
SpeakEasy

A Publication of SAC: Speaking Across the Curriculum



Volume VI, Issue 1

Summer, 2000

Travelers: Choose the Phrase Book That's Right for You

By Edward Martin



Before taking a recent trip to Germany, I decided to brush up on my language skills. In a dusty box, I found a phrase book I had used when I first went to Europe in 1970 as an undergraduate. What struck me as I perused the text was how the rest of the

world and the world of language has changed since then!

The beginning units on pronunciation, declensions, and conjugations were still valid. But recently Germany has adopted a new official *Rechtschreibung*—the accepted rules for the written language; these have profoundly affected spelling and word division. Naturally, my old book did not reflect these changes.

More significant the old book did not reflect the kinds of social, technological, and travel changes that have occurred in the last 30 years. I turned to one page at random and was taught how to make the following inquiry: “Where can I find a porter to take my luggage to my stateroom?” I thought to myself, “Who travels like this?”

Throughout the rest of the book the sample situations seemed to harken back to a more simple time and a more elegant mode of travel than I have experienced. Since 1970, I have been to Europe about 12 times. I have never used a porter much less have a stateroom. Indeed, to save a few dollars, I am usually willing to schlep my own bag up several

flights of stairs.

So, I laid aside my old text and went to find a new phrase book that would better reflect both my budget mode of travel and the kinds of vocabulary I would be more likely to actually use.

An amazon.com search for “German Phrase Books” listed an overwhelming 300 items. So I limited my review to four: *Harrap's German Phrase Book* (Macmillan), *Rick Steves' German Phrase Book & Dictionary* (Avalon), *German Phrase Book* (Lonely Planet), and *German Phrase Book* (Berlitz).

Harrap's is a British publication and costs less than \$5, but it is definitely the least helpful. It has no material on grammar or syntax. And while it addresses many basic speaking situations (Eating Out, Shopping, Telephoning), most sections are severely limited. It has a two-way dictionary, but I don't see how one could use it very effectively without a few more models of grammar.



I really like Rick Steves' travel programs on the Public Broadcasting System and admire his philosophy of budget travel that he calls “Europe through the back door.” But, I already know enough German to know how bad his pronunciation of the language is. So I assume his phrase book has been written by someone else and is marketed as a Rick Steves' product.

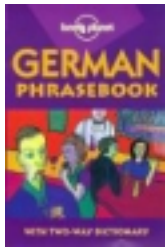
At \$7, the book is economical, easy to use and complete. Its sections reflect the commonsense information needed by the budget traveler. Handy tips and cultural insights are sprinkled throughout to make the book fun and enlightening. It also includes the latest information on European currency and rail transportation.



See “Travel” page 2

Travel, continued

Increasingly the Lonely Planet guides have become the Bibles of the knapsack and youth hostel crowd. The advice is definitely geared toward the budget traveler and a rather young audience. This is true of the Lonely



Planet German Phrase Book too. It has solid grammar and pronunciation section and adequately covers all of the basic situations a traveler would encounter.

But it is especially good in providing vocabulary and expressions for topics of special interest to young travelers such as Finding Night Spots and Dating and Romance; there are subsections titled Making Love, Safe Sex, Being Intimate, and After Sex—“Would you like a cigarette?” The section on Medical Care is very practical in covering the kinds of health terms needed by young, sexually active travelers.

If the cultural world of my old phrase book seemed too genteel for me, the cultural world of the Lonely Planet book seems at times too far removed from my travel needs. This is especially true in the section on Drugs where one learns such expressions as: “Are you interested in some cocaine?” and “Is there a methadone program in this country?”

Perhaps the best phrase book for my needs turned out to be the one from Berlitz—an old and well-respected name in language instruction. For less than \$6 their



phrase book is perhaps the most comprehensive. It has all the essentials of grammar and pronunciation, covers the basic situations of travel, has many sample dialogues and basic patterns that one can use for building one's own sentences. The choice of electric colors to separate sections and the use of many type styles and text boxes

allow readers to gather a lot of material from one page without suffering text monotony.

Certainly my travel requirements have changed over the years. No longer can I crash on someone's floor or feel comfortable at a youth hostel. It is only natural that what I look for in a phrase book has also changed.

Who knows, maybe someday I won't be able to carry my own bag any more. Then I'll need to learn to say: “Where can I find a porter to take my luggage to my stateroom?”

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<http://www.historychannel.com/speeches/>

The History Channel web site provides access to hundreds of recordings of great speeches. You can access speeches from art and entertainment, politics, and science and technology.

<http://www.eveo.com>

This independent film web site provides access to many independent films. Even better, you can submit your own short independent film free-of-charge. Every time someone views your film, you earn a nickel. Eveo has set about developing a new form: the eveo-personal. These are engaging, short videos that convey unique creative visions from independent filmmakers all over the world. Eveo empowers people to create the kind of entertainment they want to see—it sports, travel, music videos, documentaries, or short fiction—forming an online mosaic of the human experience.

<http://www.adcritic.com>

On this web site you can view all of your favorite commercials, the top 100 commercials, and even some very funny commercial spoofs. Adcritic also provides the full “Final Days” video starring President Clinton in which he pokes fun at himself as a “lame duck” president. You can find that video at www.adcritic.com/content/president-clinton-final-days.html.

Communicating in the 21st Century

Part I: Communication and Governance

By Bruce Ardinger



Access to information has always been a major means of gaining and enforcing power, and communication has been a principal tool of governance, whether hierarchical or shared. Misinformation, truth-telling, secrets, propaganda, spies, lies, gossip, hoarding information,

hiding information, and selectively sharing information are familiar communication vehicles for the powerful in any country or any organization. Simply stated, those who know most can, at least theoretically, communicate most (or least) and govern most effectively. We take it for granted that our leaders are knowledgeable. When we find leaders who govern badly or abuse power, we first assume a defect in their knowledge. We are quick to accuse them of ignorance (lacking knowledge or being misinformed) or of dishonesty (having knowledge but lying about it). Knowledge is power.



In this sense, governance--the act of deciding what laws, policies, and regulations will be enforced within

a group of individuals in order to encourage specific behavior, and the act of carrying out those decisions--is merely enacted communication in a political context. It can be one-way communication, in which kings, emperors, dictators, parents, CEOs, or supervisors give an order to those over whom they have governing power. It can be one-way communication also when an individual or group previously governed decides to rebel, riot, disobey, or take over the role of governor instead

of governed. All political entities have examples of both types. In either hierarchical situation, the communication is intended to go one way; there is no intention to listen, except to one's own imperative voice saying, "Do this," or "Take that."

Shared governance, on the other hand, occurs through two-way communication; the intention of both parties is to listen as well as speak. True shared governance is non-hierarchical, non-directive, and has as its goal mutual understanding through reciprocal communication. Democratic and republican forms of governance were revolutionary in introducing and valuing such shared communication. Shared governance does not preclude hierarchy, nor does shared governance preclude leadership, but it does preclude dominating and submissive relationships. It has been perhaps ideally defined as respectful communication resulting in mutual decisions and cooperative actions. It has also been defined as productive conflict.

Today, we are participating in an era that's been termed "the information age" because of the speed and accessibility and amount of information that is available to all peoples within any society worldwide. Even now free college courses are available on the Internet, and full degrees are promised soon. One question newly faced by this shift is the degree to which any hierarchical governance structure can survive when all participants have access to the same information. When everyone is (at least potentially) knowledgeable, then those at the bottom of the chain of command may have solutions that are superior to those at the top of the chain. When those at the bottom or middle can communicate those solutions to all others in the chain, what's the function of or need for a hierarchy?

In the 21st century, power and the ability to govern may be decided not by mere access to information and superior knowledge. If all have access to the same knowledge, power may be decided by the uses any given participant makes of that information. What constitutes an "educated" individual will likely change. Knowing how to communicate may increasingly gain ascendance over knowing what. Equally important may be the degree to which all participants are able and willing to share in the creation of new knowledge and to work together to reach new solutions.

(Page 5: **Communicating in the 21st Century, Part II "Communication and Property"**)



Shall We Dance? Rhythm and National Identity in the Spanish-Speaking World

By Gilberto Serrano

According to the Latin dance troupe, Onda Latina, “the Latin American dance and music express everything the culture wants to say; its sensuality, rhythm, and life are the main characteristics of its people... This is what we want to do, express the life and culture of Latin America.” Many Americans believe that all Latinos have rhythm and dance very well. Up to a certain extent this notion is true. However, rhythm and a sense of movement are not shared by all the members of the Hispanic world.

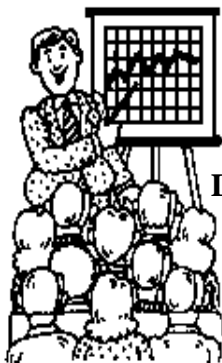
People from the Caribbean islands such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico are said to be good dancers. They integrate a whole gamut of movements and combinations when they perform. The merging of the plena (African-derived work songs) and the decima (a 10-line, 17th-century Spanish verse song form) has created a highly original and sophisticated song tradition in the Dominican Republic. The dance form associated with this music is the merengue, which synthesizes European and Afro-Caribbean rhythms. In the Dominican Republic the merengue was originally a couple dance related to European line dances. The dance form has since become popular throughout Latin America and is often associated with blue sunny skies, white sandy beaches, and joyful and friendly people.



Merengue dancers

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ing countries where regional music is notably influenced by other ethnic groups. People from countries such as Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador have a different sense of rhythm. Dances such as the *cueca*, *auqui-auqui* and *tinku* hold a reverent place in popular culture. Their dances are not as lively; however, the presence of other elements, such as color, is evident.

Whether people dance like Ricky Martin or not, it is a given fact that music and rhythm are essential components of the culture of the Spanish-speaking world. Salsa, rumba, and merengue are very popular all over the Spanish-speaking world and even in the USA. Although each individual dances differently, they all enjoy its cadence.

Communicating in the 21st Century

Part II: Communication as Property

By Bruce Ardinger



Land, turf, or “real” estate was the most important form of economic wealth for thousands of years. “Land” became synonymous with the term “property” because it was fixed in location and could be easily documentable

as “owned.” It was measurable and could be staked out, sold, traded, or passed down to one’s offspring. Land, however, was supplanted during the Industrial Revolution by the notion of “capital” or the means of production (factories, machines, ships, and other means of generating income and wealth). “Capital” became the most important form of “property” to the extent that owning a factory soon was recognized as more valuable than owning a farm (unless the farm was operated as a factory). Land barons, those who merely owned land but didn’t know how to make it generate capital, were supplanted by barons of industry or “capitalists.” The third revolution we are in the middle of gives priority to knowledge, information, and communication. The person who has access to and controls most information “wins.”

That’s a major reason why the battles over information as “intellectual property” appear so prominently in the news media today. That’s what Bill Gates and the other Internet barons are fighting about. The battles over Napster, AppleSoup, and Napster-like programs are “turf” wars, and each participant struggles to file claims. Just as the importance of land offices was replaced by patent offices, now copyright offices stake out ever larger and more valuable piece of intellectual property and the means to it.

The theory, based on the notion of wealth as a form of property, runs as follows: the ones who “own” most information are the ones who can gather most money and power because others must pay for the privilege of having that information. To the new information barons, releasing all information freely is releasing one’s wealth and the means to wealth. Proprietary information (knowledge that can be “owned”) is the only information of value. Under the new paradigm of property, those who would garner wealth and power must control both the content and the flow of infor-

mation. They must retain knowledge as their means to govern. Communication is useful, not only as a means to wealth, as in the past, but as the source of wealth, the source of power. In such a system of values, secrecy becomes more prized than openness, and full and open communication becomes a liability.

In this third revolution, therefore, the education community is faced with a crisis of which it is not yet fully aware. Education has as its purposes to discover, create, and disseminate knowledge. In a democratic society, the common good is served by a free and educated electorate. Free public education is a hallmark of our society, and free libraries have been recognized as one of democracy’s greatest gifts to itself and its citizens.

Hence the paradox: If power and wealth are achieved through communication that is owned and controlled, and education is achieved through communication that is free and accessible, the question for democracies is how much control the new information barons will acquire and how much control the educators will relinquish in the struggle over intellectual property.



Something to Talk About



Would you like to translate a message, word, or phrase from one language to another? Babelfish will do that for you. Go to <http://babel.altavista.com/translate.dyn> and type in your message. Alta Translations will translate English into Spanish, German, Italian, French, or Portuguese. It will also translate other languages into English.



Worried about the fate of Napster.com? While the music download site is still operating, good luck getting on. Some users have stopped going to work or school so they can download as much music as possible before a new ruling shuts down the site. Many new sites are popping up to take Napster’s place and there is plenty of downloadable music out there. Epitonic.com, launch.com, and even rollingstone.com offer free music downloads.

SAC is an interdisciplinary committee whose mission is to encourage the incorporation of formal oral presentations into the curriculum across campus. The following personnel comprise the SAC committee:

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SpeakEasy is a publication of SAC: Speaking Across the Curriculum. Special thanks to Bruce Ardinger, Gilberto Serrano, Christiana Hopkins, and Edward Martin for their assistance in writing and editing this issue.



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