



Language Link Line January 2013

Language Link

Your Passport to
Spanish Learning
No cost 800.552.2051
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Language Link's Latest

We are proudly announcing the start, after a few pilot students, of our Spanish learning online through Skype. We're calling it Language Link Online. (You'll notice that our newsletter is now just Language Link Line.) We're very excited about the possibilities for you in this new learning platform. In case you can't journey, we can bring an excellent quality of Spanish instruction with your own teacher directly to you, on your own time and schedule. See [Language Link Online](#) on our website. We're immensely pleased with the high quality that we can deliver in this new area of learning Spanish. And your first lesson is *gratis*!

CUBA IS A GO! We are so pleased to announce that on January 29 Language Link received notification from the U.S. Treasury Dept. that we now have an official license to offer People to People *viajes* to Cuba. We will now start working on an itinerary, dates and costs. All of you have put your names on our interest list and have been patiently waiting will be the first to receive full information.

FEBRUARY AND MARCH (BEFORE

Tips and information about learning Spanish and the people who speak it. Published every other month
What's in this edition - Online Lesson, Cocina Cooking, Culture Clips, Language Link's Latest, OJO (real deals), Rhythm & Read, Been There, Loved That (reports from participants), Likeable Links

Online Lesson

The Subjunctive – Past and Present

Whenever I think about advanced students learning the subjunctive, I think of a priest who was studying the subjunctive tense. He declared that he firmly knew that the subjunctive was the invention of the *diablo*. I've even overheard people saying that the tense was completely unnecessary. Neither statement is true. Yes, the concept can be difficult for English speakers, but the tense simply can't be avoided. The whole trick is to ease into it by getting comfortable with high frequency phrases. A major use is with the verb to want – *querer*. Unlike English, you have to set up two clauses linked with *que* when making a request such as – do you want me to.....? Practice asking the question – *¿Quiere usted que yo* (And here's where the subjunctive verb goes. If it's an AR verb, play the switch gambit and put an E on the verb root. *Hablar* – goes to *hable*, with no accent. If ER or IR verb, put an A on the verb root. *Comer* - goes to *coma*.) Do you want me to speak English? *¿Quiere que yo hable inglés?* Do you want me to eat the bread? *¿Quiere que yo coma el pan?*

When you get really comfortable with the two clause format, you can easily change it to – I want you to.... *Quiero que usted hable español. Quiero que usted coma el pan.* Be sure to add a *por favor* so that you don't sound demanding and rude with your request.

It's not difficult to transpose this to the past, as in - I wanted you to... Your first form of *querer* will be the imperfect (or ongoing one). *(Yo) Quería que usted* ..(And for the past subjunctive AR verbs, put the ending of ARA on the verb root. *Hablar* – goes to *hablara*, with no accent. If ER or IR verb, put IERA on the verb root.) I wanted you to speak Spanish. *Quería que usted hablara español.* I wanted you to eat the bread. *Quería que usted comiera el pan.*

Of course, there are always irregular verb forms, but first get really comfortable with the regular verbs in high frequency phrases. Listen for them said by

*SEMANA SANTA or Easter Holy Week)
ARE GREAT TIMES TO
STUDY...FEWER STUDENTS,
SMALLER CLASSES AND PERFECT
WEATHER EVERYWHERE.*

We're sorry to announce that the B & B Casa Alonzo in Antigua, Guatemala, has recently closed, due to the death of Dr. Alonzo's mother. Many of you have fond memories of your stays there while studying at PLFM. Of course, PLFM is still going strong, but we now have other B & B options.

The Academia de Español Quito has decided to cease operation. Many of you had great study trips to Quito and the Amazon Basin. We will soon be announcing an excellent replacement school, so keep thinking Ecuador if it has been on your mind.

Coming soon – schools in Bogotá, Colombia, and Montevideo, Uruguay!

Cocina Cooking

Ropa Vieja – an easy slow cooker recipe, serves 6

There's no one recipe for *ropa vieja*, the shredded beef dish that originated in the Canary Islands and migrated to the Americas with Spanish traders. *Ropa vieja* means "old clothes", a nod to the resemblance of the cooked meat to tattered rags. The "rags" practically melt in your mouth.

Ingredients: One 15 oz. can crushed tomatoes, 3 T catsup, 1 T red *vin*o vinegar, 3 cloves minced garlic, 1 ½ tsp. ground cumin, 1 tsp. oregano, 1 jalapeño pepper thinly sliced without seeds, salt to taste, 1 ½ lbs. flank steak, 2 bell peppers (1 red, 1 green) sliced half inch thick, 1 onion thinly sliced, 3 T. chopped pimento stuffed green olives plus 1 T. brine from the jar. Plus Cooked white rice for serving.

Combine the tomatoes, ketchup, vinegar, garlic, cumin, jalapeño and ¾ tsp salt in a 5-to-6-quart slow cooker. Add the steak, bell peppers and onion and toss to coat. Cover and cook on low, undisturbed, 8 hours. Uncover and skim off excess fat. Coarsely shred the meat with two forks, then stir in olives and brine. Serve over white rice.

others in conversations. After a while the format will seem natural to you, and those subjunctive forms will start rolling out without thought of any rule. That should be your target. *Quiero que ustedes aprendan el subjuntivo muy fácilmente.*

Culture Clips

One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things. – Henry Miller

Seeing Things in Mexico

I found interest in the quote above, as it seems that so often these days we are answering questions about the way people are seeing Mexico, especially in the areas where we represent schools. The perception is so different than the reality which I live every day. From the U.S. press it would appear that in Cuernavaca I live in a battle zone, with constant peril at every hour and around every corner. I continue to explain to all that the only place I have ever been a victim of crime was in two cities in Illinois. And it's not just me. Last week we said goodbye to a group of 30 college students from the University of Wisconsin. They had a terrific program here for three weeks. Having explored many local businesses, welfare agencies, hospitals and schools, as well as local attractions, they returned home quite safe and sound with nothing but positive memories of Cuernavaca and Mexico. What they "saw" of Mexico was reality and not a distorted perception. Oh, that more people would see this same reality. I wouldn't have to answer so many questions!

This has all made me think of why I so enjoy living here. One of the reasons is that I am always "seeing" new things. Every fall I notice that my neighbors place crosses made of yellow flowers called *pericón* on their front doors. These crosses are such a perfect example of the melding of ancient and modern traditions which occur every day in Mexico, and this one specifically in the Cuernavaca area.

The oldest legends of Cuernavaca relate that in the prehispanic era, there was a serious conflict between the *tlahuicas* (inhabitants of the original Cuernavaca) and the *tepoztecas* (inhabitants of nearby Tepoztlán). The dispute was over an instrument called a *teponaxtle* (*type of drum*) with supposed magical powers produced during rituals. The version of the dispute and the real drum owner depends on which side you were on! In Cuernavaca it is said that the *tepoztecas* came here to rob the *teponaxtle* from the Cuernavaca temple. The *tlahuicas* found out

Rhythm and Reads

Reads - *Stories from Mexico/Historias de México*, Second Edition, by Genevieve Barlow and William Stivers – One of our favorite learning formats with Spanish and English stories side by side to improve your reading skills. Enjoy 16 well known short stories that chronicle 1500 years of Mexican history.

Rhythm

La Historia Continúa Part IV by Marco Antonio Solís – A native of Michoacán, Mexico, this Grammy winner has complete control of the language and produces fabulous sounds.

OJO

Thanks to Dr. Robert Dailey for sending this valuable information for those who use frequent flyer miles to study destinations:

The Good News: TACA, LACSA, AND COPA have all been recently added as full partners to the Star Alliance, and their flights are ready to go on the UA on-line search engine. They add enormous potential for Star Alliance tickets in Mexico, Central America and South America.
The Bad News: The information technology interface with these 3 companies is sketchy, iffy and glitchy. It appears that one cannot get a REAL confirmed reserve upon first contact when these three are involved. One gets an email "ticket" with a confirm #, but the fees haven't been billed, miles not deducted from one's account, and no ticket number recorded! The "ticket" is actually on a 24 hour hold while UA checks to see that the partner actually has the seat. So one must make a callback within 24 hrs to reconfirm, or the ticket will become void, and there will be no notification. This disappearing ticket happened to Bob, but thankfully he was able to successfully rebook and was shortly on his way to join Language Link in Mexico, using his "miles".

An ongoing contest on our website for a *gratis* one week study at Intercultura of either Heredia or Playa Sámara, Costa Rica. Air is on you, but we include one week of small group classes and a

about the theft, gathered their men, and laid an ambush in an area where the *pericón* flower grew abundantly. They waited for several hours until the *tepoztec* passed by with the stolen drum. Attacking by surprise, they killed the majority of the *tepoztecos* and recovered the drum. They honored their fallen enemies by covering them with *pericón* flowers.

The memorial of the sacred drum recovery became an annual event every September, and it was typical to fill the local houses with this yellow flower. In the era of the *Conquista*, the first missionaries who arrived and learned of the custom decided that this would be a good date to celebrate the Archangel St. Michael, September 29. Starting from that time, crosses made from the flowers were placed at the entrance to each house. The idea was encouraged that the *diablo* of evil forces was let loose on September 28, but in fighting with St. Michael the Archangel, he was overcome. It was traditional to place the *pericón* crosses on the doors at midnight to keep the *diablo* away.

I had a houseguest who arrived in Cuernavaca on the evening of September 28. We had a great time joking that the yellow *pericón* cross on my own front door hadn't kept him away, and I was sure he was a *diablo*!

Been There Loved That

International House Riviera Maya, Playa del Carmen, Mexico - *Everyone at the school was extraordinarily kind and welcoming. I felt right at home from the moment I arrived! The school did really nice work of organizing a wide variety of unpaid (and some paid) evening /weekend activities which were very well-organized and a lot of fun. My instructor Xavi was a great teacher - he kept the class both educational and fun. He was great at tailoring the class to the needs of the students and adapting his approach to the students' varied levels and learning styles. The staff at the school residence were fantastic - they were all so kind and helpful. They would frequently come sit and talk with the students and seemed to genuinely enjoy interacting with us. The rooms were large, clean, and comfortable and came with a mini fridge, which was very much appreciated.* – Megan Stewart, Hospital Administrator, Michigan

PLFM of Antigua, Guatemala - *I had a great experience at PLFM. I loved that I had a teacher to myself. That let me work at my own pace. I'm pretty sure that I learned more in my first week of school than I learned in my two years of high school. My teachers were great and very helpful. They all had a good balance of homework assignments and just*

homestay with individual BR and two daily meals. Just click our contest box to enter and add a brief comment from you. You'll then be included in the general drawing for a winner. *¡Suerte!*

Likeable Links

Legends of Mexico

<http://www.inside-mexico.com/legends/legends.htm>

Folktales

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folktales_of_Mexico

Aztec stories

<http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/index.php?one=azt&two=sto>

plain conversation during class. - Bethany Herrmann, Student, New York

General Comments –*Learning a language without its culture is like reading a recipe for a great dish, but without getting to taste it. My experiences with Language Link schools have been the equivalent of a full meal.*- Robert Ashley, Teacher, Illinois

Language Link has a diversified and honest product that is extremely well researched in every conceivable detail and absolutely seamless in terms of logistics. I will continue to use your services and will recommend them without qualification to others interested in improving their linguistic skills.

- Charles Kordula, M.D., New Jersey

We hope you enjoyed our news. Please see us at www.langlink.com.

Call us at 800.552.2051.

Central Standard Time with hours 9:00 to 5:00.

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info@langlink.com www.langlink.com *¡Hasta luego!*

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