Resources for the Learning of Spanish Available at CARLA

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Spanish Grammar Strategies Website

This website is dedicated to the pursuit of ways to enhance learners’ control of Spanish grammar.

How?
By providing examples of strategies that learners of Spanish have used successfully in their efforts to deal with problematic grammar.

Grammar strategies are deliberate thoughts and actions that learners consciously employ in order to have better control of grammar structures.
Where did we find these grammar strategies?

From learners themselves: The website features strategies deployed successfully by learners, including strategies from nonnative teachers of Spanish – who must learn and perform Spanish grammar if they are going to teach it to others.

• So, rather than being a repository of Spanish grammar rules (which can be found elsewhere on the web), this website is intended to offer a representative set of strategies for dealing with problematic grammar – offered by numerous learners who have “been there and done that” successfully. (We’ve checked to make sure that they do have control over the forms that they’ve shared their strategies for.)
Organization of the Website

• **Introduction**
  - Reasons for using strategies to learn and perform Spanish grammar
  - Definition and example of a grammar strategy
  - Questions to promote self-awareness of current language strategy use
  - Purpose of the website
  - Factors that influence the choice and effectiveness of grammar strategies

• **Learning Style Survey**

• **Rationale for using particular strategies**

• **Glossary**
How can I use this website?

- “I’m looking for a strategy that someone has used successfully to learn a specific grammar form.”
- “I’m looking for strategies that match my learning style and that can apply to various grammar forms.”
“I’m looking for a strategy that someone has used successfully to learn a specific grammar form.”

**Tenses**
- Preterite
- Imperfect
- Preterite vs. imperfect

**Moods**
- Subjunctive
- Imperfect subjunctive
- Conditional
- Conditional perfect and pluperfect subjunctive

**Pronouns**
- Simultaneous use of direct and indirect object pronouns
- Reflexive pronouns in present perfect constructions
- Direct and indirect object pronouns in affirmative and negative tú commands

**Relative pronouns**
Ser vs. Estar
Por vs. para
Negative words
Superlatives
Hacer and desde in time expressions
Other
- Lo + adjectives
- Gender and number agreement
- Gender of nouns
- Demonstrative adjectives
“I’m looking for strategies that match my learning style and that can apply to various grammar forms.”

**Auditory**
- Rhymes
- Songs and chants
- Talking to native speakers

**Visual**
- Color coding
- Decision maps
- Drawings / mental images
- Note cards
- Playing with verbs

**Kinesthetic**
- Physical behaviors
- Writing it over

**Memory aids**
- Acronyms
- Initials as a vehicle for mnemonics
- Phrases as memory aids
- Phrases as vehicles for syntax

Quasi-math formulas
Quick grammar references
• **Cognitive**
  – English sentences with Spanish syntax
  – English sentences with Spanish words inserted
  – Focusing on meaning
  – Learning materials as a chunk
  – Learning grammar by explaining it to others

  – Using archetypal sentences
  – Using L1 to keep forms and functions straight

• **Context-based**
  – Making associations
  – Observing use of the form in context

• **Other**
  – Avoiding avoidance
  – Combining perceptual modes
Spanish Pragmatics: “Dancing with Words”

http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/sp_pragmatics/home
• The Spanish website, “Dancing with Words,” has a robust strategy overlay.
• Aside from an introductory unit, following units:
  – Compliments
  – Gratitude & Leave Taking
  – Requests
  – Apologies
  – Invitations
  – Service Encounters
  – Advice, Suggestions, Disagreements, Complaints, and Reprimands
  – Considerations for Pragmatic Performance
• Each module contains the following elements:
  – Introduction
  – Encountering the Speech Act
  – Strategies for Pragmatic Performance: Sociopragmatic and Pragmalinguistic Strategies
  – Important Sociocultural Factors
  – Language Varieties
  – Summary
Multiple and varied language strategies are important.

In Spanish, there are many language strategies available for leave taking. It is very common to use more than one strategy and to vary strategy choice across the interaction. A physical expression of closing (e.g., kiss on the cheek, hug, or handshake) is also very common.

Play each of the conversations below to get an idea of the many different language strategies that native speakers use to close a conversation. Notice the variation that exists even among the same speakers.

As you watch each of them, compile a list at the bottom of each of the strategies. This will give you a list of some of the key phrases you can use. As you experience more leave taking situations in Spanish, you can work on further building this list. Try and only use the transcripts if you need help and to check your answers. In each transcript, the leave taking strategies are color coded.
• Varieties of Peninsular and Latin American Spanish.
• Numerous video clips to demonstrate conversational dynamics, directness/indirectness and relative politeness.
• Guidelines for enhancing strategies for learning and performing speech acts.
• Extended exercises for learners to work their way thru these strategy sections.
• Piloting of the website at different proficiency levels and a research study found that the website was well received.