

Parrot Time

The Thinking of Speaking

Issue #31 January / February 2018

Examining the Language Guru Why do we look for secrets and tricks?

The Ethics of Language Teaching

Teaching a language is
always good, isn't it?

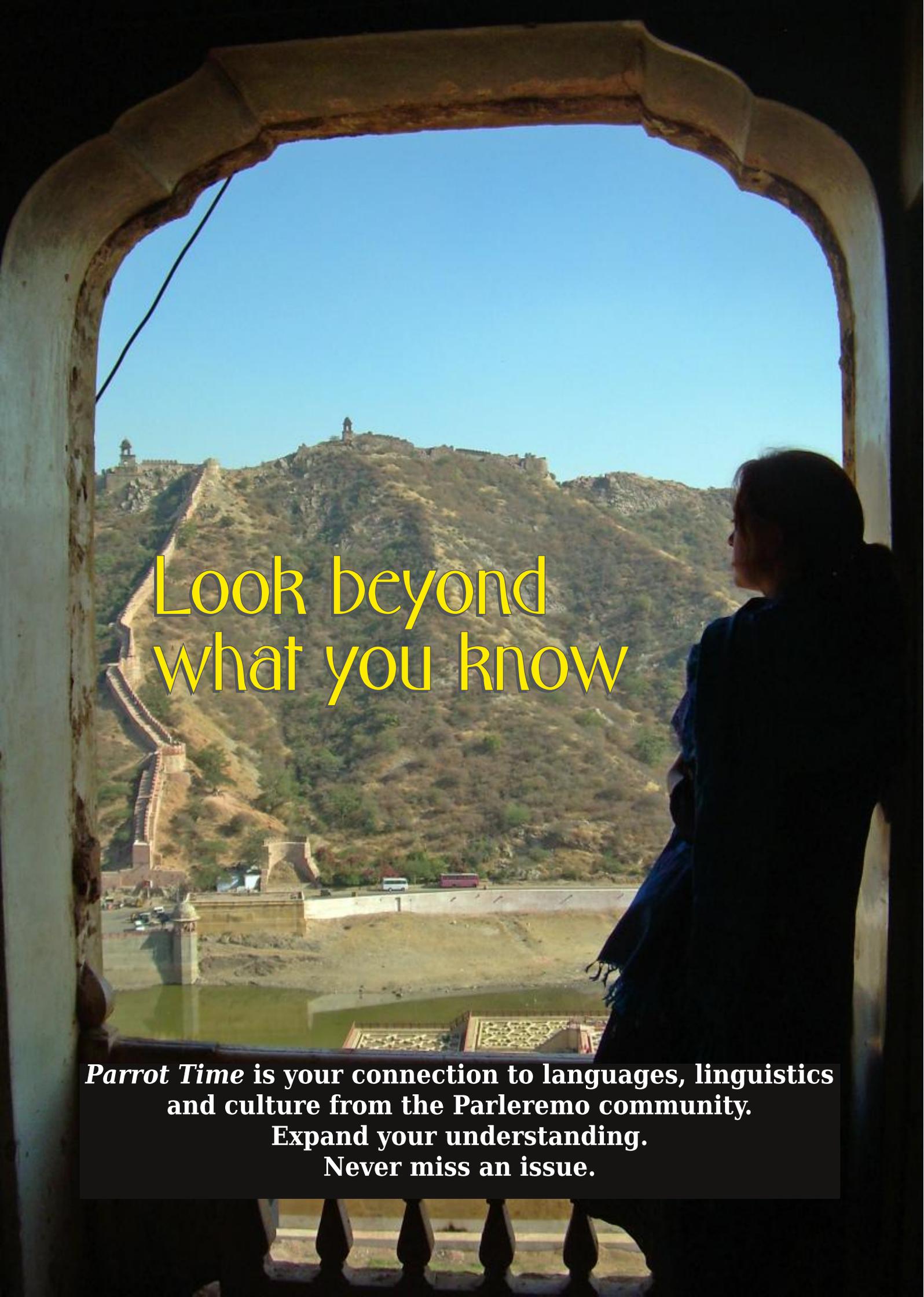
Teddy Talks

Making and joining
language meetups

PLUS

News and Events of the
language community



A woman in a blue sari is seen from the side, looking out from an arched window. The view outside shows a hilltop fort with a small tower, a long wall leading up the hill, and a dry lake bed in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

Look beyond
what you know

***Parrot Time* is your connection to languages, linguistics
and culture from the Parleremo community.
Expand your understanding.
Never miss an issue.**

Parrot Time

Parrot Time is a magazine covering language, linguistics and culture of the world around us.

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

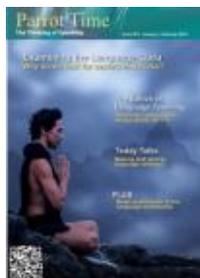
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Editor: Erik Zidowecki
Email: editor@parrottime.com

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

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Cover: One is believed to reach a higher plane of thinking when one has learned enough. Do you have what it takes to become a language guru? Do you want to?

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A flisni Shqip?

Learn a language,

Make friends,

Have fun!

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Up the Guru Path

Why are you learning languages?

I am sure you have been asked this questions many times. I am guessing you have probably asked yourself this question a number of times as well.

It bears repeating because while for many of us, it is a hobby which we are drawn to, to many others, it is a path to something else. That "something else" might be a better job, a better relationship, a better experience in another country, or just better self-esteem. Whatever it is, we figure it will be "better."

But then what? While many have a goal, which is achieved once they have learned that second or third language, what about those who simply keep learning new languages. Is there a goal? Is there a time when the "better" stops happening?

I ask this because I have become particularly focused recently on the concept of a language "guru". This is the person who is valuable just for the fact that they have learned several languages, even if they don't actually apply them to something like a job or project.

As a computer programmer in my early twenties, I read an article one day which described a "programming guru" as one who had learned so many programming languages that they no longer actually programmed. Instead, they just wrote articles about programming.

I was horrified! Was I doomed to become like that... one day no longer use my knowledge to create but instead just sit, as if on a higher plane or mystical mountain ledge, drinking tea and telling people things like "C is its own virus"?

I haven't yet, but I am wary of picking up any more programming languages.

What about human languages? Does the person who eventually learns so many languages become only known for knowing them and no longer have to actually use them?

If so, is that a better thing?



Erik Zidowecki

ERIK ZIDOWECKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF



Scriveremo Publishing Expands, Releases New Series

The mother company of Parrot Time, *Scriveremo Publishing*, has recently increased its staff with the addition of another language lover.

Siskia Lagomarsino, creator of *The Polyglotist*, a blog about her experiences learning and teaching and languages, has officially joined the Scriveremo team. Up until this point, she had worked mainly in a consultatory role.

Siskia's creativity and knowledge of several languages have given way to an original series of language teaching books for very young children.

Scriveremo Publishing mainly produces puzzle books for language learning. They include word searches, word scrambles, and multiple choice quizzes, in various combinations, formats, and vocabulary themes. There is also a branch of game books for just English speakers, without another language involved.

The latest series follows in the same venue, with six different kinds of puzzles over several different word themes. These are aimed at the very young (with the help of a parent) and based around the fictional hamster, **Awesome Alex**, who has a tendency toward adventure, learning, and getting into trouble.

While Awesome Alex is currently only available for fun learning in Spanish, we are assured that the orange and white hamster will be learning / teaching more languages shortly and eventually expanding to other language adventures. **PT**

Holistic Approach to Language Learning Gaining Popularity

The holistic approach promoted by **Trisha** from *Language Learners Journal* seems to have become a very popular topic within the language learning communities this year.

So what exactly is holistic language learning? It is about not just grabbing a grammar book or listening to audio, it's seeing the bigger picture and looking at learning as a whole and on many different levels. Trisha said "A more holistic approach means taking personal responsibility for your own language learning. You are the expert of you! Use your personal intellect style, preferences, insight, imagination as well as optimizing your environment to make you more successful independent language learning."

Trisha who has a professional background in psychology and wellbeing believes that in order to be more successful at languages you also have to optimise your brain for learning. You can do this via simple mindfulness techniques, developing soft skills, such as active listening. Good sleep hygiene, improved mood management, aerobic exercise, diet and nutrition. Her award-winning blog has also featured in the local news for her dedication and passion for empowering independent language learners across the globe.

If you would like to know more check out the official page and [Facebook Group](#) that offer live support and guidance to language learners with free access to her courses. This is part of her *Language Learners Amplified Program* to help people learn languages faster and more efficiently.

PT



Mark Your Calendar

Polyglot Gathering 2018

**May 30 - June 3, 2018
Bratislava, Slovakia**

The Polyglot Gathering is an informal event which takes place once a year and brings together polyglots (people who speak several languages) and language enthusiasts from all over the world. It is a five-day event with lectures, workshops and social activities for everyone who loves and enjoys languages.

If you think learning languages is a great leisure activity and you are learning new and new ones in your free time, where else will you find 400-500 people with this passion?

For more information and tickets visit www.polyglotbratislava.com

Montreal Language Festival

**August 21 – 26, 2018
Concordia University,
Montreal, Quebec**

The Montreal Language Festival, or "Lang-Fest" for short, is North America's premier celebration and conference for language learners and enthusiasts of all levels. Lang-Fest 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

Polyglot Conference 2018

**October 27 - 28, 2018
Ljubljana, Slovenia**

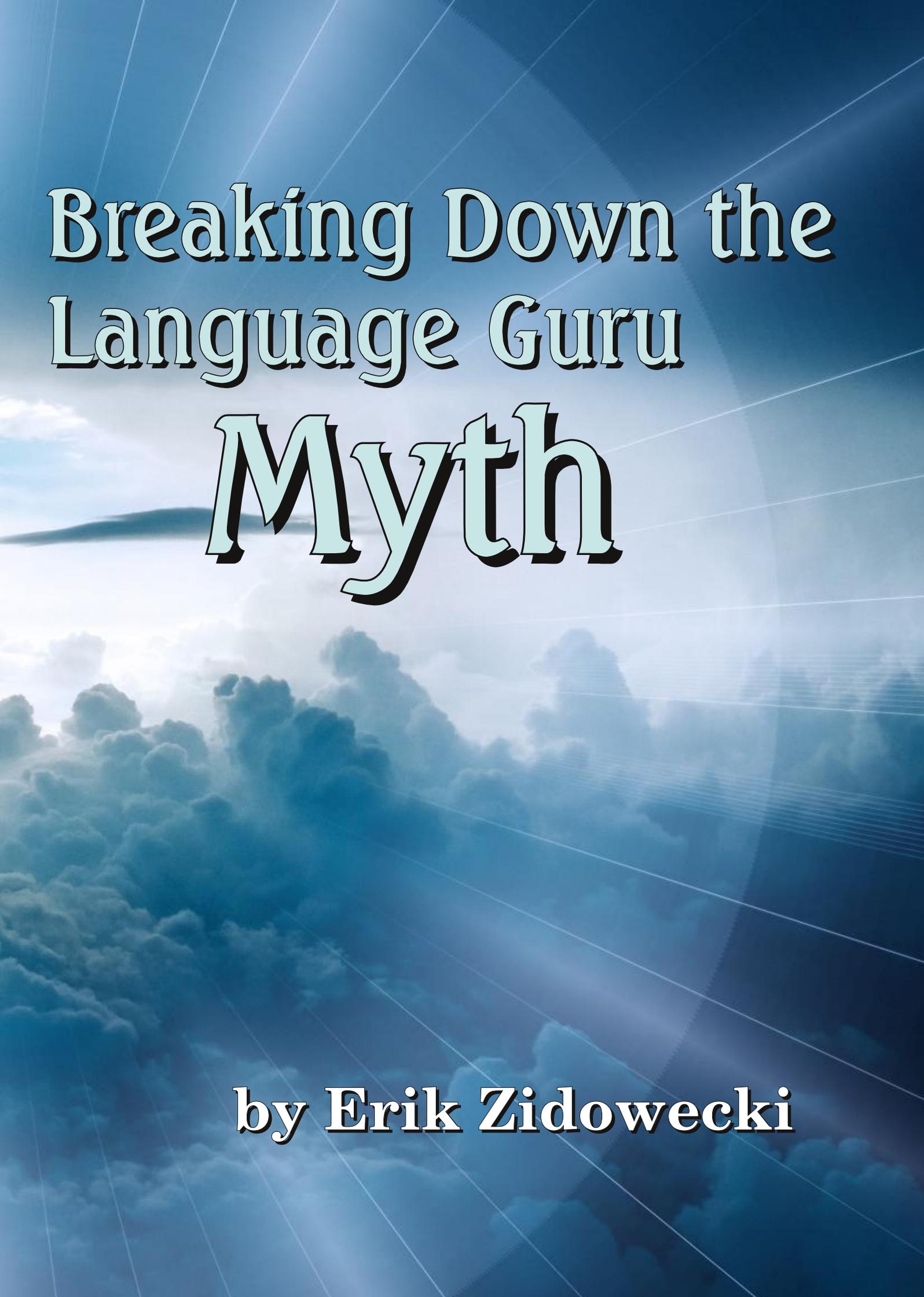
The Polyglot Conference is open to anyone and everyone who loves languages. The events are designed for anyone who loves language: teachers, interpreters, translators, students, scholars, language bloggers, linguists, writers and people who simply want to know more about languages.

You will meet other language enthusiasts, discuss new learning resources and techniques, learn about new linguistic research, speak in different languages to the many attendees from different parts of the world, and generally spend a weekend focusing on language in a way that most of us are unable to do in our normal lives.

For more information and tickets visit polyglotconference.com

How to Learn Any Language -





Breaking Down the Language Guru Myth

by Erik Zidowecki

While browsing Amazon books online randomly one day for language resources, I saw a new language book coming out in 2018. The title promised that I would be able to become fluent in any language when using the information found in the book.

I sighed.

It struck me that over the last few decades, we seem to have been abstracting information more frequently. The focus has been less on providing a person with the information to do something and more on helping with finding that information.

Now, a part of me understands this. My father used to get perturbed when my sister or I would ask him the meaning a word. “Look it up!” he would tell us, to which we would justify our requests with “But it is easier to ask you”. And indeed, it was. He wanted us to use a dictionary to search for each word so we would remember it, but we were more concerned about having the answer at the moment.

A similar idea is put forth in the adage “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.” Having the knowledge of how to achieve something might be more important at times than actually achieving.

My problem with this is that teaching does not necessarily lead to learning and application. My own second part of that fishing adage is “Teach a man to fish, and he will complain how he has to do everything himself!”.

Back to the Books

If you’ve collected more than five language books at any one time, then you have probably come across one which promised to teach you a language within a certain amount time (sixteen months, eight months, three months, etc). Some claim “new” or “special” techniques, such as using mnemonics, scientific study of word orders, et. These are directed at a specific language because they are actually course books, and the methods they



apply would probably be fine for most other languages. In fishing terms, they show you how to fish, then go fishing with you to make sure you get plenty to eat.

The Pimsleur Method is a way of applying spaced repetition to audio files. DuoLingo also uses spaced repetition along with a variety of questions for words and phrases. The Rosetta Stone uses matching images to words and sentences. The Mello Method uses carefully planned sets of exercises that build up your understanding of the language to absorb the structures easily.

None of these are the “secrets” of which I was speaking. They are just the formatting of one of the methods (audio, website, software, book) for which they then apply courses to.

For the most part, any special trick they offer is probably nothing more than a gimmick, because while there are always other ways to study, the brunt work of obtaining a new language is studying and practising.

Let me repeat that, because it is a core truth we often want to forget: to learn a language, you need to study hard and practise often. Some languages may take longer to learn and others will come easier to you, based mainly on what you already know, but the true key is just “study and practise”.

Why am I putting such an emphasis on that? Because, like most things, people want to find a way to get around the hard work and time-consuming practise to learn anything and instead know of a “secret” way to do it which is effortless and painless. Even though you have shown them how to fish, they believe you must know of a faster or easier way you aren’t telling them.

“How to Learn Any Language”

The desire for the fast track is what creates the idea that there are better ways of doing things. Now, don’t get me wrong. There are always different ways of learning, and some methods will prove superior to others, and which of those depends on the individual. I wrote a whole series of articles about language learning methods, which I then pub-



lished as a book, “Finding Your Way to Languages”, looking at the pros and cons of each method. A person might work better in a structured classroom than trying to learn independently from a book or audio programs. Phrasebooks might be a good way to digest gulps of the language for some, while others might do best using the sink-or-swim approach of immersion.

But the important thing to note is that those are all just methods of leaning. They all still need the application part, the studying, using them. Whether you are doing the course, the phrasebook, the immersion, you’re still having to go through the hours of study. You are just doing it in a different format or medium.

You might read that and think “well, of course. That’s obvious”, but I am betting you have still wondered at least once if there might be a neat tip you could apply to whatever method you are doing which would speed it up. And such a way must work for any and all languages, naturally.



Some of these have appeared over the years as rather obvious frauds. One has been audio courses that will teach you while you sleep, so you will awaken fluent in another language. This one has not only come back into popularity, but a few sites even claim it works even better now. Another is magic pills that instantly infuse you with complete knowledge of the language. While those were long ago debunked, scientists are again beginning to make promises of such a thing in the future.

The modern era has allowed for a greater means of producing the promising materials which will lure us in. Blogs have been kicking around for years about learning languages, often containing lists and countdowns to language assistance and learning the same way teen girl magazines gave the “secrets” to applying makeup or “tricks” to get that handsome boy to notice you. The only difference is that the teen magazines were probably more reliable.

As an example, I googled “language blog 5 secrets to memorizing vocabulary” and was

instantly rewarded with a link to blogs with articles touting their own list of tips: “8 Practical Ways to Learn...”, “9 Imaginative Tips for Absorbing...”, “12 Fun Ways to Learn and Remember...”, “7 sure-fire ways to drastically improve...”, “The 6 Best Techniques for Learning...”.

Now imagine how many language blogs out there, having to push out new articles each week, and you can get some understanding of how we are completely saturated by all of this advice. How do you know which is the best and which is worthless? How can you know who *really* knows the ancient secrets of vocabulary acquisition?

You look at books! Naturally, if someone has written a blog on it, and they really have truth to what they say, then they would have put it into books too! So you do searches on Amazon like I did to start all this and see what you come up with.

I came up with 18 on the first three pages of an Amazon search, and that was just with the books who had variants on that title “How to Learn any Language”. You might recognize



some name and go with that person's book. You might try to see who has a book and matching blog, figuring that shows they are devoted and trusted (maybe).

Or you might just ask yourself "What am I doing?"

What You Are Doing

See, somewhere along the line, you decided to seek help in your learning process from someone who you figured had done it before and might have some ideas on what you might do. Or maybe you've learned another language before and are looking for advice on refining your methods. The most obvious choice would be someone who has studied several languages and is writing about what they did.

Or is it? After all, what has enabled that person to learn the languages they claim to speak. That's right, I said it: "claim to speak". Industries are built around people who have the knowledge, and the language community is no better. When you know something, or

even seem to know something, your worth goes up. Power and prestige can also go up along with it, so there is plenty of incentive for a person to boast about skills they don't have or exaggerate their fluency claim. Whose to say they are lying?

So you are seeking out those who are titled "polyglots" and asking for them to share their wisdom. Much the same way we would look for a lawyer who has won more cases, we seek out the polyglot who has learned more languages.

We fail to consider so many things in that choice, however. The most obvious is how difficult was it for the person to learn the languages. In some countries, the population is raised bilingually, with a third language like English taught in school. That means you might have a person who starts with three languages they never really had to work at on their own, then who have started learning two other.

Another person might have had to travel constantly as a child because their family was



in the military and while they have picked up several languages, it was all through immersion, not through any special learning methods.

Both of these polyglots have had a significant advantage over someone who learned 5 languages by scraping together materials from any place they could. Yet if you asked them how they did it, no answer they give you would help you unless you could somehow replicate their growing up conditions.

And then there is the question of usage. I know several polyglots who put their skills to use doing translations, writing courses, teaching others, or maybe just maintaining and learning more for their own enjoyment. You probably know some as well, and may not even know it. Similar to actors. We can name a few dozen “big” celebrities, and yet in every show and movie we watch, we may see a dozen to a thousand other actors who have also learned the practice. They just aren’t being given the “star” billing.

That is because while we tend to seek out those whom we see as polyglots, we do that

for the ones who are “selling” that aspect of what they have done. If they have learned multiple languages, they must know something we don’t, because we don’t see all the hard work that went into it.

This is just something else humans do. When we only see the final product and not the struggle, the fame can seem “easy”. Most of our musicians, actors, dancers, writers, etc., did not get a chance in the spotlight because one morning, after having done nothing all their lives, they woke up and someone handed them a giant light bulb and contract.

Those stars had to work a long time, learning and practising their crafts. They had no tricks and secrets, although a few may have gotten lucky, similar to those people growing up bilingually, or had some other advantage, like the polyglot who had to travel around.

But becoming a polyglot doesn’t signify any special power or knowledge inherently. Far more people than we know become polyglots because learning the languages was part of the journey, not the destination.

The Language Guru

This brings me back to the idea of abstracting knowledge. The polyglots most of us recognize are known not for *what* they learned but that they *did* learn. We want to know how they achieved this understanding, even though we already know the answer: study and practise. But that answer won't do, and instead, we pester them for their secret methods and mystical ways. They write about their experiences so we can read every detail that might give us the insight to advance our learning. We attend their talks, watch their videos, listen to podcasts, and buy their books. In a sense, they become our idols. Some become this way because we make them into it, some because they seek it out and want us to treat them this way.

I'm not saying that these individuals are false or trying to fool people. Indeed, in some cases, their position as language gurus have made them ambassadors to the non-language learning world as well as inspiring many others to study harder to learn as they did.

However, obtaining knowledge or a skill does not mean some unique technique was used, or that some inherent ability was involved. So why do we believe this to be the case? Why do we hold to this conclusion that someone who has learned multiple languages must have some mysterious way of doing it. In fact, thinking this suggests that the person did *not* work hard and instead cheated.

So why do we think this? First, it is human nature to believe that those around us are cheating at life. Everything they get or achieve is done through dishonesty or trickery. And that comes partially from our own desire to take the easy way out and as an excuse for our own underachieving. "I'd learn 5 languages too if I knew his secrets." So some polyglots use that delusion to promote that they do. And they will have their experiences to share which might be useful. But think of it this way: if any of them really had some instant trick to becoming fluent in multiple languages, enough people would have it heard it by now so you would be surrounded by these polyglots.



"But wait!" you cry, "Lots of people claim they have used what they were told and got better results, so doesn't that prove such secrets exist?"

My answer is "No", because when you talk more to those people making those claims, you will realize that while they might have gotten some advice and been inspired, there was no actual trick revealed, no curtain drawn back to show how the magic is done. The person simply buckled down and worked hard from the inspiration.

And that is what I think should be a better way to view the polyglot elite. Not as some great wise men or women who have achieved an impossible dream, nor as some cheater who uses little-known methods to master a language quicker. They are Languages Achiever, dynamos, people who have worked hard to learn more.

And there are a great many more around us than you know, hidden away among the bloggers, teachers, and translators. They may not have written any books promising a quick path, for they did not take one, but they got to their point of excellence nevertheless.

So next time you look for a "How to Learn Any Language" or seek a guru's advice, remember that there are no easy paths to fluency and that it is important to recognize all who have gained higher levels of multiple languages, not just those who promote it.

PT



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The Ethics of Language Teaching





by Olivier Elzingre

While it is becoming rarer to find anyone who doesn't agree that language should be taught, there remains at least one controversial domain whereby the teaching of a language can leave a bad taste in the mouths of many, the language teaching that occurs in missionary work. I am not aware that any religion other than Christian is currently involved in such a global effort to spread a language, though clearly the teaching of language for ideological reasons has been done for centuries, from Latin to French and many in between. I will not pretend to know anything about the methodology or the success rate of this teaching approach, but rather I would like to address the question of ethics in teaching a language for the specific dissemination of an ideology. Also, in this article, I will focus only on the teaching of English, as it is the most recent language taught globally.

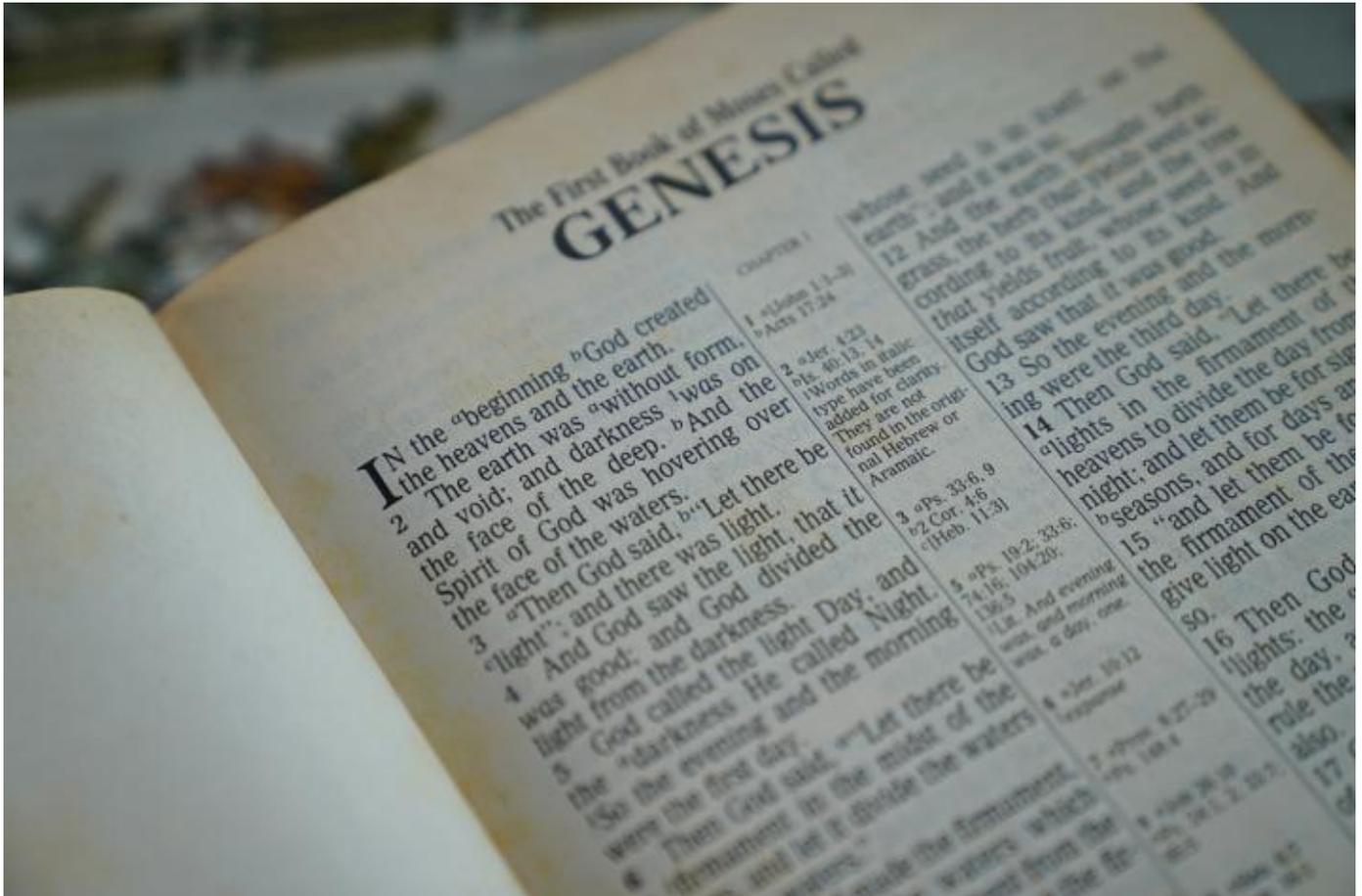
There are more than 2 camps in this question, but the two main ones are that languages should never be taught under these circumstances and that all language teaching involves, whether the teacher is conscious of it or not, an ideological position.

Of course I have an opinion about it, but

this article is not about my opinion. Sometimes, the question is more interesting/important than the limited perspective of a single person. I am writing this to explore my own understanding of the question, trying to present things objectively, leaving you to be the judge. I can't even pretend that this will be entirely factual, since 'facts' are more often than not an interpretation of events rather than events themselves.

The reason people have an issue with missionary language teaching could be more complex than a problem with its underlying ideology. One aspect of this work that causes discomfort is that the Christian faith is placed upon people, as if these people didn't already have a set of beliefs. It is thought that there is a certain arrogance ignoring someone's beliefs for the benefit of one's own, whether you call it a belief, a faith, a religion or the Word of God. The questions to be asked here are, in my mind, is this really what is taking place? Are locals' beliefs really ignored? It is possible that when we voice this opinion, we are assuming that missionary work is monolithic – the same everywhere. It would surprise me greatly to learn that the teaching that takes





place in so many different world locations with so many different missionaries and people was organised so superbly that the 'product' of teaching was the same everywhere. I would be more tempted to believe that the teaching varies greatly, from highly ideologised to not at all.

I also feel that a second cause of discomfort with missionary language teaching work is not so much the spread of a religion, but the spread of English. As a colonising language, English is being blamed for the fast disappearance of many languages globally. From around 7000 languages currently in the world, estimates can be as bleak as 90% will have disappeared in the next hundred years because of the spread of English and the economic need to know it. While so many languages may well be disappearing, it is not the religious dimension which is causing this much destruction, but rather a wide-spread notion that English gives the speaker economic mobility. In the terms of French sociologist Bourdieu, English is seen as "symbolic

capital" worth investing in.

The opposite line of argument is that all language teaching involves an ideological stance. In recent decades, a school of thought called post-structuralism promoted the idea that identities are negotiated in every moment, with influences coming from global and dominant discourses, local cultures such as institutions, or what social scientist call "communities of practice", and finally in every conversation we have. This is important, because it implies that people are not simply recipients of an ideology (discourse), but have "agency", the ability to think, act, chose to believe or not etc. The significance of this is that missionary work would only be one of the many other discourses floating around, all of which are ideologically driven to some degree.

Within the poststructuralist school, all relationships involve a power imbalance. When you picture missionary work, what do you see? A Christian person interacting on a one to one with a local person. Who is in a position of power? The new comer of course,

because they position themselves as a teacher. At the conversational level, therefore, there is an imbalance. Someone teaches, the other learns. In addition to this, missionaries are not empty handed. They come often with medical supplies, offer workforce for the constructions of wells, schools etc, and may provide food too. A local person may be lacking in any of those, making it very difficult to refuse missionary help. Finally, the language taught is English more often than not, and as I have mentioned above, it provides the opportunity of a certain economic mobility for the learner, a chance to improve their professional outcome.

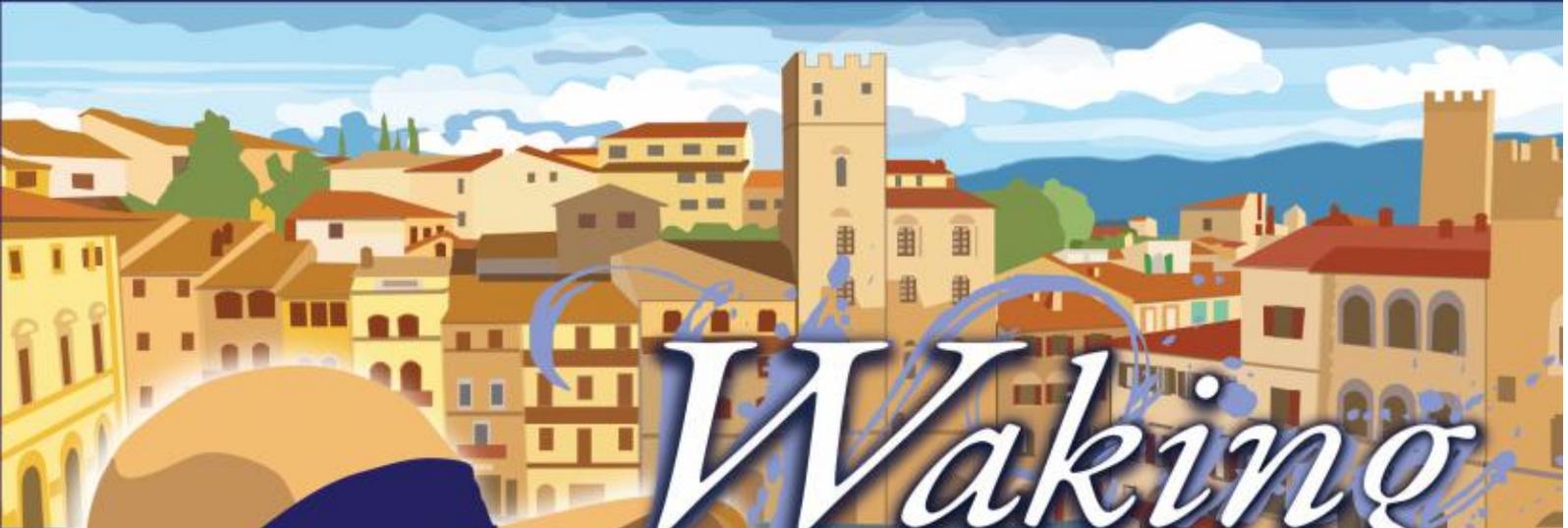
Further than that, I did say that ideology was present in all language teaching. Think about your textbook. What pictures does it show, what texts introduce what topics, what sentences illustrate aspects of grammar, what cultures are represented, what names are used in the texts? Think about your teacher if you have one. How explicit are they about their own opinions, what position do they adopt when running a discussion, what topics do they choose to present the target language culture? While none of these are necessarily religious in orientation, they still represent

particular moral and ethical perspectives. How then can we accuse missionary work of being wrong, when it is so similar in any language teaching. It could also be argued that missionary language teaching is more ethical because it makes its ideological intent explicit, as opposed to everyday classroom teaching.

I have only addressed a few aspects of what is an ongoing discussion. I did say that this article was not about my opinion, but about trying to present things objectively, leaving it to you to think about it further and form your own opinion about it. All I will say is this – I am not Christian, but I feel that at the very least these language teaching missionaries are true to themselves. They do what their religion asks them to do, to spread the word. And in doing so, they also do much good. **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 olivierrelzingre@gmail.com





Waking Isabella

...because beauty can't sleep forever

by Melissa Muldoon



Waking Isabella is a story about uncovering hidden beauty that, over time, has been lost, erased, or suppressed. It also weaves together several love stories as well as a few mysteries. Nora, an assistant researcher, is a catalyst for resolving the puzzle of a painting that has been missing for decades. Set in Arezzo, a small Tuscan town, the plot unfolds against the backdrop of the city's antique trade and the fanfare and pageantry of its medieval jousting festival. While filming a documentary about Isabella de' Medici—the Renaissance princess who was murdered by her husband—Nora begins to connect with the lives of two remarkable women from the past. Unraveling the stories of Isabella, the daughter of a fifteenth-century Tuscan duke, and Margherita, a young girl trying to survive the war in Nazi-occupied Italy, Nora begins to question the choices that have shaped her own life up to this point. As she does, hidden beauty is awakened deep inside of her, and she discovers the keys to her creativity and happiness. It is a story of love and deceit, forgeries and masterpieces—all held together by the allure and intrigue of a beautiful Tuscan ghost.

"Waking Isabella" by Melissa Muldoon is a must-read for all fans of Italy, history, romance and intrigue. Eccellente! Muldoon magically weaves together the lives of Nora, Isabella and Margherita, spanning the course of many centuries, into a story that will mesmerize and haunt readers long after the last page is read. - Sheri Hoyte for Reader Views

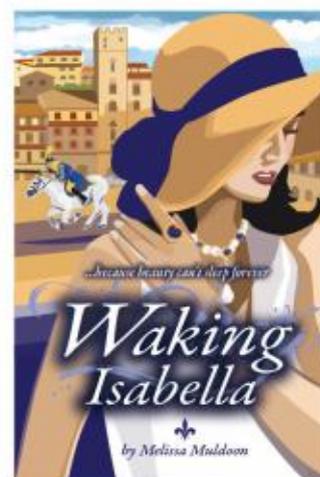
A latter-day Renaissance woman, Melissa Muldoon blends fact and fantasy, history and art, English and Italian in this richly woven tapestry. Waking Isabella, carries us from 16th-century Italy to modern-day Arezzo, from palace plots to wartime intrigues. A perfect read for Italophiles, art lovers and armchair romantics. Brava! - Dianne Hales, "La Bella Lingua"

Renaissance princess Isabella de' Medici steals the limelight as her influence transforms lives even across centuries. A beautiful story filled with intrigue, mystery, art, and redemption, Melissa Muldoon succeeds in transporting the reader to Tuscany with all its cultural festivities, history and people. A treat for lovers of historical fiction, the beauty of art, and the challenge of starting a new life and rediscovering love. - Italy Book Tours



Available in print and e-book on Amazon and other book vendors

Visit: www.MelissaMuldoon.com for more information



Adventures in the Land of Maybe

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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



We are introducing a new, regular column "Teddy's Talks" by the popular language blogger, entrepreneur, and polyglot, Teddy Nee. He will be writing on a range of subjects, including endangered languages and language meetings.

Language Meetups



I bet many of you have joined at least one language meetup. It does not matter which language it was. Near where I live, there are many kinds of meetups, from social and language meetups to business meetups. Don't con-

fuse them with workshops because meetups tend to be casual events where people from various background gather with the same interest.

The capital city of Taiwan, Taipei city, has been improving itself gradually to become a foreigner-friendly and more developed city. Seeing foreigners in public places is common because foreigners don't come here just to travel; they also come also to study, do business, etc.

The desire to improve their foreign language skills and have international friends has made a wide variety of meetups available almost every day in Taipei city. You can just simply search for the meetups in language groups and foreigners' groups on Facebook by using related combination keywords.

I have joined some meetups in Taipei city but I don't live there. I live in Taoyuan city, and there were no such meetups there. One day I thought to myself, "Why don't I organize meetups?". Putting my social and language skill experience into practice, I started my

own language meetups, and it has been going on as of today for more than one year.

The language offered in my meetups vary from English, Indonesian, to some other popular European languages, such as French, Spanish, and Portuguese, and even Esperanto.

Facebook has become my main platform to promote my meetups. I created a page called [Language Meetups By Teddy Nee](#) where I post all of the upcoming meetups. In addition, I promote in several related groups. I have also created a photo blog called [Language Meetups](#) where you can see the photos of my meetups from time to time.

The feedback that I have received so far is positive and rewarding because the main problem that many language learners face over here is the unavailability of the opportunity to use the target language actively on a daily basis. Hopefully, I can help as many people as possible to improve their language skill and make more friends. **PT**

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 talk with him in Medan Hokkien, Indonesian, English, Chinese, Spanish, Esperanto, Portuguese, and French. Visit his blog at www.neeslanguageblog.com



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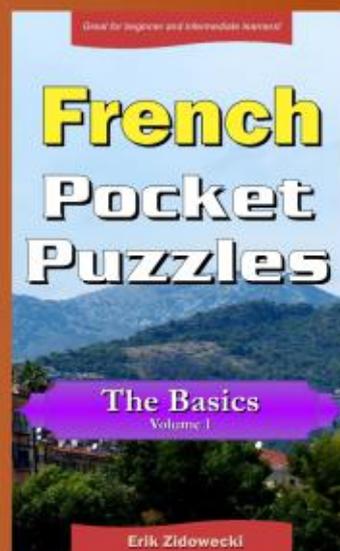
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In FOCUS

Show us where you've been!

These photos are from Kendal Knetmann and show parts of Mykonos, Greece.



The Mykonos windmills are iconic features of the Greek island of the Mykonos



Stones in the sea with rock peeking out.
Mykonos, Greece



The changing of the guard ceremony
outside the Greek Parliament building in
Athens



The purple Wisteria trees in Athens, Greece



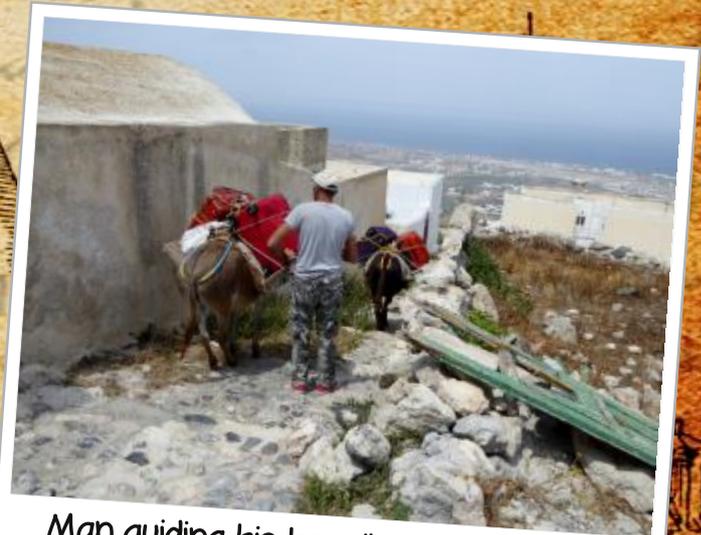
Mykonos, Greece



Oia, a coastal town on the northwestern tip of Santorini, a Greek Aegean island



Holy Monastery of Prophet Elias of Thira



Man guiding his heavily laden donkey down a rocky alley



The Arch of Hadrian, or Hadrian's Gate, is a monumental gateway resembling a Roman triumphal arch



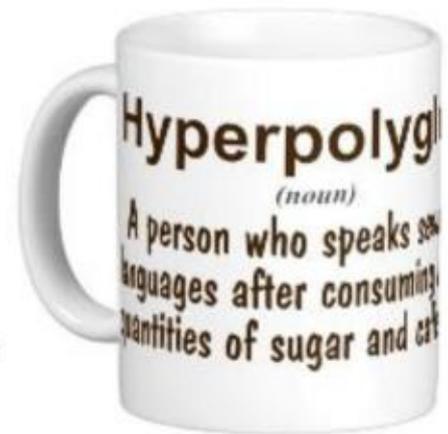
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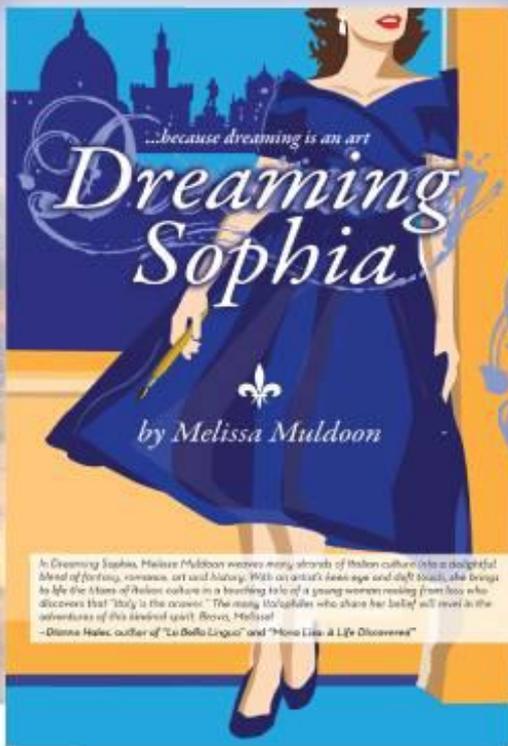
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Melissa Muldoon is the “*Studentessa Matta*”. In Italian, “*matta*” means “crazy” or “impassioned”. She promotes the study of Italian language and culture through the dual-language blog StudentessaMatta.com. She has a B.A. in fine arts, art history 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 page:s



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Proverbs from the World: Latvian

The world is full of languages, which in turn are full of proverbs and proverbial phrases. Some of them are very culture related, some instead very universal. The language of choice this time is Latvian, formerly called Lettish. In Latvian the language is called “latviešu valoda”.

Latvian is not the only language spoken in Latvia, but it is the only official language there and spoken by the majority as a native language. The country is small, about 2 million people, and the number of native speakers in Latvia and abroad is roughly the same.

Latvian belongs to the Balto-Slavic branch of the Indo-European language family, and more specifically, to the Baltic language sub-group. The alphabet is Latin, but there are several letters with diacritics that are missing in many other Indo-European languages, like vowels with a macron to indicate that they are pronounced as long (ā, ē, ī, ū), consonants with caron (č, š, ž) and consonants with cedilla/comma (ģ, ķ, ļ, ņ).

Latvian is an inflecting language with seven cases and also prepositions. It has two grammatical genders, and there are no articles. Verbs are conjugated according to their mood, tense and person. What is also interesting is that foreign names tend to be adapted to Latvian orthography – even if they are originally written in a Latin alphabet, a feature Latvian shares with Lithuanian. For example, the first president of the United States, usually known as George Washington, is called Džordžs Vašingtons in Latvian. This system is valid also for contemporary foreign names.

Considering how small the number of Latvian speakers is, the situation for those who want to dig deeper into it for hobby or necessity is rather promising. There is a decent amount of proper learning material, both monolingual and bilingual. The following popular wisdoms, sakāmvārdi, are all suitable for language learners.

1. Mūžu dzīvo, mūžu mācies!

Keywords:

mūžs = life(time), dzīvot = to live, mācīties = to learn

Meaning:

A life you live, a life you learn. In brief, it is always a good time to learn. Good attitude! This is a cornerstone idea for everyone who needs to learn something and can be found in many languages.



2. Apetīte rodas ēdot.

Keywords:

apetīte = appetite (finally an easy word), ēst = to eat

Meaning:

Appetite arises by eating. This often applies also to learning languages, or anything for that matter: the more we study, the more we want to learn.



3. Mazāk runā, vairāk dari!

Keywords:

mazāk = less, runāt = to talk, vairāk = more, darīt = to speak

Meaning:

Talk less and do more. To be more specific, talk less about doing and talk more when learning languages.



4. Katrs iesākums grūts.

Keywords:

iesākums = beginning, grūts = difficult

Meaning:

Each start is tough. This is something we should always remember when we start learning something.



It's quite common to see proverbs in ordinary study books of languages, often at the end of some or each chapter. Sometimes they are inserted in the story; sometimes they are there just to introduce a lighter element with a taste of real life. The proverbs presented here are among the many found in an elementary book of Latvian for Finnish speakers, *Laipni ludzam!* **PT**



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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 search for words in Albanian. Find all the English and Albanian words in the letters. They may be in any direction.

Puzzle #88

i	h	ë	f	n	v	b	y	ç	g	b	u	n	g	d	p	h	c	c	d	f	ç	ë	h	q
j	o	y	e	s	j	l	l	a	m	b	ë	l	q	ë	l	y	h	b	x	t	h	j	q	v
w	r	o	m	f	q	b	o	e	n	t	g	s	h	d	a	m	i	t	h	s	i	g	z	o
o	n	z	m	s	r	f	k	c	j	ç	r	z	w	x	i	l	k	c	x	e	d	c	a	g
c	n	v	t	ë	w	a	v	q	c	l	a	y	i	h	l	a	m	p	q	q	x	c	h	z
e	b	m	u	h	t	o	c	ë	p	s	b	o	l	a	s	k	t	e	t	n	n	e	ç	n
y	f	v	q	c	c	v	y	s	r	x	b	a	h	v	s	o	ç	a	b	t	p	w	x	a
t	p	r	u	x	q	k	c	r	ë	p	i	s	t	e	g	y	x	ç	c	a	u	c	g	l
s	d	a	f	e	f	z	d	ç	h	q	t	i	p	n	n	n	i	u	y	o	ç	t	d	p
r	ç	q	r	w	s	k	ë	l	s	e	k	a	c	a	v	s	e	t	w	g	v	p	ç	o
i	ë	ë	l	e	n	y	w	e	e	j	ë	v	k	l	z	j	w	z	g	i	y	c	t	r
h	s	ç	w	i	n	u	j	p	p	v	i	l	t	p	r	u	t	e	m	i	m	s	g	e
t	v	i	j	g	ç	t	k	u	b	ë	j	k	w	r	i	y	s	s	a	y	v	w	o	a
o	i	n	q	h	w	e	n	r	p	r	i	n	d	i	n	y	n	d	c	w	c	r	z	q
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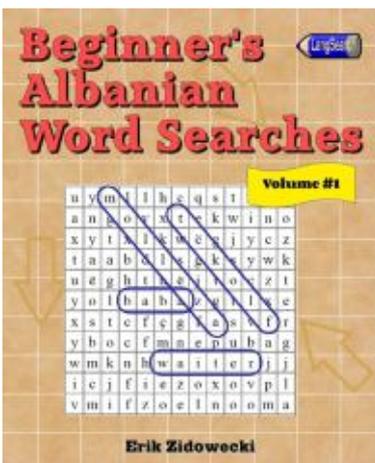
Find all Albanian and English words in the puzzle.

Albanian

- mace [f]
- shall [m]
- peshë [f]
- aeroplan [m]
- etur [adj m/f]
- kek [m]
- gisht i madh [m]
- llambë [f]
- lepur [m]
- prind [m]

English

- cat
- scarf
- weight
- airplane
- thirsty
- cake
- thumb
- lamp
- rabbit
- parent



Beginner's Albanian Word Searches - V1

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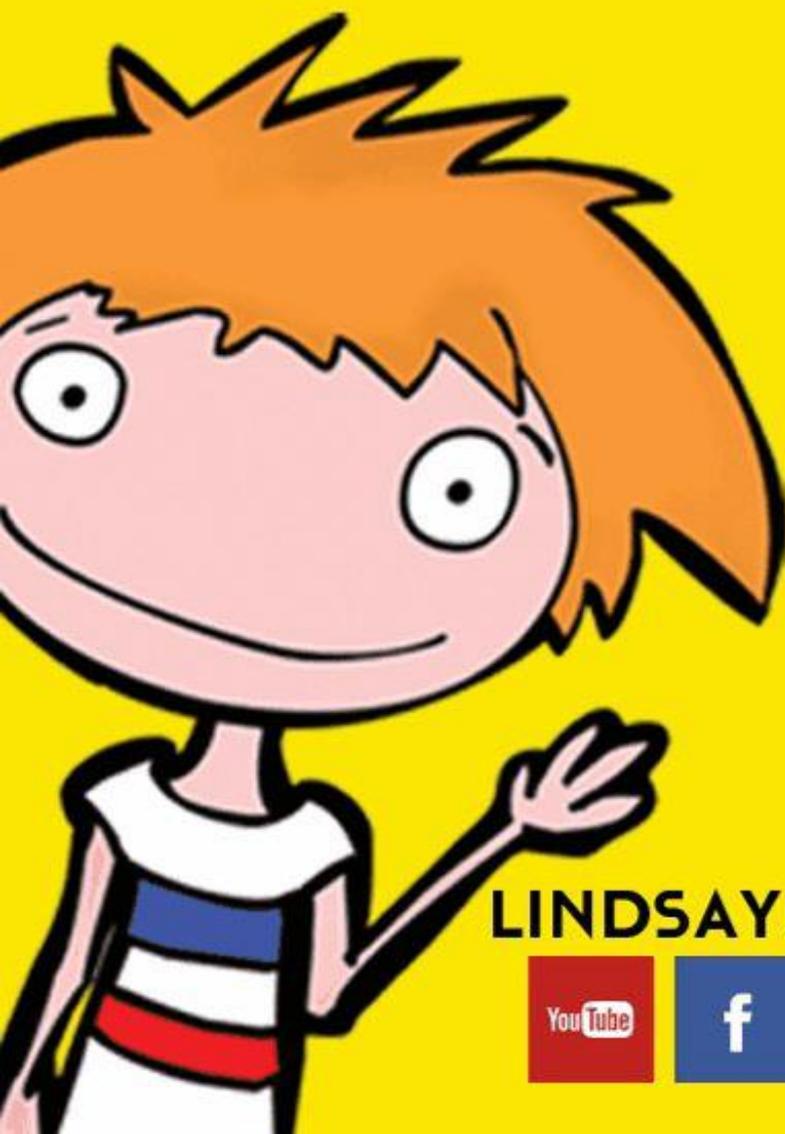
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Basic Guide to Japanese

Japanese is the third largest language used on the Internet, after only English and Chinese.

Embrace the Japanese culture of anime, bonsai, and origami. Start here by learning a few of the basic words and phrases.



Hello	konnichiwa	こんにちは
Good morning	ohayou gozai masu	おはようございます
Good afternoon	konnichiwa	こんにちは
Good evening	konbanha	こんばんは
Good night	oyasuminasai	おやすみなさい
How are you?	o genki desu ka	お元気ですか？
Fine, thank you	hai, genki desu	はい、元気です
And you?	anata ha	あなたは？
Welcome	youkoso	ようこそ
It is a beautiful day	ii tenki desu ne	いい天気ですね
Have a nice day	yoi ichi nichi wo	良い一日を
Goodbye	sayounara	さようなら

See you later	atode o ai shi masho u	後でお会いしましょう
See you tomorrow	ashita o ai shi masho u	明日お会いしましょう
Do you speak English?	eigo ga hanase masu ka?	英語が話せますか？
Yes, a little	hai, shoushi	はい、少し
Yes	hai	はい
No	ie	いいえ
Nice to meet you	hajimemashite	はじめまして
Nice to see you	hajimemashite	はじめまして

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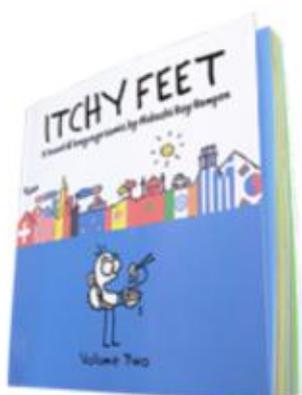
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Lindsay Does Languages

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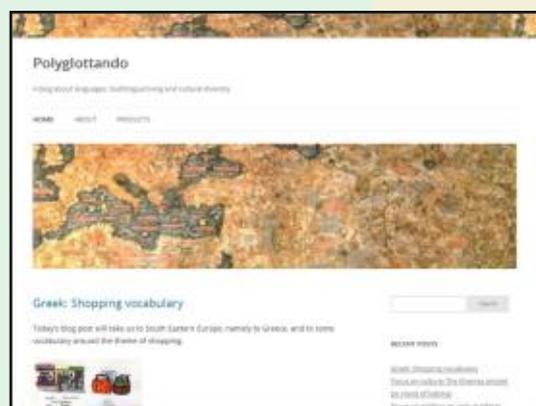
<http://www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com/>



Polyglottando

Polyglottando is a blog about languages, multilingual living and cultural diversity and focuses on the 'minor' languages. The page offers language learning resources for a variety of these 'smaller' and less popular languages, language learning tips as well as interesting articles which explore the culture, customs, traditions and more. Each blog post focuses on a different language.

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Urdu



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- "Latvian orthography" Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvian_orthography>

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Editor in Chief: Erik Zidowecki
Associate Editor: Olivier Elzingre

Contributors:

Olivier Elzingre
 Tarja Jolma
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 Teddy Nee
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