

## ARTICLE #26:

# Do You Want to Speak Spanish Like Forrest Gump? Why Listening Comprehension is Key

By Julio Foppoli

## THE SITUATION



Señor Julio, why is it that you focus so much on listening comprehension?

This is a question I hear a lot from my students and from my website users who see the kinds of materials I usually make. And it is a very valid question indeed. After all, many of these learners have studied Spanish for years and have never done anything like that\_ and sadly , most of them cannot understand real speech despite their best efforts.

Most people that have ever studied Spanish with me have witnessed my radical focus on listening comprehension in all of the language programs I develop. Compared to most language courses, it may seem just insane the amount of listening comprehension activities. And on top of that, one thing that is very characteristic of my courses is the use of “real” everyday language from day one.



[As much as I like Forrest Gump, I would never like to train my students to speak like him]

Unlike most courses that simplify what students listen to, to make it more digestible, especially at beginning levels, I prefer to develop activities that prepare students to understand the real-fast paced type of speech that people use in real life...

.... and yes, I do this from day 1 and it works like a charm.

Let me give you a quick example of what I am talking about, but for people who want to learn English.



Source: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p60iMXNRhA8>

[Note: Phil is a great teacher, and he has great lessons, just that this one is definitely not my cup of tea. In my experience, this type of simplification causes more harm than good preparing learners for a reality that does NOT exist beyond the classroom. Just imagine someone coming to you talking like that in English!]

I am 100% convinced that the sooner you expose the learner to real language, the faster they will understand real people, even if it may be a bit hard at first.

As ludicrous as this may sound in English, strangely enough, when it comes to learning Spanish, almost all language courses sound like this and students don't even notice this. Of course, it is not their native language and it even seems common sense to expect people to speak slowly at first. After all, they are just "beginning", they will get it some time later.

In the same way as that way of talking in English may sound outright ridiculous to you, the same happens when it comes to Spanish. You need to learn “The Real Thing”, not simplified materials.

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words, so I hope that a video can clear this up even better. Instead of writing a long article describing the reasons why I positively think listening comprehension is key, I will show you a video from my JUMP START YOUR SPANISH PROGRAM that clearly addresses this topic.

I hope you find it useful, as it is really a gem if you need to understand real Spanish fast.

Happy Spanish Learning,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julio Foppoli". The signature is written in a cursive, slanted style and is enclosed within a hand-drawn rectangular box.

Julio Foppoli

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