

CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter November, 2023

COMMUNICATION

How often has fantasy predicted reality? Did the 1902 SF silent movie "A Trip to the Moon" inspire the Apollo moon-



landings of the 1960's and 70's? Could the 1920 children's story about Dr. Dolittle be having the same effect on current scientific thinking? Could it be that soon

a trip to the zoo may be as wondrous an experience as a trip to the moon?

Scientists are now working on compiling a dictionary of animal sounds with the eventual goal of understanding their languages and, in time, actually talking with them, à la Dr. Dolittle!



It has already been established that many species of animals communicate among themselves. We humans are not normally aware of this because much of their "verbalization" is generated at frequencies beyond our range of hearing. But with AI and other modern, sophisticated equipment, scientists are tuning in to many of their "conversations" and documenting the results. Elephants, whales, dolphins, tigers, bats, and many others are able to hear long, slow powerful sound waves that can travel many kilometers, even penetrating solid matter, sounds we are normally ignorant of due to our poor hearing.

But are these sounds actually an intelligible language? Many scientists argue that they, although meaningful for the animals' survival, may not constitute a real language as we humans understand it. So, the question is, will we ever be able to have a conversation with an elephant, a bat or a fish?

Instead of considering the possibility of us learning animal languages in order to communicate with them, let's look at this from an inverse perspective. Can animals learn to use our languages to talk with us? No, not just mimicking words like a parrot, but actually having a two way conversation with us in *our* language.

Introducing Noc (pronounced "no-see") the beluga whale.

Belugas are very affable, curious and intelligent creatures and normally spend their lives in pods of about 25 whales in the open seas, but Noc lived virtually his entire life in captivity. For more than 20 years from the late 1970's, he worked for the U.S. navy detecting and recovering test torpedoes. He lived and trained with only 2 or 3 other belugas and the only "pod" they were able to bond with was their surrogate family of human trainers.

One day two navy divers were making some underwater repairs to the whales' enclosure when one of the divers thought he heard the command "out" through his "wet phone." He abruptly surfaced to discover that nobody had given such an order. It was soon realized that Noc had issued the "order"! This instance was followed by more "orders" from Noc in what seemed like English! Studies followed, recordings were made and the experts were convinced, Noc spoke in English! Not too clearly, but in English!! Follow the link below to hear a recording of Noc's utterances.



Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

To hear Noc's English recording go here:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/story-one-whale-who-tried-bridge-linguistic-divide-between-animals-humans-180951437/>

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: It is, of course, very helpful to watch and listen to English recordings, movies and TV shows between lessons. As helpful as this is, one very important English skill can not be practiced just by listening to English. Of course, I'm referring to speaking skills. But you can still improve here too, if you try the following: Turn on the English sub-titles of the movie you are watching and read the dialogue aloud along with the action! Give it a try....

Junko Says: One of the most influential linguists, Noam Chomsky, suggests that all human languages have certain features in common. Sometimes word order differs but, conceptually, all languages are the same – they have the same purposes and intentions and they follow similar patterns and similar types of rules (grammar, etc) which our brains are predisposed to pick up on. So, it sounds like it should be very easy to learn new languages.



Marek Says: We humans can detect quite a broad spectrum sound and evolution has prepared us to hear a specific, “useful” range of sounds that come from our environment. However, when it comes to vision, we can only see a narrow spectrum of electromagnetic waves, namely visible light. We cannot see other wavelengths such as X-ray, ultraviolet, infrared or radio waves. In fact, visible light constitutes only 1% of the total electromagnetic spectrum.

Mandcy dit: Le beaujolais nouveau est arrivé !! Chaque année, on peut le déguster la troisième semaine de novembre. Rendez-vous alors le 16 novembre chez votre caviste préféré. Toutefois. Comme les frais d'exportation par avion ont augmenté. Suntory a annoncé que les bouteilles seront légèrement plus petites 10 ou 20 mL en moins. C'est dommage. Alors je boirai deux bouteilles. Hahaha !



ACROSS

- 1 suddenly without warning
- 5 increasingly complex or refined
- 10 audible sounds (not necessarily words)
- 12 the rate of recurrences
- 14 putting together
- 16 put into words
- 17 create social ties
- 18 unaware, lacking information
- 19 almost all, in essence
- 20 passing through

Play A Game!

Find the answers on P1

DOWN

- 2 a group of sea animals
- 3 comprise, make up
- 4 comprehensible, understandable
- 6 opposite
- 7 of the present time
- 8 marvelous, amazing
- 9 sociable, warm and friendly
- 11 final, concluding
- 13 in the place of (often a parent)
- 15 produced, created

Choose the best *modal verbs* from the box below to add meaning to the main verb in the following sentences. Some may have more than one correct answer.

can could have to have got to must might should may had better shall

1. I don't wish to be rude, but ____ I know how old you are?

2. You ____ look good for your interview. You ____ wear a tie and suit.

3. We ____ take lots of extra water with us if we're going hiking. It ____ be a good idea to use sun-guard also.

4. You ____ take some cash, that restaurant ____ not accept credit cards.

5. You ____ be joking! If you think I'm going to pay for second-hand junk like that, you ____ get your head examined!!

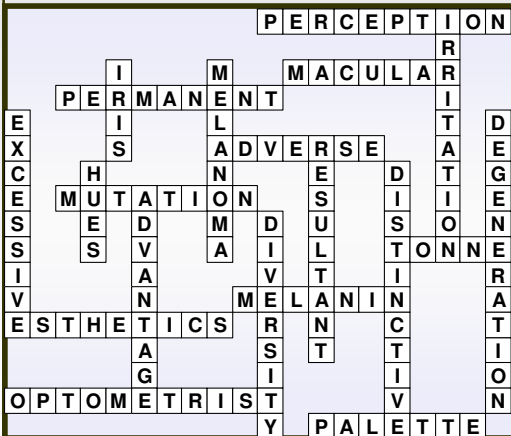
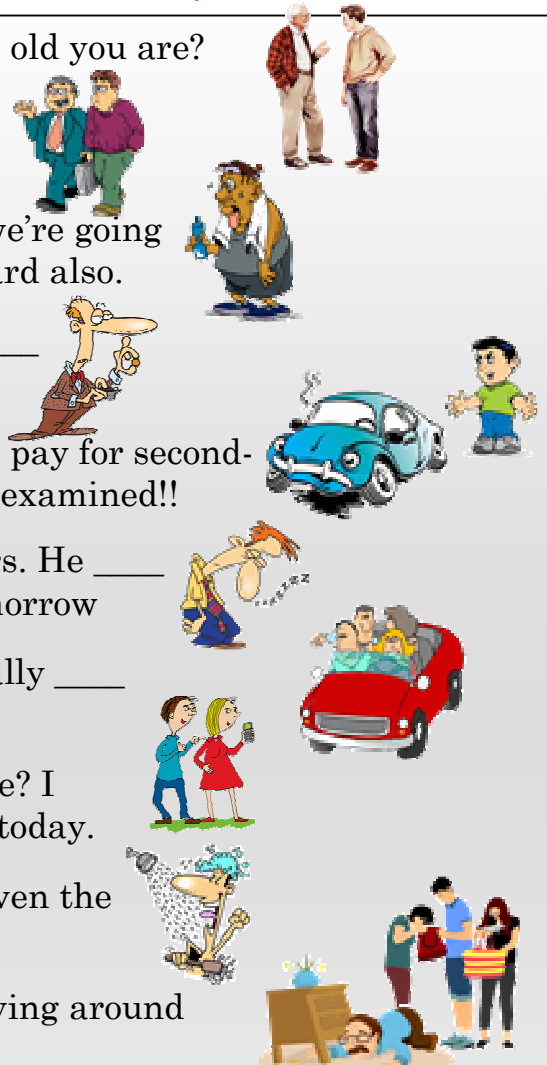
6. John has been working non-stop for 24 hours. He ____ be exhausted. He ____ prefer to sleep-in tomorrow

7. ____ we pull over at the next rest stop? I really ____ use the bathroom

8. Alice, ____ I borrow your mobile for a minute? I ____ call my boss to say I'll be late for work today.

9. Do you ____ sing so loudly in the shower? Even the neighbors half a block away ____ hear you!

10. I've misplaced my car keys. They ____ be lying around here somewhere. Where ____ they be?



Last Month's puzzle Solution

ACROSS

- 1 insightful observation
- 5 part of an eye's retina
- 6 unchanging
- 9 unfavorable
- 13 genetic alteration
- 16 a unit of weight
- 17 pigments in skin and eyes
- 18 concerning beauty (especially in art)
- 19 eye doctor
- 20 a range of colors

DOWN

- 2 causing annoyance
- 3 part of the eye
- 4 malignant skin tissue
- 7 too much
- 8 declining in quality or power
- 10 the final consequence
- 11 the qualities of colors
- 12 characteristic, typical
- 14 having a more favorable position
- 15 many different types or kinds

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