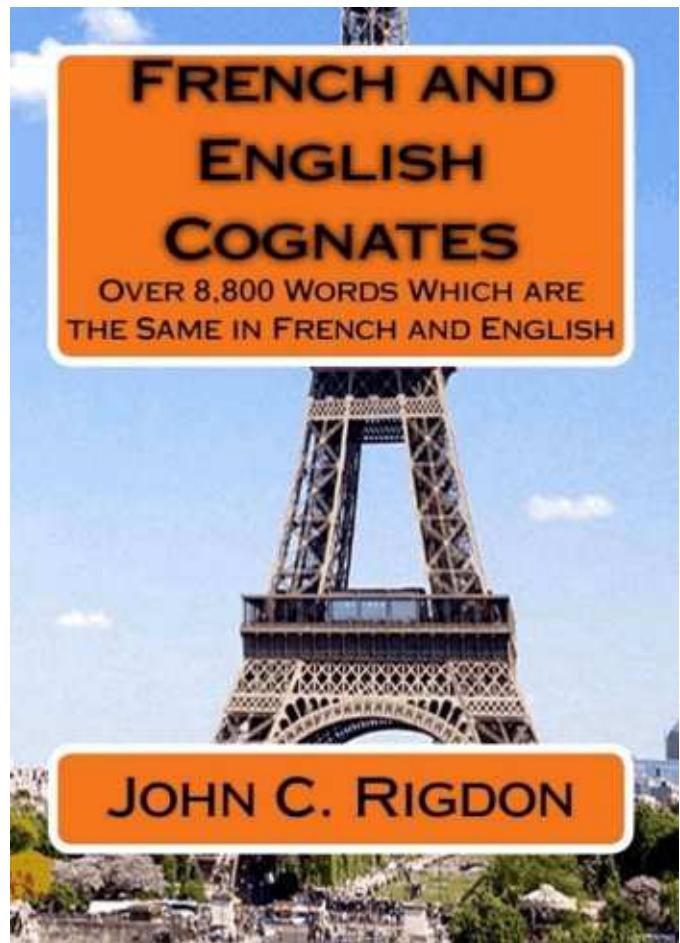
While a list of cognates in your language and your target language you want to learn can prove to be a great help in getting started, I find very little that has been published in this area when I do a search of Amazon and WorldCat. Our recently published **French and English Cognates** contains almost 9,000 terms, but most lists I have found are quite small and focus on false cognates between languages. I believe this is primarily because until recently it required that someone be conversant in both languages to develop such tools. Our *Words R Us* database makes the task much easier, but the task of teaching a computer to recognize these using “fuzzy logic” is particularly daunting and for the immediate future I believe that it will require someone looking at these lists of terms side by side in both languages to discover the cognates.

Languages which do not share the same alphabet script pose particular challenges. It is estimated that Punjabi and Hindi share 60% cognates. A look at the word ‘cow’ reveals:

cow - ਗਊ - Ga’ū (Punjabi)
cow - गाय - gaay (Hindi)

These are indeed cognates and pronounced very closely to the English word, so I would designate those as cognates in all three languages.

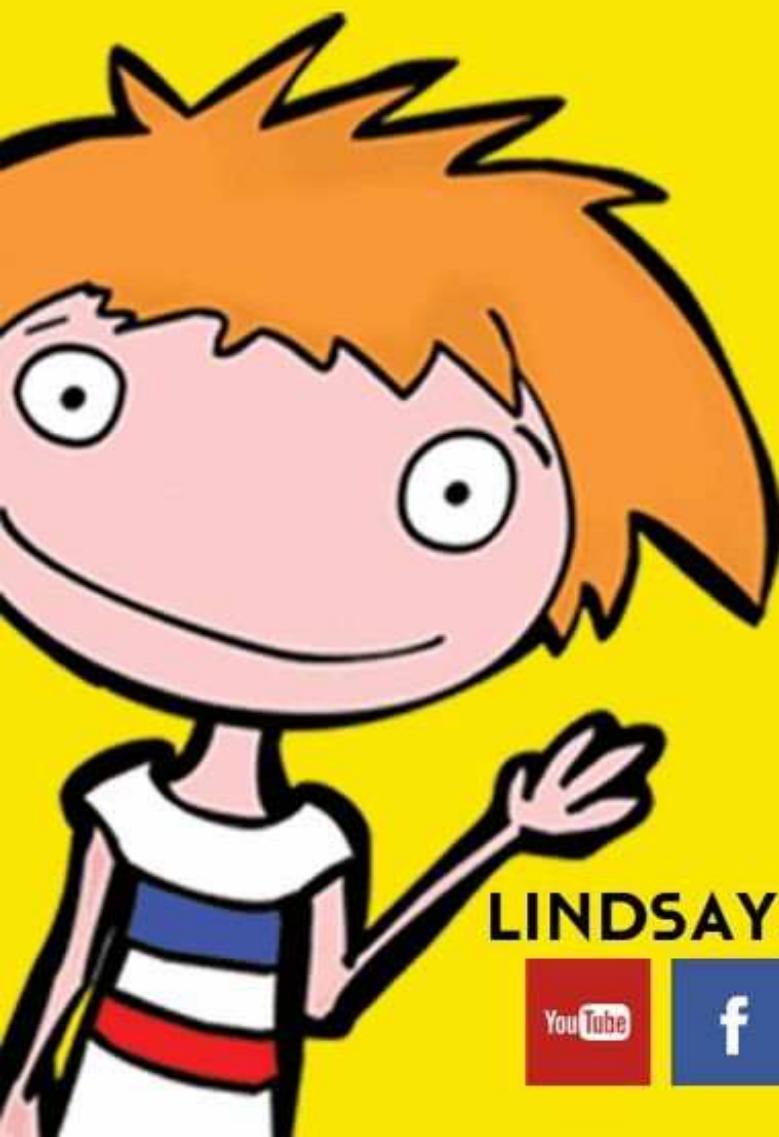
If you are working two languages and would like to explore the cognates, we can probably generate an Excel spreadsheet for you with the terms side by side in both languages. Drop me a note a jrigdon@researchonline.net with your request. Some lists will have thousands of words, others only a few hundred. **PT**



John C. Rigdon has authored a number of books on the American Civil War and is the manager of the web site, Research OnLine, (www.researchonline.net) the premier site for researching Civil War ancestors in the Civil War. His titles include the Historical Sketch and Roster Volumes (1100 plus titles) and a dozen volumes in the "We Fought" series focusing on particular battles and commanders. Additionally, John works in translation of materials in several languages and maintains the website, www.wordsrus.info.

John resides in the foothills of the Appalachians outside Cartersville, GA. where he enjoys gardening and aquaponics. You may reach him at jrigdon@researchonline.net.

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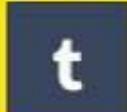


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A Peek into Pinyin

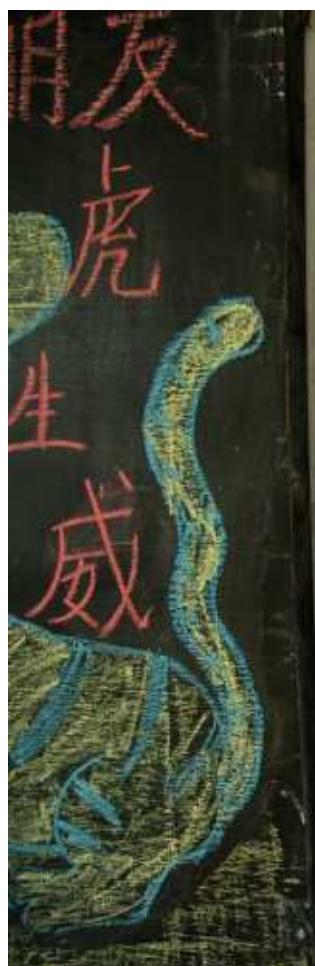
by Tarja Jolma

When people think of Chinese language, they are often both fascinated and a bit intimidated about its writing system. Fortunately memorizing thousands of complex characters is not the only way to learn written Chinese. Most Mandarin Chinese learners are very familiar with its parallel support script Hanyu Pinyin, and probably consider it indispensable in the studies. This writing system has also made possible to use only one standardized romanization system for Chinese names in other languages, which has made dealing with Chinese names much easier. Before Pinyin, Chinese names, as well as all kinds of words, were transcribed in Latin letters in various ways. The Wade-Giles romanization system, named after its creators, was the most common for about a hundred years.

The situation changed when in the 1950s the government started an ambitious project to reform the language to increase literacy. The task consisted in setting Mandarin

Chinese as the national language, creating simplified Chinese characters (in Chinese, 汉字, hànzì) and developing a unified romanization system for the characters. A group of linguists developed the Hanyu Pinyin system, originally 汉语拼音 (traditional Chinese 漢語拼音), and the head of them was Zhou Youguang (周有光 i.e. Zhōu Yǒuguāng). They based their romanization system on the several existing systems used at the time, and finally, Hanyu Pinyin became officially adopted in China in 1958. Zhou Youguang is nowadays known as the “father of Pinyin.” He could enjoy this accomplishment for six decades, as he passed away this January at the respectable age of 111 years (and one day).

So nowadays Pinyin is the standard romanization system of Mandarin Chinese in languages that use Latin letters, even though it took some time for the international instances to start using it systematically. The United Nations adopted it in 1986, a few years



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韵母表								
a 阿	o 哦	e 呀	i 水	u 山	ü 山	ai 埃	ei 埃	
ai 圆	ao 哥	ou 鸡	iu 船	ie 和	ue 月	er 耳	an 安	
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				zhí 组 chí 咳 shí 骨 rí 日 yǐn 针 cí 刺 sī 丝 yí 衣 wú 无				
				yú 鱼 yé 叶 yuán 圆 yín 印 yún 云 yǐng 鹦				



after the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Along with its arrival, the century-old use of Wade-Giles system ended. However, the way a Chinese speaker romanizes his/her name sometimes tells something about the person's origin or age or both, because there are several phases in this development, and mainland China is not the only area to need a romanization system. In Taiwan, Hanyu Pinyin wasn't officially adopted until 2009. The different romanization systems may have some advantages and disadvantages when compared, but having a systematic, officially recognized system was and still is important in international relations.

So what is the essence of Pinyin and why is it needed? Every Chinese character, i.e. hanzi, represents a syllable, and the pronunciation of these syllables can be described by Pinyin. Its pronunciation rules have to be memorized just like those of any written language, as there are special combinations to learn. Mandarin Chinese is a tonal language,

so these syllables are pronounced using five tones that are marked with a diacritic on the significant vowel of the syllable, and they are represented by numbers. 1 is high (ā), 2 is rising (á), 3 is low/dipping (ǎ), 4 is falling (à) and 5 is neutral (a). As especially the diacritics for high and low are often difficult or impossible to write using keyboards, they can be described as numbers placed after the syllables. That is also a way to write Pinyin with tones using a Chinese language computer input. However, the tones are important, as simple letters are not enough to distinguish words. One of the most common examples of this is ma. Here are some examples: 吗 ma, toneless question particle; 马 mǎ, 'horse'; 妈 mā, 'mother'; 麻 má, 'hemp'; 骂 mà, to scold/abuse/curse. There are even more meanings and characters representing these syllables in Pinyin.

According to the Routledge Encyclopedia of the Chinese Language, the number of characters has grown over the past few thou-

A Peek into Pinyin

sand years, as dictionaries show, and the Giant Dictionary of the Chinese Language (1990) records up to 54 678 characters. Fortunately much less is needed for everyday use. Characters in general use in modern China are estimated to be about 7 000, and the average Chinese speakers frequently use about 3 500. The highest level of Hanyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì 汉语水平考试, a language test commonly known as HSK, requires the knowledge of 2 865 characters to pass the highest level test, HSK6. The number of characters is significantly greater than the number of different syllables, so lots of characters are pronounced the same way.

So technically Mandarin Chinese can be written with Pinyin, but as there are lots of homonyms, using characters is more exact. The characters tend to have some component that gives a hint both of the pronunciation and the meaning. Some study books for language learners focus on spoken Chinese only and concentrate on Pinyin, like Working Mandarin (for beginners) by Yi Zhou and M. Lynne Gerber, but many study books use both characters and Pinyin in basic and intermediate level. In advanced level, Pinyin might no longer be used except maybe in the vocabularies. Pinyin is employed along with the characters in the national HSK languages test for language learners in elementary levels 1 and 2, but not after that. However, nowadays there are two possibilities, the traditional paper-based test, and the internet-based test.

The paper-based test requires handwriting skills, and lots of test centers in every continent organize these tests on a regular basis. The internet-based test makes it possible to use Pinyin to type Chinese characters, which means knowing Pinyin and recognizing the character among others with the same pronunciation, instead of writing it stroke by stroke. This sounds promising to those who struggle with the handwriting. However, much fewer test centers organize the internet-based



test, and not necessary every level of HSK. There are 175 test centers in China, but in Oceania, only Australia offers it, in Africa no place. In the American continent, only Canada, Colombia and USA offer this possibility. In Asia, the test can be taken in South Korea, Japan, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia. In Europe, it can be taken in Spain, Italy, Greece, France, Denmark, UK, the Netherlands, Ukraine, and Russia.

With the amount of characters in existence, for a language learner Pinyin is a great tool to get past illiteracy and enhance one's reading skills. Reading and recognizing characters passively is much easier than remembering how to write them stroke by stroke. It's not too easy for native Chinese speakers, either: learning to read and write is clearly much more demanding for Chinese children

ā á ă à a

than let's say for Finnish children who sometimes learn to read before going to school without systematic teaching. Nowadays, Chinese children use Pinyin systematically as a stepping stone before starting to learn the characters, and later on, Pinyin annotates the pronunciation of all new characters. As the knowledge of characters increases, the need for Pinyin decreases gradually. This also means that children learn standard Chinese, Putonghua, as they learn to read and write. The characters are not pronounced equally all around China, as there are many dialects and even languages. Pinyin represents the standard language pronunciation used in schools, and it's mandatory in mainland China elementary schools. The older generations do not necessarily know Pinyin at all or have studied it only later in life, possibly to use the computer or mobile phone.

Even after all the hard studying of characters, Mandarin Chinese speakers may still need Pinyin from time to time because it's useful to show how a new word should be pronounced, even though a phonetic component included in the character may give an idea of it. Moreover, in the era of technology Pinyin is a useful tool for typing in Chinese, even though it's not the only one. For a language learner using Pinyin input method means being able to use a regular keyboard by just switching the language setting to Chinese, typing Pinyin with or without tone numbers and then choosing the intended character(s) from a list. Recognizing characters does not equal being able to write them. In this aspect, Pinyin is very useful.

It can be discussed if Hanyu Pinyin is the best possible romanization system, but personally, I think that having a standardized, internationally used and unifying system has without a doubt had a huge impact for language learners. The same kind of international system would be very practical also in other languages, like Arabic, Persian, and Russian. It would help in learning the language if dictionaries and studybooks used the same type of Romanization style. It would also help in dealing with names when using other lan-

课文一：会话 Huihuà Dialogue

这个假期你有什么打算?
Zhè ge jiàqī nǐ yǒu shénme dāsuàn?

爱德华: 快放假了, 你有什么打算?
Aidéhuà: Kuài fàng jià le, nǐ yǒu shénme dāsuàn?

戴维: 我想去旅行。你呢?
Dàiwéi: Wǒ xiǎng qù lǚxíng. Nǐ ne?

232

guages. At the moment the same names are romanized in multiple ways, like for instance the late Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat who was Anouar el-Sadate in French, Anwar al-Sadat in italiano, Anwar as-Sadat in Polish, Anwar el-Sadat in Spanish and Enver Sedat in Turkish. Not even internationally known country leaders' names are romanized the same way in different languages that use Latin letters. The implementation of Hanyu Pinyin has made all this a lot easier in Mandarin Chinese. **PT**

Tarja holds a Master's degree in Italian Philology with studies in Finnish, Spanish, and cultural history. Her daily work as a tv-subtitler writing subtitles for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing consists mainly of her native Finnish language, but all kinds of language skills are useful. She simply can't stop studying languages, especially the ever challenging and fascinating Mandarin Chinese.

More to Explore:

The Wubi 98 keyboard based on the structure of the characters:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wubi_method#/media/File:5strokes.jpg

A chart of all possible syllables:

<https://www.mnsu.edu/comdis/club/pinyin.jpg>

A comparison of Pinyin with other orthographies and IPA:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin#Comparison_with_other_orthographies

An interview of Zhou Youguang at the age of 102 years:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7Bi_DVFecE

Information about Bopomofo, i.e. Zhuyin, a non-Latin-based phonetic annotation system:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bopomofo#Bopomofo_vs._tongyong_pinyin_.26_Hanyu_pinyin





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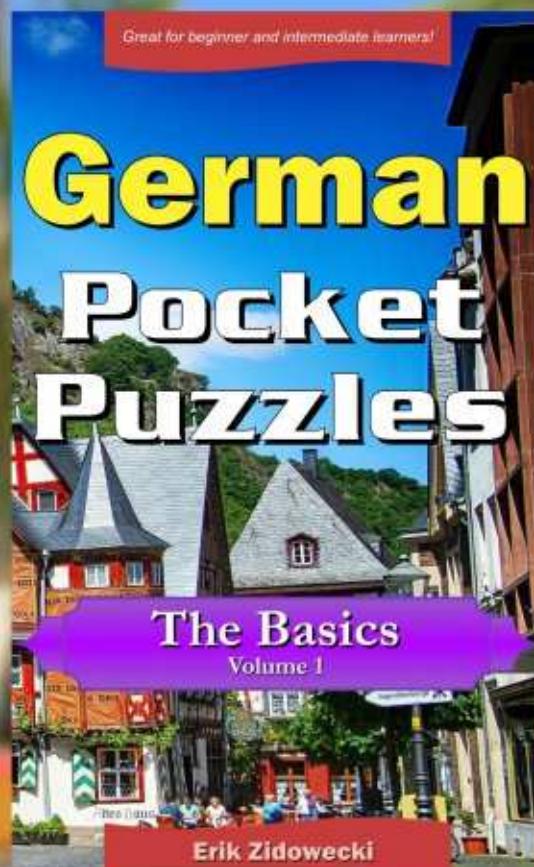
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Language review for the travelling you!

An Art Exhibition That Spoke To Me

by Olivier Elzingre

Have you ever wondered what language actually is? I don't mean distinguishing between a language and a dialect, or pondering whether to call computer programming a language or not. I mean what is this phenomenon we call language?

In the last few decades, attention has been turned somewhat (not entirely) away from trying to define things in a pretence of objectivity, to instead describe how concepts or phenomena are locally understood, how are they performed in social contexts. Thus for complex ideas such as language, a plethora of 'definitions' are available, stemming from the most abstract conceptualisations to the most socially relevant. This is where one can observe that definitions are not neutral, but may be used to achieve argumentative goals.

It is difficult to express a multipoint position convincingly because of the risk of contradiction. Consider how discrediting it is for politicians to make a statement at one point in time, only to contradict themselves a while later – in a few instants, clever videos are shared globally to mock the person. I enjoy them. Yet, contradictions are a part of life; we all do it.

Encapsulating the notion of multipositionality, the work of the Swiss artist Maximilien Urfer invites his public to think about language both as an institutionalised discourse and as an idiolect, or the private use that is made of it, in his current exhibition "Ob-la-di Ob-la-bla" - l'imitation du language (maximilienurfer.com).

Over 2000 years ago, Socrates (or rather Plato who pretended to write Socrates' words) suggested that art be eradicated from the ideal society. The reason was that it could never represent what Socrates considered the true nature of things. Art was judged a pale representation of reality, a dangerous mode of expression leading citizens to a world of false thoughts, where justice was not achievable. Urfer, however, shows that art is not only representative of something essential about language, but does so by presenting the most criticised of all language usages: the political spin.

"Think Different" is the name given to this narrative on the politically oriented. In this video, 5 minutes of which are available on his webpage, Urfer sits on a swivel chair between three cameras pointing at him. A word is



chosen from a pre-written list, concepts perennial to the political discourse: security, environment, multiculturalism. Urfer then spins on his chair, randomly choosing which camera he will be facing. Each camera represents a political inclination: left, right or centre. The artist then deliberates on the topic given by the word from the perspective of the camera selected.

Language here performs a multiplicity of roles, all bundled up in a single imitative performance.

At the institutionalised level, the audience is able to observe the artist deliberate from an ideological stance, irrespective of the artist's own true inclination. The intellectual tiredness felt by the artist is symbolic of the general apathy towards dominant discourses, acting as an opium du peuple. Read Byung-Chul Han's acclaimed philosophical treaty titled "La Société de la fatigue", 2010. In broad strokes, Urfer presents at that level an imitation of the usual political discourse. His deliberations are caricatures to some extent, arguments without weight. The performance is a strong reminder of a populist approach to politics.

From the level of the individual expression, the imitation of language lies in the artist's pretence to converse with an audience. Yet this is not an intimate conversation between the artist and the spectators. Urfer assigns an ideological significance to the camera he speaks to, challenging the audience's traditional role as viewer/agent in the co-construction of performance's meaning. The audience is thus muted in the camera's eye and the argumentative force of the speech is rendered futile. The immediate message is removed. If the language is then not a tool for true communication, the performance, by contrast, is.

The silencing of the audience creates a tension, a gap filled in by the audience's critical force. The audience's critical mind is thus awakened by the context in which the language is used. It is indeed the performance, not the language, which brings the viewer to ask themselves about how language vehicles their own thoughts and beliefs.

The title of this piece is also worth exploring critically. Why is it called "thinking different" when the action is about talking, gradually losing the ability to think? The artist pushes himself to the point that think-

An Art Exhibition That Spoke To Me

ing is drowned under the pressure of both the randomness of the political perspective to adopt and the head spin he experiences by swivelling in his chair. Urfer may be experiencing some randomness in his piece, but his title is certainly very astute. The viewer will initially accept that thinking is taking place, because the sign says it does. Yet the experience demonstrates the power of language and the experience of tiredness and apathy. It is a realisation that we are not viewing thinking, but we are invited to think differently. The process of reflexivity turns the audience into the piece and the piece into the critical audience.

In my opinion, the true artistry of this piece lies in this brutal reflexivity experienced by the spectator. The realisation that we proudly announce our own adherence to an ideological discourse, while at the same time claiming to be free thinkers gives us an experience of our own intellectual tiredness. Urfer aims to shake us from our deep discourse-induced slumber.

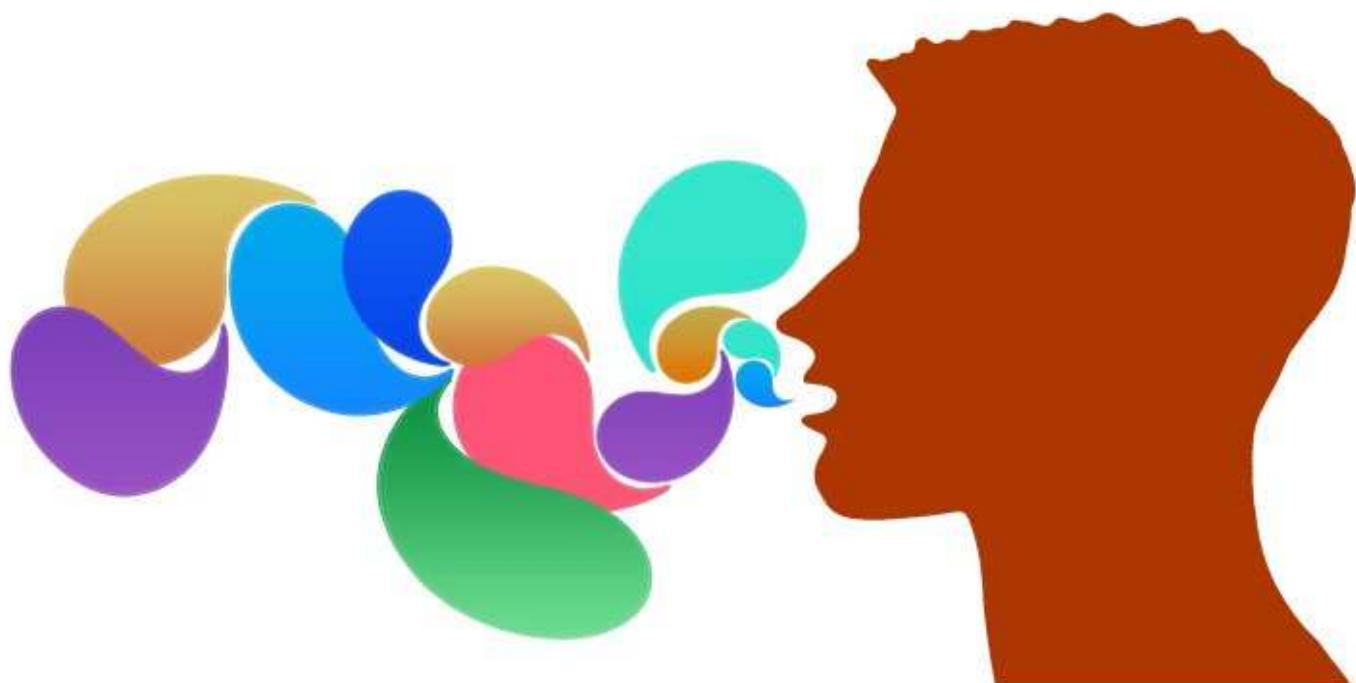
Just like prisoners chained at the bottom of a cave, shackles are removed for the time of the video. Do we become free? No, it is still up to us to climb the treacherous incline which might eventually lead us to a clearer vision of

our position in this world. "Thinking different" perhaps offers us a chance to begin this journey.

As Urfer's work begins with a question, it feels only natural that I extend my own question to him. While language is conceptualised here as simply existent, even through the challenges of miscommunication, how could the trajectories of language be represented in his art? The learning of a language, the evolution of the language through societal changes? The piece denounces the existence of discourses, but isn't a window in how they appear.

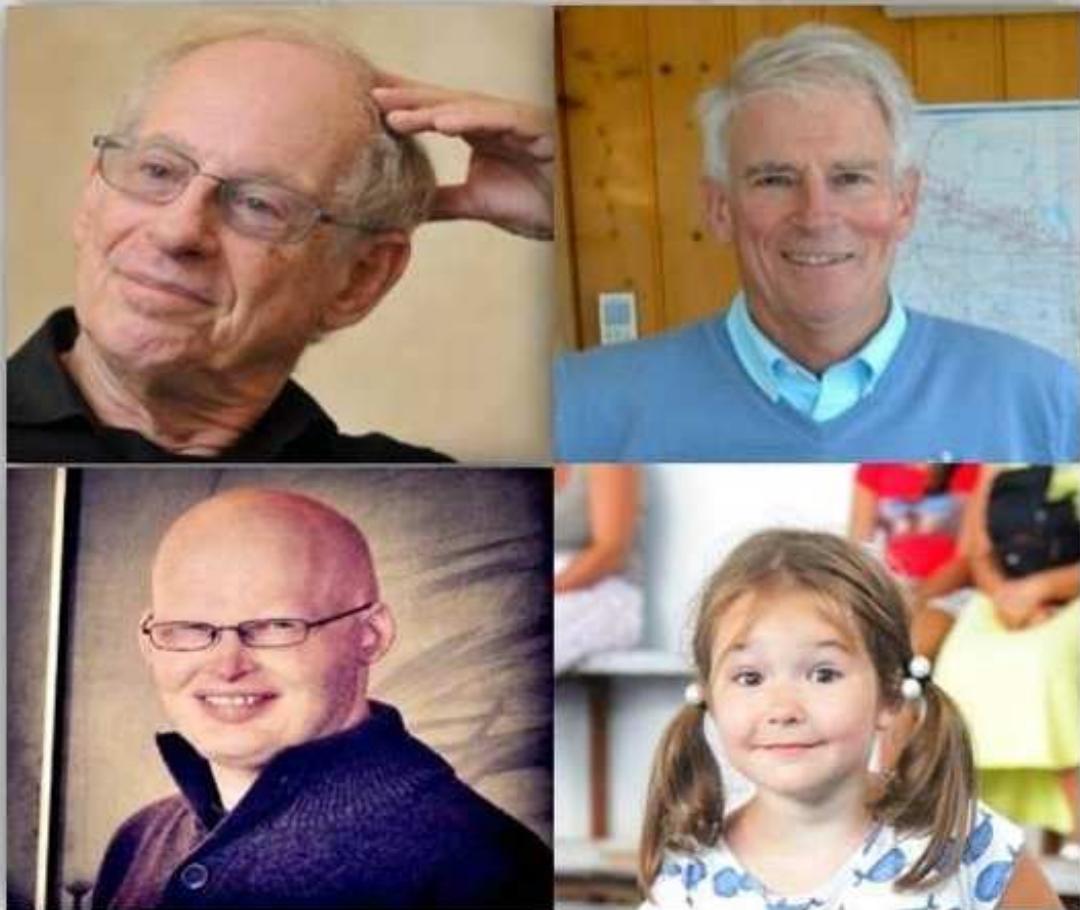
Whatever you may draw from the work of this artist, there are many layers to be explored. The variety of the audience interpretations is ultimately a reflexion of the way we all think differently. **PT**

Olivier Elzingre is a PhD candidate researching motivation and identity development in study abroad contexts. He teaches high school French in Australia. Correspondence to olivierelzingre@gmail.com



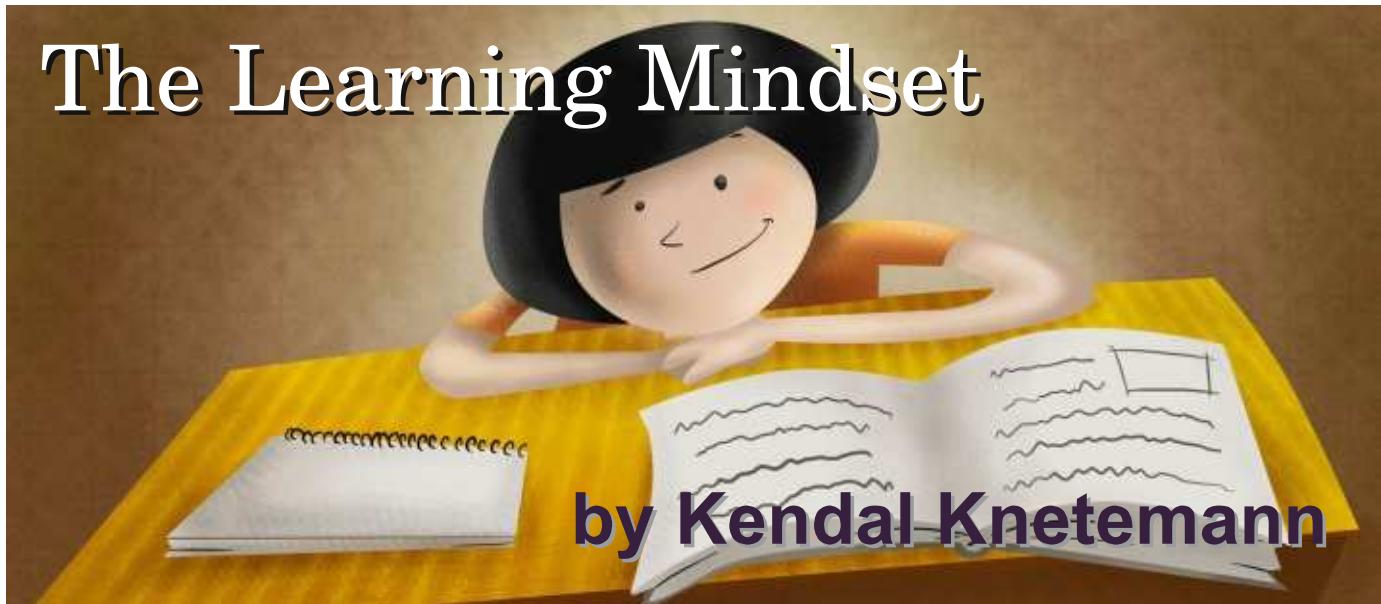
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| • Lydia Machova | • Diana Skaya |
| • Tetsu Yung | • Mark Pentleton |
| • Joey Perugino | • Georges Awaad |
| • Lindsay Williams | • And more! / Et plus! |

Questions?



Language learning does not happen overnight. Many wish they could sprinkle some pixie dust or wave a magic wand and voilà you know a new language. That is not how it happens, although there are a few language maniacs out there who can feel self-assured and speak a new language in a few months. Those folks have the proper mindset and character to become poised in a week or a few months speaking a new language. But for most of us, it takes months or even years to feel confident speaking and using a new language.

The good news is that there are many worthy free resources out there which can help you in your language journey such as <http://lingohut.com/> and <http://www.games-forlanguage.com/>. The tools and resources are critical in your learning a language, but your mindset and commitment are the keys to becoming confident and having full, satisfying conversations.

Who can we find who knows us so incredibly well, so deeply, that they can handle the responsibility to providing us with constant, tailored, the perfect motivation that speaks directly to our goals and experience? YOU. You're the only person. You know yourself better than anyone else. Your job as a self-motivator is to provide the mindset and confidence needed to learn a new language. We tend to experience a deeper buy-in when the

motivation is tailored to us - to our specific journey. You already know your favorite excuses and deepest desires.

It's funny when some people start a new skill they want to be perfect right away if they do not achieve perfection within days they quit. Did you learn to walk in days? Did you learn their native language in days? Did you learn all about math equations in one class? The answer is no.

Learning a new language, just like any other new skill, takes time and practice. You've got to experience successes and failures before you can achieve mastery.

You can do anything you set your mind to doing. It's all in your mindset. You can learn a new language, move to a new country, find a new job, go back to school or just be a better you. You control your journey in life, don't let others dictate what you can and can't do.

There are two types of adults when it comes to learning a new skill the can-do and can't-do. I believe that a negative attitude can stem from a collision of confused, fear of failing and a poor mindset. Positive learners have a firm grasp on their priorities and take steps to align their time, actions and mindset accordingly.

Setting goals and getting clear on why you want to pursue a new language is mission critical. Goals help set the tone, calibrate our motivational compass and give us something

to focus on when developing a new skill. When we imagine ourselves as the personification of our goals, inspirations seeps in, and we're even more ready to learn.

When we take on language learning, we fear failure. I need you to know that you're going to have days you fail at remembering a word or saying a new word. It's just going to happen! As soon as you acknowledge that mistakes are inevitable, they lose their crippling power. Don't let a fear of an imperfect journey keep you from taking tremendous strides toward learning a new language. Work towards progress, not perfection, this can be your saving grace.

Commitment is the final piece of the puzzle. Commitment encompasses all four important components; your determination, plan, follow through, and consistency.

I want to start with consistency; it is the key to learning anything especially a language. Your determination is your fuel on this journey. Your project is your map. Stay the

course and keep working at it every day. It will feel like hard work at first, it gets easier and more intuitive with time.

In other words, regardless of the venture, new pursuits are always uncomfortable, and then one day the uncomfortable becomes slightly more comfortable. Suddenly the clouds part and the new language feels like an old friend. Hunting your memory bank for words and phrases in your new language require less effort and less planning, and your mind shows less resistance. You have reached the sweet spot – the holy grail of your new skill. You got this!! **PT**

Kendal Knetemann is the founder of LingoHut where free language lessons, activities and articles on making language learning uncomplicated. Communication is our thing!!! Like us on our Facebook page.



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In FOCUS

Show us where you've been!

These photos are from Kendal Knetemann and show part of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.



The Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya is especially notable for its collection of romanesque church paintings, and for Catalan art



El Relámpago in Gracia, full of costumes, masks, and decorative items



La Sagrada Família is a large Roman Catholic church in Barcelona, designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí



Gelato from one of the numerous shops in Barcelona



Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain



One of the decorated balconies with the sign "La llengua és un dret i una cultura" (The language is a right and a culture)



Street Performer imitating white statue of painter with brush on Rambla street



Port Vell is a waterfront harbor in Barcelona



On Port Vell is this artsy structure, a small shopping mall (Maremagnum), and an aquarium



Another view of Port Vell, with a focus on the smaller boats

Adventures in the Land of Maybe

An American girl's island-hopping,
party-crawling, tallow-tasting,
scarf-knitting, tongue-twisting,
car-stalling and sheep-stalking
attempts to understand
what it means to be Faroese.

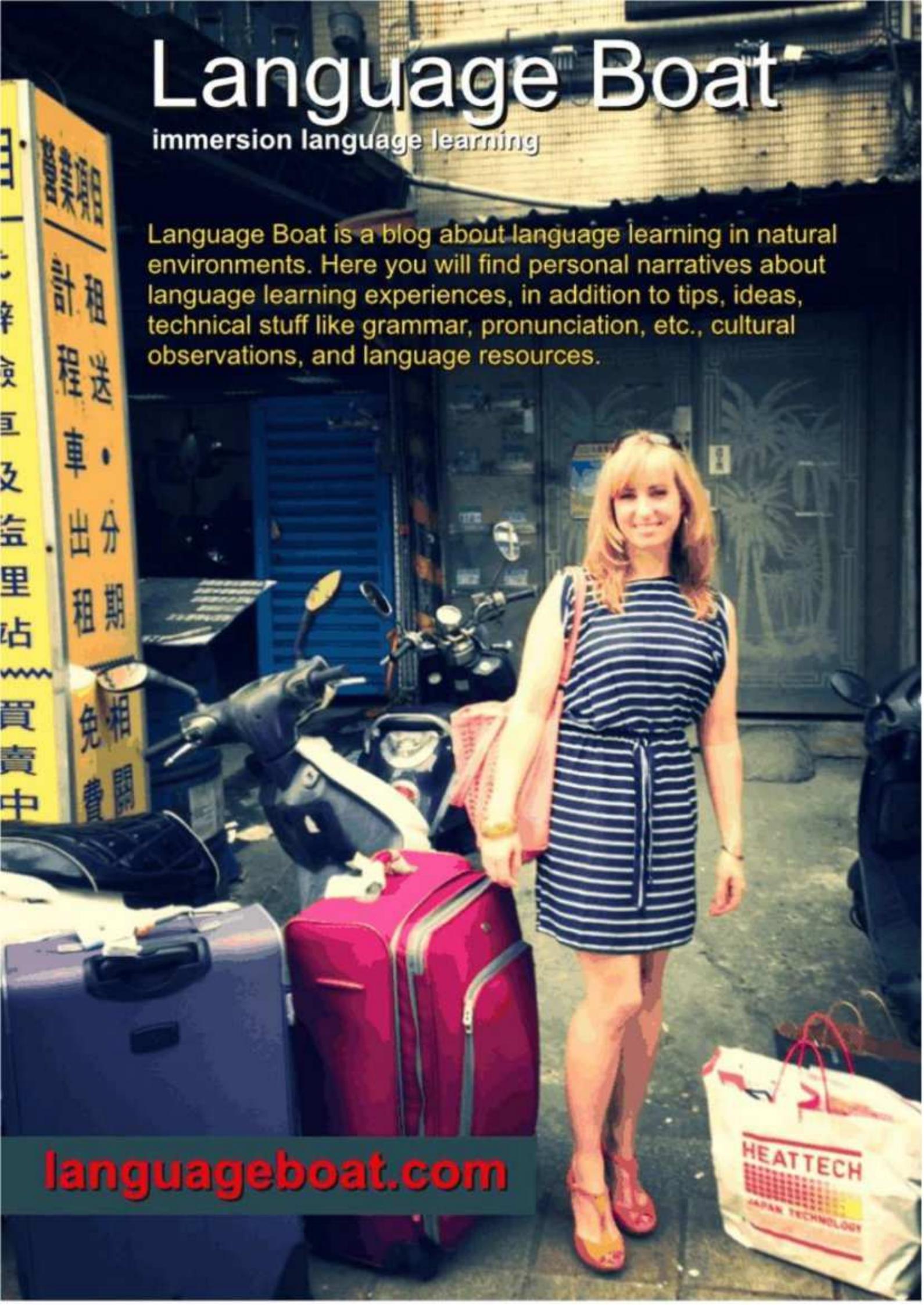
A photograph of a young woman with dark hair, smiling at the camera. She is sitting cross-legged on a grassy hillside. She is wearing a dark blue sleeveless top and dark blue jeans. The background consists of rolling green hills under a clear sky.

landofmaybe.wordpress.com

Language Boat

immersion language learning

Language Boat is a blog about language learning in natural environments. Here you will find personal narratives about language learning experiences, in addition to tips, ideas, technical stuff like grammar, pronunciation, etc., cultural observations, and language resources.



languageboat.com



Krrish
2h 34min
Action / Adventure /
Romance / Sci-Fi

Country: India
Language: Hindi / English /
Cantonese / Tamil

Krishna finds himself forced to wear a disguise to save others from a burning tent. His actions get caught on camera, but no one can identify who the mysterious "Krrish" is.

The film being reviewed this issue is a sequel to one of my favourite Bollywood films. It is the origin story of a superhero, *Krrish*.

Sonia Mehra is raising her grandson, Krishna, after his parents died. His father, Rohit, had suffered a trauma as a baby in the womb and had been born with mental disabilities, so it is understandable that Sonia is concerned when Krishna's schoolmaster asks to give him an IQ test. Rather than doing poorly, however, it turns out that the boy is very smart for his age. Abnormally smart.

When the excited schoolmaster wants to celebrate Krishna's genius, Sonia flees with her son into the mountains, to live in a small village, hoping that no one will ever learn of Krishna's special abilities.

Time goes by, and Krishna's abilities grow as he becomes a man. He can run, jump, climb, and fight beyond normal human capabilities, but does his best to do as his grandmother wants and not reveal his abilities. This comes to an end when he saves a young female skydiver, Priya, and uses his skills to catch and bring her safely down from the top of a tree.

At first, Krishna manages to convince her, along with the help

of his friend, that she saw a ghost, but Krishna's playful nature wins out and accidentally reveals himself to her, her friend Honey, and their group of campers. He explains away his powers as "just natural" from growing up in such a wild area.

Priya and Krishna spend lots of time together, including having Priya meet his grandmother. They are sad to part when the group leaves, but Priya is sure she will always remember the strange and wild young man.

When Priya and Honey return to their lives in Singapore, they are fired from their jobs in a TV network for taking the trip. The girls offer up the knowledge of Krishna's abilities to save their jobs, so they must now bring Krishna to Singapore to be filmed.

To do this, Priya lies to Krishna, telling him in a call that she wants him to come meet her mother so they can be married. An excited and naive Krishna begs



Sonia and Krishna, at the home in the mountains



Krishna meeting Priya and her friend, Honey

Sonia to let him go, but when she refuses, he lashes our at her for being selfish.

Sonia then explains the full reason for the hiding. She explains how Rohit had been mentally under developed until he and Krishna's mother, Nisha, met a lost alien, whom they named Jadoo. Jadoo gave Rohit not only normal human capabilities, but advanced ones as well, and Krishna's parents helped Jadoo return home.

After that, Rohit helped a scientist, Dr. Siddhant Arya, to build a supercomputer which would be capable of seeing the future. When he switched it on, however, he sees that Arya is going to kill him, so he frantically called Sonia and Nisha, who is giving birth to Krishna, saying that he has been betrayed and exploited for his powers, then he destroyed the computer. When Arya reports Rohit as dead, Nisha cannot handle the news and dies, leaving Sonia to raise Krishna on her own.

Hearing the truth, Krishna forgives Sonia, but still wishes to go to Priya, so he promises he will never reveal his abilities again, and Sonia lets him travel to Singapore.

Once there, Honey and Priya add one lie to another as they try to catch Krishna doing something amazing on film, but instead, he uses his abilities to avoid it.



Who is this strange man and what does he want with Krishna?

But his promise to Sonia and his need to help people come into conflict when a circus performance they are attending turns into tragedy, and Krishna finds himself forced to wear a disguise to save others from a burning tent. His actions get caught on camera, but no one can identify who the mysterious "Krrish" is. Priya, however, has her suspicions.

Meanwhile, an older man visits Krishna's old schoolmaster, looking for the boy and his grandmother. Does he know about Krishna's powers, and if so, what does he want them for? Krishna also learns that there is a possibility that Rohit may still be alive!

I was very pleased with this film and felt it had good pacing. It seemed to avoid the normal story elements common in many Bollywood films not just with the superhero aspect but in the way that while Krishna falls easily for Priya (really the first adult female he had close contact with besides his grandmother), Priya does not have the same feelings, and instead has no problem using him for her own gains.

The primary languages used are Hindi, English, Cantonese, and Tamil, so language lovers get a chance to hear all of them. The story of Rohit, Nisha, and Jadoo are shown in the first film, *Koi... Mil Gaya*, which is an excellent film.

I will admit, *Krrish* is definitely not for everyone. The superhero aspect can seem odd in a Bollywood production, and some parts near the end get rather strange (including what appear to be ninjas popping up to fight our hero), but it isn't meant to be taken seriously and it does provide you with a good three hours of entertainment. **PT**

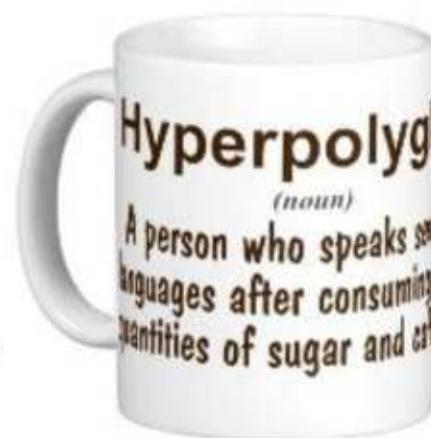


Krishna learning the truth about his parents

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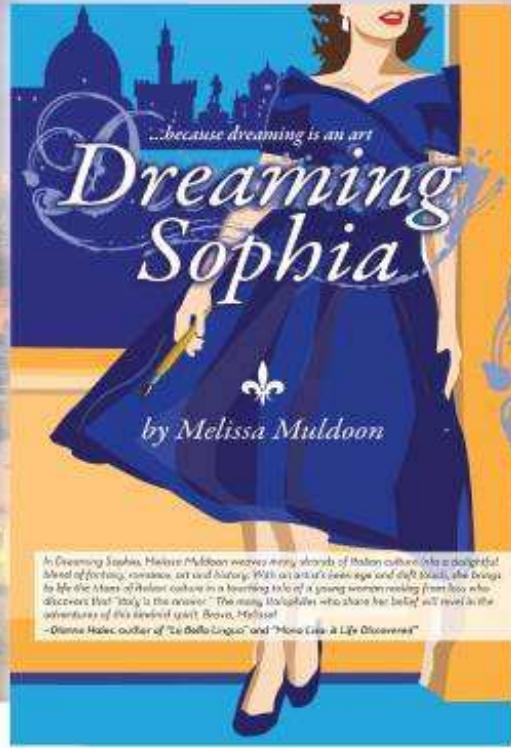
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“Author Melissa Muldoon presents spellbinding artistic expression in her delightful story, Dreaming Sophia. Not your typical Italian romantic adventure, Dreaming Sophia is a wonderful multifaceted story that pushes through several genres, with layers and layers of exquisite entertainment. The development of her characters is flawless.” - Sheri Hoyte: Reader Views

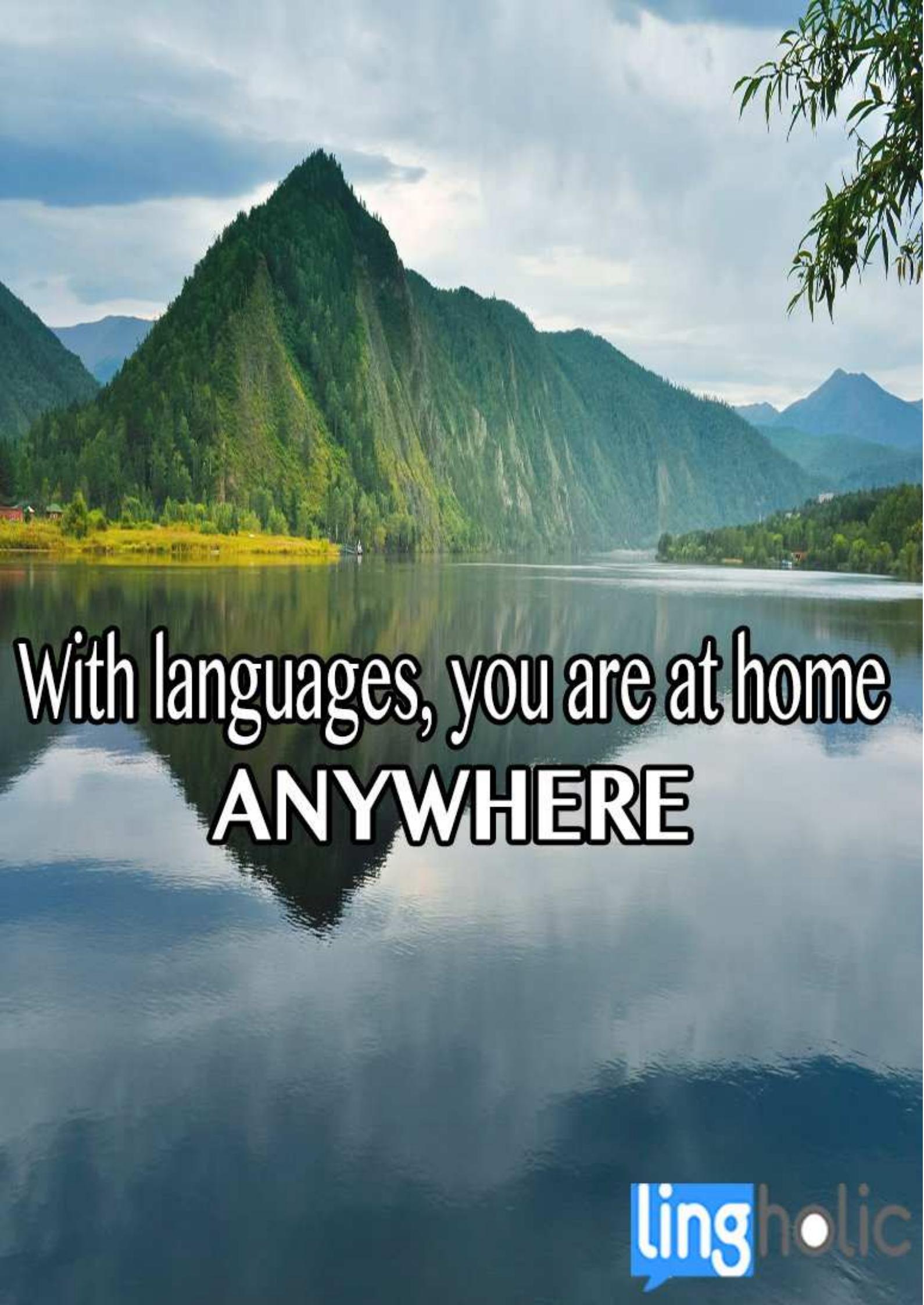


Melissa Muldoon is the “Studentessa Matta”. In Italian, “matta” means “crazy” or “impassioned”. She promotes the study of Italian language and culture through the dual-language blog StudentessaMatta.com. She has a B.A. in fine arts, art history and European history from Knox College and a master’s in art history from the University of Illinois. She has studied painting, language and art history in Florence.

Dreaming Sophia is a fanciful look at art history, but it is also a culmination of personal stories and insights resulting from Melissa’s experiences traveling and living in Italy, as well as her involvement and familiarity with the Italian language, painting and art history. Find more about *Dreaming Sophia* on the website, Pinterest and Facebook pages.



Available on Amazon in print & E-book
DreamingSophiaBook.com

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, surrounded by lush green forests and towering mountains under a cloudy sky.

**With languages, you are at home
ANYWHERE**

Language Puzzles

Every issue we post a puzzle here for you to solve. It varies in language and type, so if this puzzle doesn't interest you, you can wait until the next issue, or try the puzzle anyways. You might learn something new!



This month's puzzle is a word scramble for Polish animals. Unscramble the letters to reveal the name of an animal in Polish.

Word Scramble #5 - Animals

1)

g r l y o

2)

ł b i e d ą w 1

3)

n ę e z i z c s

4)

j o k m w ó r a d

5)

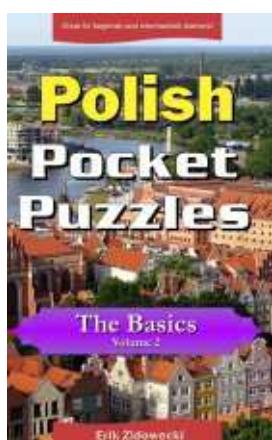
b ó r b

6)

w ł ó ż

7)

a a ł p m



Polish Pocket Puzzles -
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Proverbs from the World: Dari (Afghan Persian)

The world is full of languages, which in turn are full of proverbs, some of which are very culture related, some instead very universal. In this article there is one of each type. The language of choice this time is Dari, the Afghan variety of Persian language.

There are about 12,5 million native speakers of Dari, and it's one of the two official languages of Afghanistan. As an Indo-European language, Dari is related to languages like English, Spanish, Russian and Hindi. The script used is a Perso-Arabic script, which is read from right to left. There is no standardized romanization system, but the one chosen here is rather common.

یک نه و صد آسان.

Yak na wa sad aasaan.

Literal translation:

One "no" and a hundred easy.

Some things really are universal, like this first proverb. This refers to a situation when saying "yes" to a request leads to many problems and responsibilities, but saying "no" (نه) saves from all that.

از زیر پلو، مولی برآمد.

As zer-e palau, muli bar aamad.

Literal translation:

From under under the pilaf, a radish came out.

To understand this we need to know something about the culinary culture of Dari speakers. "Palao", in English pilaf, is a typical rice dish, and underneath the rice people expect to see delicious meat. To discover a radish there is a disappointment.



Proverbs inspired by *Zarbul Masalha*.

151 Afghan Dari Proverbs by Captain Edward Zellem,

2. and bilingual edition in 2012, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, USA

Where Are You?

This national capital city has a population of over 1.4 million. Population and location make it the world's northernmost metro area with a population that high and it is also the northernmost capital of an EU state.

Established as a trading town in 1550, it had a slow growth due to poverty, wars, and diseases. Most of the inhabitants were killed by a plague in 1710 alone. But it did grow, and later the same century, it saw the construction of a naval fortress, which greatly improved its status.

Surprisingly, it wasn't until the Russians took control of it in 1800 that it really began to develop. It became the capital of the region when Russian Emperor Alexander I wanted a capital closer to St. Petersburg. After a great fire in 1827, an academy, at the time the country's only university, was relocated to the city, where it is still used as a modern university.

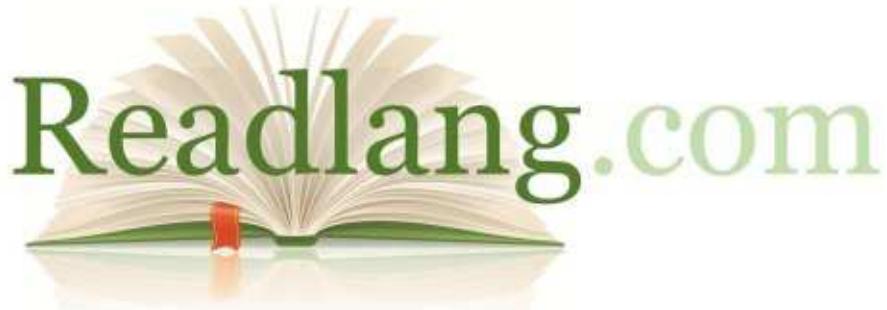
Despite being under Russian rule, the country maintained its culture, religion, and language. It declared independence in 1917, and as relations with the West became more stable, tensions increased with the new Soviet Union. The country finally broke free after the Second World War.

It had an economic boom in the 1970s and has been increasing its economy since to become among the highest in the world. It joined the European Union in 1995.

Can you name this location and country?

Last month's answer: Lviv, Ukraine





Reading in a foreign language made easy



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Basic Guide to French

French is the second most commonly-taught second language in the world, and considered by many to be the "language of love". It is the most prominent Romance language and a component of most creoles.

Here are some beginner words and phrases in French for you to gain a simple introduction to it.



Hello

Bonjour

How are you?

Comment allez-vous?

Fine, thank you

Bien, merci

And you?

Et vous?

Welcome

Bienvenue

It is a beautiful day

Il fait beau aujourd'hui

Have a nice day

Bonne journée

Goodbye

Au revoir

See you later

À la prochaine

See you tomorrow

À demain

Excuse me

(when bumping into someone)

Pardon

May I help you?

Puis-je vous aider?

Yes

Oui

No

Non

Speak slowly

Parlez lentement

Nice to meet you

Enchanté

Mr.

Monsieur

Mrs.

Madame

Please

S'il vous plaît

Thank you

Merci

You're welcome

Je vous en prie

Congratulations

Félicitations

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You will find these words on Lesson 1, 2, 3 and 4 plus there are over 100 other free lessons to learn more French.

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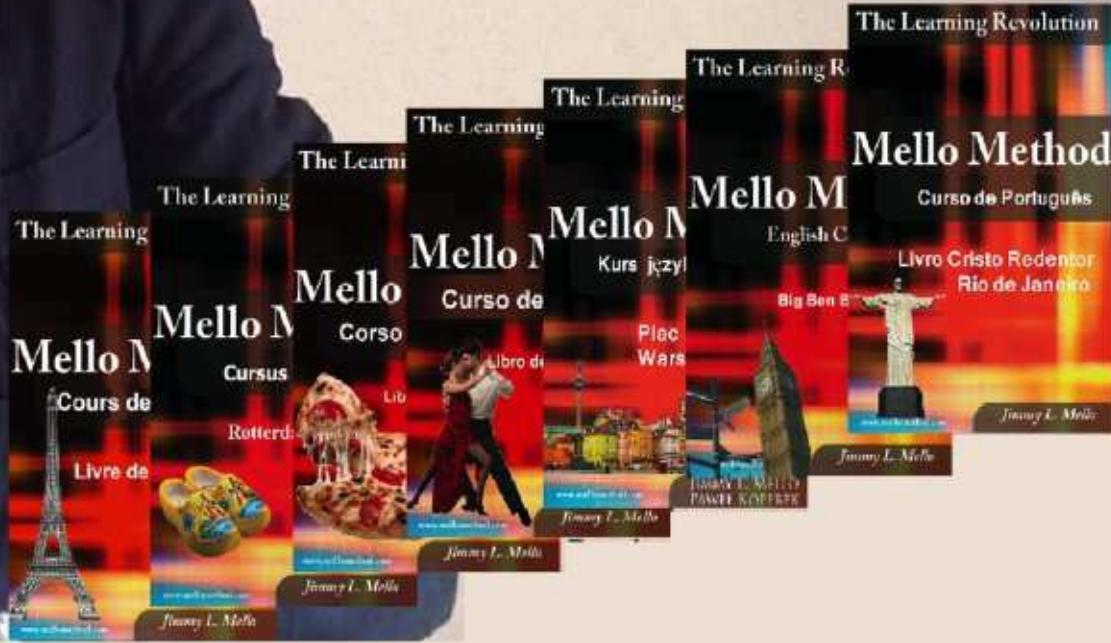
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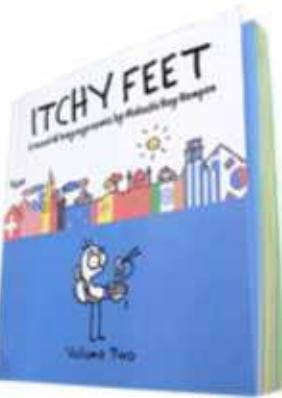
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At A Glance

Specific Language

Learn Amharic Website

A website that teaches the Amharic language for beginner to advanced levels. There is also a section to learn the script.

<https://www.learn-amharic.com/>

Amharic



Little Linguini

Customized classes online in Chinese, English, and Persian/Farsi to teens and adults, in addition to classes about the culture, history, and politics of Chinese and Iran. Interested? Sign up for your free trial class!

<https://www.littlelinguini.com/>

Chinese, English, Farsi



Ultra Easy German

Ultra Easy German is the online language school dedicated to teaching the German language in the easiest way possible. There are innovative free video courses for beginners and upper beginners. The free video courses come along with lots of great tools to improve your German such as spelling checker, voice recorder and a verb conjugator.

<http://www.ultraeasygerman.com/>

German

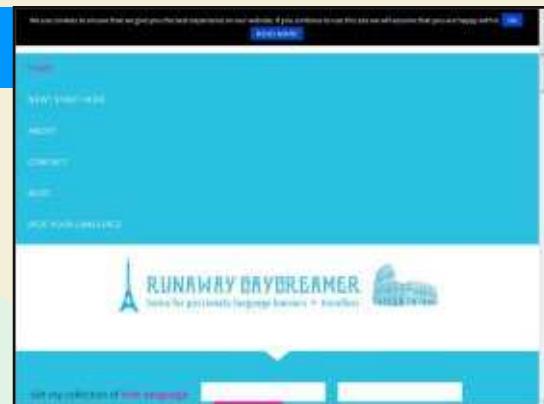


Blog

Runaway Daydreamer

Runaway Daydreamer is a community for passionate language learners and travellers from across the world. It's a place to swap language stories as well as favourite, tried and true, language learning tips and tricks.

<http://runawaydaydreamer.com/>

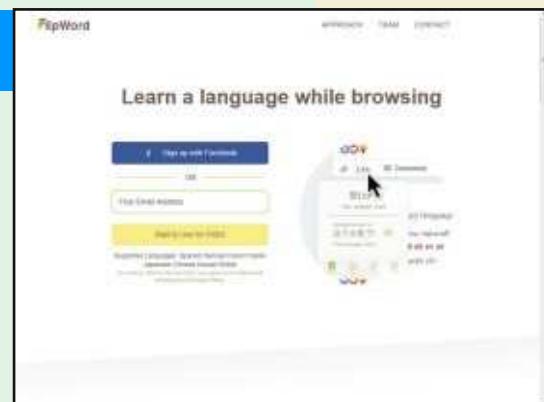


Software

Flip Word

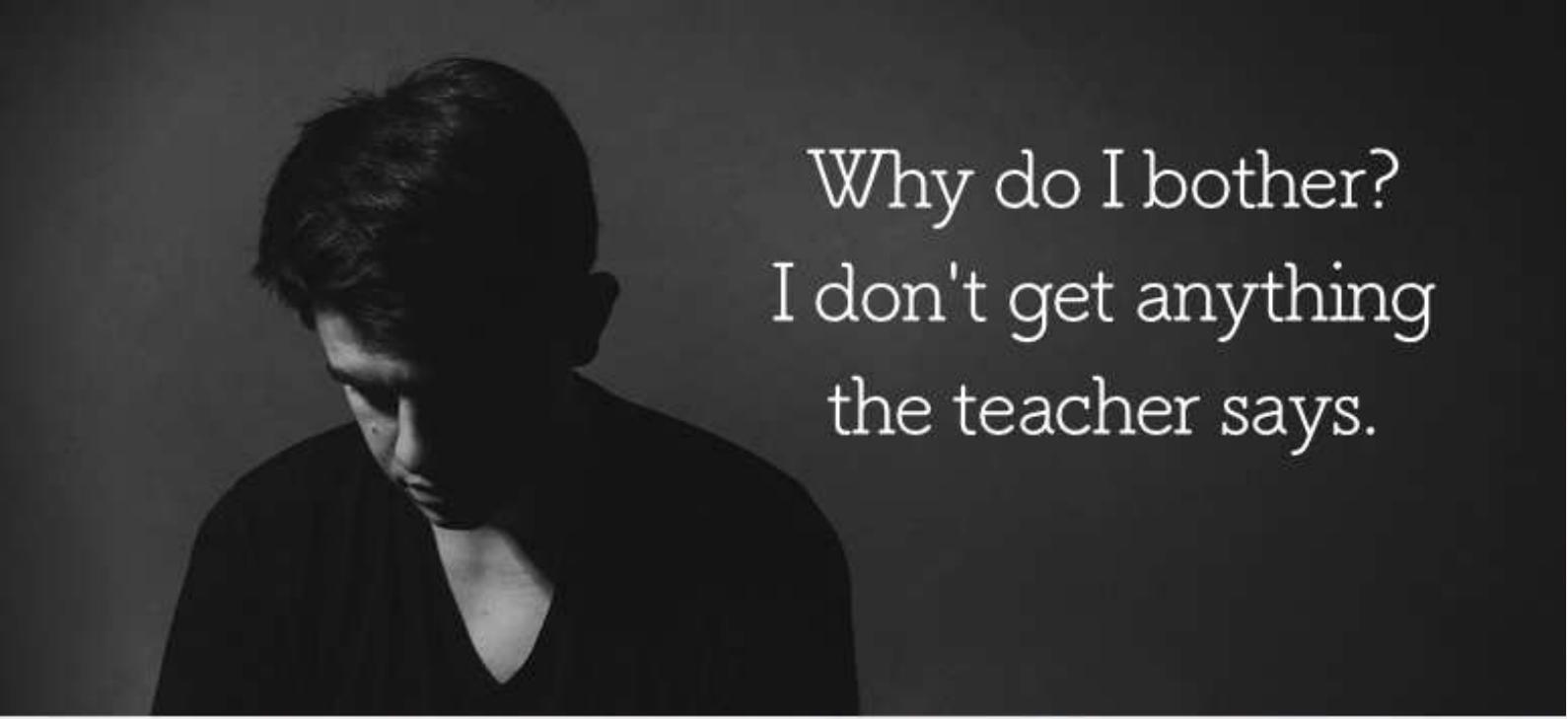
Free extension for the Chrome browser allows the user to engage in normal reading and browsing online, but every few words will be replaced with vocabulary in your target language.

<https://flipword.co/>



Links provided by the
Language Learning Library

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

Learning a language feels
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**. Now I teach the language. 😎

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Letter From the Editor - In This Issue

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Images: Petey: Woman and statue

News Brief

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Mark Your Calendar

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

More About Cognates Than You Ever Wanted to Know

Writer: John C. Rigdon

Images: Petey: Glass of Cognac (title); Alice with Humpty Dumpty; Pitcher of water

A Peek into Pinyin

Writer: Tarja Jolma

Images: Petey: China plaza; Kids letter board; Sound glyphs; Zhou Youguang

Sources:

- "Zhou Youguang" Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhou_Youguang>
- "Pinyin" Wikipedia <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinyin>>
- "The Routledge Encyclopedia of the Chinese Language", edited by Chan Sin-Wai, associate editors James William Minett & Florence Li Wing Yee, Routledge, 2016
- The Chinese Testing International website <<http://www.chinesetest.cn/goKdInfoOrPlan.do>>
- "Tania Branigan: Zhou Youguang Obituary in The Guardian" The Guardian <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/01/zhou-youguang-obituary>>
- "Tania Branigan: Sound principles in The Guardian" The Guardian <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/feb/21/china>>

An Art Exhibition That Spoke To Me

Writer: Olivier Elzingre

Images: Petey: Wire-frame head; Talking head

In Focus

Writer: Erik Zidowecki, Kendal Knetemann

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At The Cinema - Krrish

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Sources:

- "Krrish (2006)" Internet Movie Database <<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0432637/>>

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Language Puzzles

Writer: Erik Zidowecki

Proverbs from the World - Dari (Afghan Persian)

Writer: Tarja Jolma

Images: Jost Wagner: Afghani Palo

Where Are You?

Writer: Erik Zidowecki
Images: Petey: Mystery image

Basic Guide to French

Writer: Erik Zidowecki, Kendal Knetemann
Images: Petey: Flag; View of city

At A Glance

Writer: Erik Zidowecki
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WHO WE ARE

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Tarja Jolma
Olivier Elzingre
Kendal Knetemann

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