

# **SPANISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

**SIRO HERBERT**

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## 1 How DO you learn a language ?

It always takes time, about the same as learning a musical instrument. Rather than a challenge to your intellect, it ought to be seen as a daily ten-minute fitness routine of reading, listening, writing or translation.

Predominantly, fluency depends on time rather than on method, because progress is about the same as in a daily 6 minute workout: you cannot do 50 push-ups one morning and then do nothing for a month! It is the same with languages.

2 DON QUIXOTE 2 DON QUIJOTE

The Mancha is	La Mancha está
in the center of	en el centro de
Spain. It is very	España. Es muy
beautiful,	bonita,
but there are	pero hay
few towns,	pocos pueblos,
few rivers,	pocos ríos,
very few trees.	muy pocos árboles.

Don Quixote had	Don Quijote tenía
a horse.	un caballo.
His servant Sancho	Su criado Sancho
had a donkey.	tenía un burro,
and together	y juntos
they crossed	cruzaban
the Mancha	la Mancha
looking for	buscando
adventures.	aventuras.

Don Quixote	Don Quijote
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asked Sancho: preguntó a Sancho:  
What can you see ¿Qué puedes ver  
on the horizon? en el horizonte?  
Sancho answered: Sancho contestó:  
On the horizon? ¿En el horizonte?

Where? ¿Dónde?

There! Look! ¡Allí! ¡Mira!  
There is a giant. Hay un gigante.  
He is moving Está moviendo  
his arms. los brazos.  
This is a great Es una gran  
adventure. aventura.  
We must be Debemos estar  
ready. preparados.

Nonsense, Tonterías,  
Sancho said. dijo Sancho.  
That is not Aquello no es  
a giant. un gigante.  
It is a Es un  
windmill. molino de viento.

It is a giant and Es un gigante y  
I am going to voy a

attack right now. atacar ahora mismo.

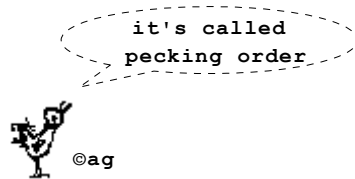
Very well,	Muy bien,
Sancho said.	dijo Sancho.
So you will see	Así usted verá
that that is	que aquello es
a mill!	un molino!

The battle began.	La batalla empezó.
Don Quixote	Don Quijote
attacked.	atacó.
Sancho watched	Sancho observó
the battle from	la batalla desde
a safe place.	un lugar seguro.

The battle	La batalla
ended, but it	terminó, pero
did not end well,	no terminó bien,
because the enemy	porque el enemigo
was in fact a	era de hecho un
windmill.	molino de viento.

Sancho, come here,	Sancho, ¡ven aquí,
help me! ¡Look!	ayúdame! ¡Mira!
The giant	¡El gigante
is a magician!	es un mago!

Notice how Sancho addresses Don Quixote as "usted", whereas Don Quixote uses "tú" to talk to Sancho, because in that world, slowly changing, a master and his servants could be great friends or enemies, but they could never be equals.



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♥ Gender: he or she?

In Spanish you can safely start off on the rule that a noun is feminine if it ends in -a and masculine if it ends in -o. There are very few exceptions.

♥ Here comes a curious Spanish grammar norm:

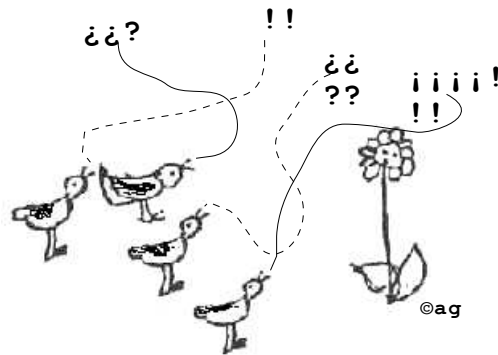
"To be" splits up into two different concepts:

♥ One is for what you are: you are a Madrileño or a New Yorker, you are tall, short, intelligent, and Madrid is big, is an old city and is famous for its

collections of famous paintings (soy,  
eres, es....)

♥ The other is for the situation or  
condition you happen to be in: you are in  
Madrid or in New York, you are tired or  
jogging, Madrid is crowded or jammed, Madrid  
is near the Guadarrama mountains, its sky is  
often polluted (estoy, estás, está...)

This takes time to get used to, but it is really just  
a matter of time, not of any immediate effort. Nor is  
it ever a source of misunderstandings, so the idea is  
not to worry.



### 3 AMBITIONS

A frog saw an  
ox and thought:  
I want to be as  
big as this  
ox. I am going to  
try  
to get  
a little bigger.

And the frog began  
to swallow air  
and more air,  
and when he was  
quite big,  
he called the ox  
and asked:  
Look, my friend,  
am I as big  
as you yet?

And the ox looked  
and asked:

### 3 PRETENSIONES

Una rana vió un  
buey y pensó:  
Quiero ser tan  
grande como este  
buey. Voy a  
intentar  
llegar a ser  
un poco más grande.

Y la rana empezó  
a tragar aire  
y más aire,  
y cuando estaba  
bastante grande,  
llamó al buey  
y preguntó:  
Mira, amigo mío,  
soy tan grande  
como tú ya?

Y el buey miró  
y preguntó:

Where are you?	¿Dónde estás?
I cannot see you.	No puedo verte.
Wait a moment,	Espera un momento,
the frog answered,	contestó la rana,
and again	y de nuevo
he swallowed air,	tragó aire,
and then he called	y después llamó
the ox and said:	al buey y dijo:
And now?	¿Y ahora?
Do you think that	¿Crees que
I am as big	soy tan grande
as you now?	como tú ahora?
I cannot see you	No puedo verte
yet,	todavía,
the ox answered.	contestó el buey.
Where exactly	¿Dónde exactamente
must I look?	debo mirar?
Here! Right here!	¡Aquí! ¡Aquí mismo!
the frog said and	dijo la rana y
he swallowed	tragó
so much air	tanto aire
that he blew up.	que reventó.

And the ox asked: Y el buey preguntó:  
What happened? ¿Qué pasó?  
But he did not get Pero no recibió  
any answer ninguna respuesta  
anymore. más.

Is this  
true?!



¿Es verdad  
eso?!



The most useful  
words  
are not long

*I am going*  
*I tried to call*

*a little*  
*a little more*

*I asked something*  
*he is waiting*

*she answers*  
*he called at 3*

*and now?*  
*and then?*

Las palabras más  
útiles  
no son largas

*voy*  
*intenté llamar*

*un poco*  
*un poco más*

*pregunté algo*  
*está esperando*

*ella contesta*  
*llamó a las tres*

*¿y ahora?*  
*¿y luego?*

*It is now,  
isn't it?*

*she speaks French, habla francés, ¿no?  
doesn't she?*

*where are you?*

*es ahora, ¿no?*

*¿dónde estás?  
¿dónde está usted?*

*another  
story?*



*¿otro  
cuento?*



#### **4 THE CZARINA'S BIRTHDAY**

*The Czarina has  
her birthday.*

*The Czar wants  
to give her  
something special.*

*He asks her:*

*What could I  
give you  
for your birthday?*

*Could you give me  
a poodle?*

#### **4 EL CUMPLEAÑOS DE LA ZARINA**

*La Zarina tiene  
su cumpleaños.*

*El Zar quiere  
darle*

*algo especial.*

*Le pregunta:*

*¿Qué podría  
darte*

*para tu cumpleaños?*

*¿Podrías darme  
un caniche?*

So the Czar	Así que el Zar
calls his servants	llama a sus criados
and tells them	y les dice
that they must	que deben
find	encontrar
a poodle for the	un caniche para el
great day.	gran día.
The servants say:	Los criados dicen:
What is a poodle?	¿Qué es un caniche?
Does anyone know	¿Alguién sabe
what a poodle is?	qué es un caniche?
And why does the	¿Y por qué la
Czarina want a	Zarina quiere un
poodle?	caniche?
And the servants	Y los criados
look a little,	buscan un poco,
but they do not	pero no
look very well.	buscan muy bien.
They go back	Vuelven
and tell the Czar:	y le dicen al Zar:
We are very sorry,	Lo sentimos,
Czar of all the	Zar de todas las
Russias.	Rusias.
There are not any	No hay

poodles in Moscow.	caniches en Moscú.
So the Czar calls Nikolai.	Así que el Zar llama a Nikolai.
Nikolai is a wise old man who has a bookshop in Moscow and knows many things. The Czar asks him: Nikolai Pavlovich, can you get a poodle for her birthday?	Nikolai es un sabio anciano que tiene una librería en Moscú y sabe muchas cosas. El Zar le pregunta: Nikolai Pavlovich, ¿puedes conseguir un caniche para su cumpleaños?
Of course, I can.	Claro que sí.
How much would it cost?	¿Cuánto costaría?
Nikolai thinks a little and says: It depends. I can get a good poodle for	Nikolai piensa un poco y dice: Depende. Puedo conseguir un buen caniche por

a thousand rubles, but a very good poodle costs much more.	mil rublos, pero un caniche muy bueno cuesta mucho más.
---	--

The Czar says: Very well. Buy the best.	El Zar dice: Muy bien. Compra el mejor.
---	---

Nikolai goes home. His wife is working in the kitchen.	Nikolai va a casa. Su mujer está trabajando en la cocina.
---	--

Nikolai says: Marie Mihailovna, tell me, what is a poodle?	Nikolai dice: Marie Mihailovna, díme, ¿qué es un caniche?
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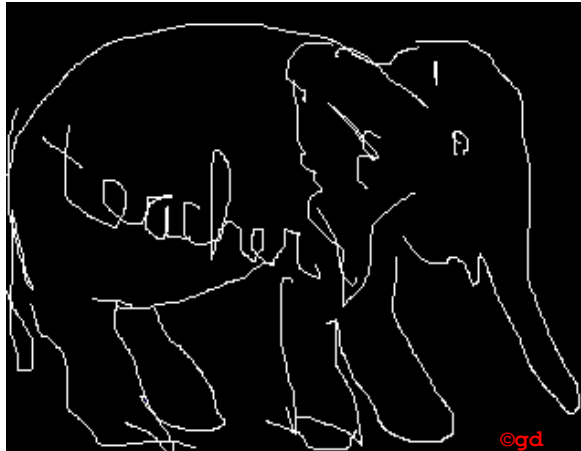
¡qué nombres rusos más  
bonitos!



what pretty Russian  
names!



©ag



*Don't you think it's time to do some  
verbs now?*

VERBS, VERBS, VERBS

(just some useful ones)

I speak English      hablo inglés  
they speak French    hablan francés

I am going now \*\*\* voy ahora  
he often goes        va a menudo

he is coming later viene más tarde\*\*\*  
they come by car    vienen en coche

she is waiting        está esperando  
do you work?        ¿trabajas?

he said something    dijo algo

what is he saying? ¿qué está diciendo?

tell him	díle, dígale
I told her	le dije

I saw him	le ví
I went there	fuí allí

he saw them	los vió
he went home	fue a casa

they did it	lo hicieron
they would do it	lo harían

she would buy it	lo compraría
I would not buy it	no lo compraría

\*\*\*

"ir" and "venir"  
are not used as  
-INGs

¿otro cuento ya?



However, as you will see, there are many expressions that can't be translated, because they never travel without an elaborate escort of fixed notions, prejudice, glory, shame or downright fact, so that sometimes to translate a word would take a page or two. Very good examples are the English "shoddy", the German "Kitsch", the Spanish "cursi" or an everyday phrase like "a very hot day", which does not mean the

same in Seville as in Toronto. But there are much more subtle chances of misunderstanding. Here is a true story:

*but really really true?*

©ag



5 THE FOREIGNER

The President of  
of a country in  
the desert was  
taking his  
visitor to the  
airport, and  
along the  
road there were  
little trees  
recently  
planted.

The visitor,  
who came from a

5 EL EXTRANJERO

El Presidente  
de un país en  
el desierto estaba  
llevando a su  
visitante al  
aeropuerto, y  
a lo largo de la  
carretera había  
pequeños árboles  
recientemente  
plantados.

El visitante,  
que venía de un

tropical country,	país tropical,***
pointed to those	señaló aquellos
little trees:	arbolitos***:
You be careful	Cuidado
with these,	con éstos,
he said and added:	dijo y añadió:
I am	Estoy
telling you***	diciéndoles
that these trees	que estos árboles
will G R O W.	C R E C E R Á N.

(His problem was  
the jungle  
invading his  
highways.)

(Su problema era  
la jungla  
invasora de las  
carreteras.)

\*\*\* *TYPICALLY SPANISH*

"Arbol" is a tree, and "arbolito" is a little tree. "Casa" is a house, and "casita" is a little house, while "casona" is a big house and "casucha" is a little ugly house, a hut.

This works even to create ironies or to give a lighter touch to an insult, but maybe it is "for natives only".

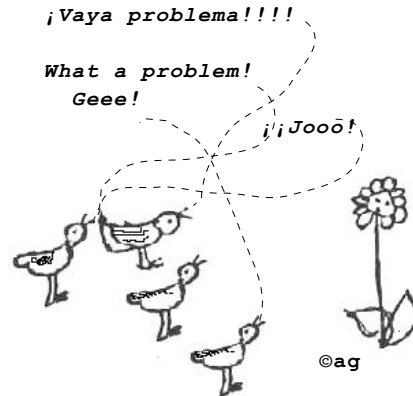
\*\*\* The adjective follows the noun. You would

also see that in the names of international organizations: NATO becomes OTAN and the European Community is la Comunidad Europea.

\*\*\* *MORE TYPICALLY SPANISH* : "¿USTED?"

According to theory, "tú" is used among friends and equals. You say "usted" to speak to strangers and people of authority or of high rank or age.

As you would guess, these rules do not mean the same to everybody, but vary according to time and place. Both learners and native speakers love to discuss them and will tell stories of how accidentally they offended somebody or got slighted when they used one instead of the other.



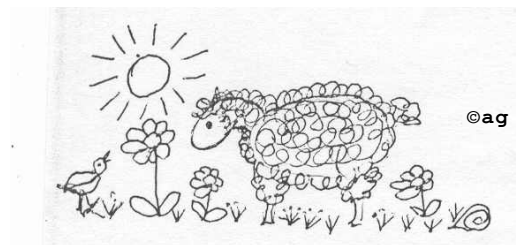
*Do you speak English? >>>> ¿Hablas inglés?*

*¿Habla inglés?*

*Could you tell me >>>> ¿Puedes decirme..?*

*¿Puede decirme...?*

They do sound alike, don't they? And yet often they are as far apart as, in the past, a master and his servants or a lady and her maid. Primarily, "usted" and "tú" depend on style, status, upbringing; but to learners it is just another pitfall of verb grammar.



*Now, really, is it "usted" or is it "tú"?*

The only way that is really safe is to explain and to keep explaining that you are not sure about the use of "usted" and "tú". They will be happy to hear that, since they themselves are sometimes not sure either.

*¡Mira! ..... Look!*

*¡Mire usted! .....Look!*

*¿Ves?..... Do you see?*

*¿Ven ustedes? .....Do you see?*

6 THE RING

Nasreddin had a  
garage beside  
his\*\*\* house.

It was his  
workshop.

He used to repair  
his things there.

One night he was  
working when  
the light-bulb  
broke; and  
in the dark  
he lost his\*\*\*  
ring.

He went out to the  
street and  
began to look  
around.

A friend came and

6 EL ANILLO

Nasredín tenía un  
garaje al lado de  
la casa.

Era su  
taller.

Solía reparar  
sus cosas allí.

Una noche estaba  
trabajando cuando  
la bombilla  
se rompió; y  
en la oscuridad  
él perdió el  
anillo.

Salió a la  
calle y  
empezó a mirar  
alrededor.

Un amigo vino y

saw him.	le vió.
Hello, Nasreddin,	Hola, Nasredin,
he said.	dijo.
What are you	¿Qué estás
looking for?	buscando?
My*** ring, said	El anillo, dijo
Nasreddin. A	Nasredin. Un
silver ring	anillo de plata
that my father	que mi padre
gave me.	me regaló.
I remember it very	Lo recuerdo muy
well, said his***	bien, dijo el
friend.	amigo.
I will help you to	Te ayudaré a
look for it.	buscarlo.
Where	¿Dónde
exactly	exactamente
did you lose it?	lo perdiste?
In my*** garage.	En el garage.
But then,	But entonces,
why are you	¿por qué estás
looking here?	buscando aquí?

Why? How  
will I find it  
in my\*\*\* garage  
if it is dark  
there?

Here  
there is good  
light from the  
street lamps.

¿Por qué? ¿Cómo  
lo encontraré  
en el garage  
si está oscuro  
allí?

Aquí  
hay buena  
luz de las  
farolas.

Did you notice all those \*\*\* ? It is again possessive versus definite article: "my" in English, but "el" or "la" in Spanish.

By the way: don't try to learn by heart. Practise by reading, writing, translating, talking to yourself, but do not try to memorize except maybe now and then. Fluency does not depend on memory, but on mental

habits. Now, if you plan to go abroad, it might be fun to prepare by learning some expressions, but you will be much better off with a cell phone and some link like this:

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

*Here they are again, master and servant, the fortress, the thistles: it was not a friendly world. And some say or think that it is still a little rough now.*



The next story is about

7 DISTANT DANGER

Sancho, hey, look! Eh, Sancho, mira!  
What is there ¿Qué hay  
on the horizon? en el horizonte?

Where? ¿Dónde?

There! Do you see ¡Allí! ¿Ves  
those clouds? aquellas nubes?  
Clouds of dust! ¡Nubes de polvo!  
It is an army! ¡Es un ejército!  
I must be Debo estar  
prepared. preparado.  
I will attack Atacaré  
this army. este ejército.

I see the clouds Veo las nubes  
of dust, but de polvo, pero  
I do not see any no veo ningún  
army. ejército.

It is an army! ¡Es un ejército!

No, Sir, they are No, señor, son

sheep. Now                    ovejas. Ahora  
I see them. Sheep.    las veo. Ovejas.

Coward! There are        ¡Cobarde! Hay  
two hundred                doscientos  
armed men,                hombres armados,  
as you will see            como verás  
right now.                ahora mismo.

Sir, I am going            Señor, yo voy  
to a safe place.            a un lugar seguro.  
We are going to            Vamos a  
have a problem            tener un problema  
with so many                con tantas  
sheep. You must            ovejas. Debe  
remember the                acordarse del  
windmill.                molino de viento.

Run! Run to a              ¡Corre! ¡Corre a un  
safe place!                lugar seguro!

The battle began.        La batalla empezó.  
It did not end              No terminó  
well; the sheep            bien; las ovejas  
ran away and the        escaparon y los  
dogs attacked and        perros atacaron y

all the men            todos los hombres  
threw stones        le tiraron piedras  
at Don Quixote.     a Don Quijote.

Sancho! Help me!    ¡Sancho! ¡Ayúdame!

Of course, I can     Claro, yo puedo  
always help,        siempre ayudar,  
Sancho said.        dijo Sancho.



*What does Sancho have in his saddle bag?  
Can you see? An **\*English\*** course!!!*

Yet have you noticed how the English and the Spanish text mirror each other so that (almost) every English expression comes with its equivalent in Spanish?

That is only an artifice to display grammar and meanings neatly side by side, as if each were a little tune in a grand opera to be assembled later. It is a simplification.

But there is another little problem: in Spanish there are two main past tenses: one is to set a background somewhere in the past and the other refers to the moment when something happened or changed.

*Don Quijote leía*  
*muchos libros >>>>>>>> background >>>> he read*

*y un día leyó*  
*una novela >>>>>>>> a happening >>>> he read*

*Don Quijote tenía*  
*un caballo >>>>>>>> background >>>> he had*

*y tuvo*  
*una idea >>>>>>>> a happening >>>> he had*



This is nothing to worry about. The difference is one of configuration, not of meaning. Misunderstandings are not usually due to any Spanish past tense, but to the English specialty called "present perfect" which virtually all foreigners get wrong, as you will see.



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♥ Translate, if possible both ways, ten minutes a day:

8 How MANY DONKEYS? ¿CUÁNTOS BURROS?

One day Nasreddin	Un día Nasredín
decides to go	decide ir
to the market	al mercado
to sell	para vender
some donkeys.	unos burros.
He leaves	Se marcha
with six donkeys	con seis burros
and he gets	y se sube
on one of them.	en uno de ellos.

After some	Después de un
time Nasreddin	tiempo Nasredín
thinks: I must	piensa: Debo
count these	contar estos

donkeys. And burros.Y  
he counts them. los cuenta.  
Are there only ¿Hay sólo  
five? He gets off cinco? Se baja  
quickly. rápidamente.

Where is ¿Dónde está  
the other donkey? el otro burro?  
He goes Va  
to look for it, a buscarlo,  
but he cannot pero no puede  
find it. encontrarlo.  
So he goes back Así que vuelve  
and he counts y cuenta  
the donkeys los burros  
again. This time de nuevo. Esta vez  
there are six. hay seis.

Again he gets De nuevo se sube  
on a donkey. en un burro.  
And then again Y luego de nuevo  
he counts them. los cuenta.  
And again ¡Y de nuevo  
there are only hay sólo  
five! cinco!

A friend comes           Llega un amigo  
and Nasreddin           y Nasredín  
says: Look,           dice: ¡Mira,  
my friend! Before, amigo mío! Antes  
I had six donkeys. tenía seis burros.  
Then I had five.   Luego tenía cinco.  
Then again           Luego de nuevo  
I had six, but       tenía seis, pero  
now there are only ahora hay sólo  
five!               cinco!

Really? But           ¡Vaya! Pero  
there are five       hay cinco  
right here, and     aquí mismo, y  
you are sitting     tú estás sentado  
on one;           en uno;  
so there are six,   así que hay seis,  
and you are the    y tú eres el  
seventh.           séptimo.



*For those brave souls who would want to try and speak Spanish even on the phone: get ready!*

9 AT THE OFFICE

Good afternoon.	Buenas tardes.
Could I speak to ...	¿Podría hablar con ...
I am calling from ....	Estoy llamando desde ...
Is Mr. Kreisler there?	¿Está el Sr. Kreisler?
I am sorry. Could you call back later?	Perdone. ¿Podría volver a llamar más tarde?
I'll spell my name.	Voy a deletrear mi nombre.
Could you repeat, please?	¿Podría repetir, por favor?
Do you speak English?	¿Habla inglés?
Does Mrs. Taylor have my number?	¿La Sra. Taylor tiene mi teléfono?
Did Mrs. Taylor receive my message?	¿La Sra. Taylor recibió mi mensaje?
Hold on, please.	No cuelgue, por favor.
I will tell him.	Se lo diré.
There is a mistake.	Hay un error.
Is there any mistake?	¿Hay algún error?
Did you receive our invoice?	¿Recibió nuestra factura?

The date?	¿La fecha?
I am sorry, I can't find it.	Lo siento, no puedo encontrarlo.
Please check the reference number.	Por favor, compruebe el número de referencia.
The file number?	¿El número del archivo?
We have not received it.	No lo hemos recibido.
What is his name***?	¿Cómo se llama?
at hotmail dot com all caps	arroba hotmail punto com todo mayúsculas
His address?	¿La dirección?
It was sent on Monday.	Se envió el lunes.
They were sent by plane.	Se enviaron por avión.
¿By registered mail?	¿Por correo certificado?
By e-mail?	¿Por correo electrónico?
When was it mailed?	¿Cuándo se envió?
By fax?	¿Por fax?
The delivery date?	¿La fecha de entrega?
The deadline is tomorrow.	La fecha límite es mañana.
It was paid by bank.	Se pagó por banco.

There is a delay.  
There was a delay.  
Something is missing.

Check your mail-box.

Hay un retraso.  
Hubo un retraso.  
Falta algo.

Compruebe su correo.

\*\*\* Do you understand a Spanish name? Their system is very different from ours and seems more logical or at least biologically more exact.

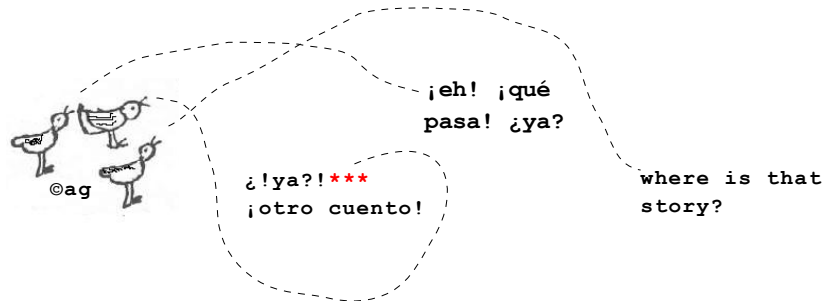
Let's say your friend's name is Juan Carlos Torreblanca Bravo: there are two surnames. One is his father's, the other is his mother's, and he uses both of them on all his documents and even on the telephone.

And let's say he marries María del Carmen Almodovar Sardó. These are her two surnames and she keeps them when she marries; their children's surnames will be Torreblanca Almodovar.

¡Vaya lío!  
What a mess!



At first this may seem complicated indeed, and it does create confusion in social security and police files all over the world. On second thought, however, you will find that it is more logical. Why should a woman change her surname when she marries? If there is a separation or even a divorce, should she change her name back to what it was before marriage? And why should her kids carry only their father's name or only hers?



\*\*\* depending on how it is said, "¿ya?" means "ready yet?" and is used to express impatience.

Now, as you seem to have come all the way to here, you surely deserve a rest, the same as your riding companions that you meet again below:

*It is night. It has been a long ride. They are at a camp-fire Don Quixote is thinking, and Sancho is lifting "la bota", his wine-skin, to have a drink.*



*In the distance you can see the lights of a little town.*

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## 10 THE WHITE LAMB

Mary had a  
little white lamb.  
She had it in  
a yard where  
she could see it  
from the window  
of the kitchen.

## EL CORDERO BLANCO

María tenía un  
corderito blanco.  
Lo tenía en  
un patio donde  
podía verlo  
desde la ventana  
de la cocina.

One day, she went  
to the yard, and  
the little lamb  
was not there.  
When her husband  
came home,  
Mary asked him:  
Dimitri, where  
could  
the lamb be?  
It is not  
in the yard!

Tomorrow  
I am going to the  
bar, Dimitri said.  
I am going to ask  
the men  
at the bar.

He went to the bar  
and asked. The  
men at the bar  
did not know  
anything.

Un día ella fue  
al patio, y  
el corderito  
no estaba allí.  
Cuando su marido  
llegó a casa,  
María le preguntó:  
Dimitri, ¿dónde  
podría  
estar el cordero?  
¡No está  
en el patio!

Mañana  
voy al  
bar, dijo Dimitri.  
Voy a preguntar  
a\*\*\* los hombres  
en el bar.

Fue al bar  
y preguntó. Los  
hombres en el bar  
no sabían  
nada.

They said: Maybe  
you should ask  
Aleko.

He has had\*\*\*  
a new little lamb  
since yesterday.

So Dimitri went  
to Aleko's house.  
Aleko, he said,  
do you have my  
little white lamb?

Aleko answered:

I have  
a little lamb;  
I have had it  
for  
a day or two,  
but it is black.

They went to the  
yard and Dimitri  
saw the lamb.

It was black.

They talked a

Dijeron: Quizás  
deberías preguntar  
a Aleko\*\*\*.

El tiene  
un corderito nuevo  
desde ayer.

Así que Dimitri fue  
a casa de Aleko.

Aleko, dijo,  
¿tú tienes mi  
corderito blanco?

Aleko contestó:

Tengo  
un corderito;  
lo tengo\*\*\*  
desde hace  
un día o dos,  
pero es negro.

Fueron al  
patio y Dimitri  
vió el cordero.

Era negro.

Hablaron un

little and  
it began to rain.  
So they went to  
Aleko's kitchen  
to wait.

When the rain  
stopped, Dimitri  
said good-bye.  
He opened the door  
and there he saw  
the little lamb.

It was black  
and white and grey  
and completely  
wet, too.



poco y  
empezó a llover.  
Así que fueron a  
la cocina de Aleko  
a esperar.

Cuando la lluvia  
paró, Dimitri  
dijo adiós.  
Abrió la puerta,  
y allí vió  
el corderito.

Era negro  
y blanco y gris  
y completamente  
mojado también.

It was	Era el
Dimitri's lamb,	cordero de Dimitri,
painted black by	pintado de negro por
Aleko	Aleko
and washed by the	y lavado por la
rain.	lluvia.

*\*\*\* the famous present perfect*

When Aleko says that he has had the lamb for a day or two, most Spaniards would understand that he does not have the little lamb anymore. If you say that you have been married for a year or that your arm has been hurting for a week, most Spaniards will understand that you are no longer married and that the pain in your arm has finally disappeared. As you can see, though the mistake won't be yours, it might be in your interest to be on the lookout for it:

I have been here for a month	estoy aquí desde hace un mes
he has been ill since Monday	está enfermo desde el lunes
she has studied English for three months	estudia inglés desde hace tres meses

\*\*\* Unimportant, yet disturbing to conscientious learners:

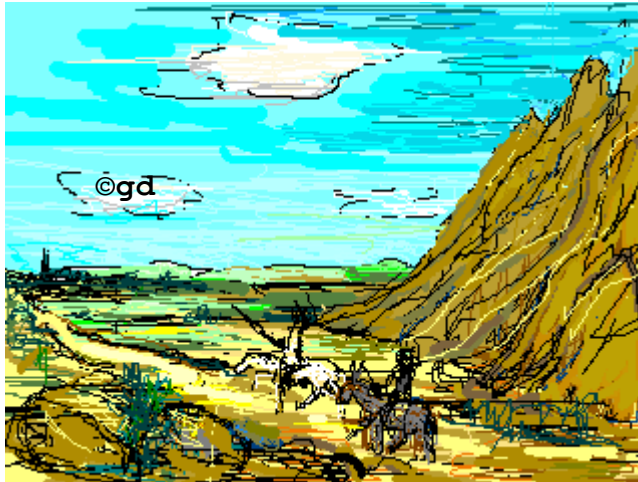
I saw a house >>>>>> ví una casa  
I saw Peter >>>>>> ví a Pedro

I understand the text >>>>>> comprendo el texto  
I understand Peter >>>>>> comprendo a Pedro

What is this "a"?

It is "to" inserted when the the referent is human. It is just one more of these things that you cannot simply learn by commending them to your memory. You will have to give them time.

*Here they are riding again, Don Quijote on his old white horse and Sancho on his donkey.*



*Soon they will get to that little town.*

But there is one more story and also one more remark on grammar, of the same kind, intriguing but not essential even to good communication.

<u>11 WHO IS THE KING?</u>	<u>¿QUIÉN ES EL REY?</u>
A peasant was walking towards London when he was greeted by an elegant man on a beautiful black horse.	Un campesino estaba caminando hacia Londres cuando fue saludado por un hombre elegante en un bonito caballo negro.
Good morning, where are you going? said the rider.	Buenos días, ¿a dónde vas? dijo el jinete.
I am going to London, said the peasant. I want to see the king.	Voy a Londres, dijo el campesino. Quiero ver al rey.
Oh, you do! And	¿Ah sí? Y

do you wish to speak to His Majesty personally?	deseas hablar con Su Majestad personalmente?
No, of course not, answered the peasant. I would like to see him in his parade. Maybe*** this time I will be lucky.***	No, por supuesto que no, contestó el campesino. Quisiera verle en el desfile. A lo mejor esta vez tenga suerte.
Well, I can tell you that you are certainly going to see him today, the rider said and smiled.	Bien, yo puedo decirte que seguramente vas a verle hoy, el jinete dijo y sonrió.
Do you think so? And how will I know which is the king, if he is always accompanied	¿Cree usted? ¿Y cómo sabré cuál es el rey, si está siempre acompañado

and surrounded by his escort?	y rodeado de la escolta?
Well, when you get to London and suddenly you see that all except one take off their hats, you will know that the one with his hat on, that is the king.	Bien, cuando llegues a Londres y de repente ves que todos menos uno se quitan el sombrero, sabrás que éste del sombrero puesto, éste es el rey.
As they were getting to the city, suddenly the peasant noticed that all the people in the street were taking off their hats, and he turned to the rider beside him and exclaimed: Hey!	Como estaban llegando a la ciudad, de repente el campesino vió que todo el mundo en la calle estaba quitándose el sombrero, y se dirigió al jinete a su lado y exclamó: ¡Eh!

Look! Don't you see?	¡Mira! ¿No ves?
One of us	Uno de nosotros
is the king!	es el rey!

\*\*\* Two expressions where the English and the Spanish text differ. In fact, in this text, there were quite a few, but I was hoping you would not notice, because some conscientious learners might worry too much about these little differences that have to be left for later.

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And here comes one last remark on grammar.

Look at the way the pronoun is repeated in the following examples:

se lo mandé a él >>>>>>>> I sent it to him

me lo dieron a mí <<<<<<<<< they gave it to me

se lo dijo a ella >>>>>>>>>>>> he told her about it

The dative pronoun is repeated, but since this repetition is not obligatory, leave it aside until you are more fluent with the verbs.

If you have read the Spanish version all the way to here, you could try translating backwards, that is, starting with the English text and trying to render it in Spanish. If you find it too hard or if there are too many mistakes, do very little at a time: a ten minute workout, no more.

If this is the first time you are learning a foreign language, you will almost certainly try to do too much at a time and then give up. It just won't work!



¿Te gusta  
mi casa?

¿Do you like  
my house?

Es una	It is a
casa de pueblo.	country house.
Se llama	It is called
"casa baja"	"low house"
porque hay	because there is
sólo una planta.	only one floor.

En algunos países	In some Spanish
de habla española,	speaking countries,
tus amigos	your friends
te dirían:	would say to you:
"Es tu casa"	"This is your house"
que significa:	meaning
"estás bienvenido".	"you are welcome".

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