

SILLY LINGUISTICS

THE MAGAZINE FOR LANGUAGE LOVERS

THE ROLE OF WORKING MEMORY IN LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE



**NOTICING
LANGUAGE
CHANGE**

***PEECHES
FER SELL!***



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This week's page numbers are in Korean (their pronunciations are bracketed)!

S is for... Scribing

By Chris Davy

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Scribing. Writing. Etching. Carving. Marking.

Something like that.

It's slowly becoming a lost art form to some; because of technology. The act of holding and using a tool to create every single detail of a symbol by hand, from 'scratch' is simply non-existent in some people's lives. In fact, for some people it's NEVER existed in their lives in the first place!

I mean, even as I'm writing this article today, I'm sat on my sofa using my phone. Because of convenience and ease as much as anything else. But I write using a pen or pencil and piece of paper pretty much EVERY DAY!

I love writing. When I hold a pen or a pencil though, I don't really hold it 'properly'. I remember being at school and my one teacher basically having a go at me because I was holding my pencil 'wrong'. My Mum found out about it and she basically went in and sorted it out. Nice one Mum! I was 17 years old at the time. Hahahaha! Joking! I wasn't 17, I was more like 9/10. All that said though, by holding a pen in the way I do I do tend to get hard skin on one part of my ring finger which is really annoying. I do try to use a different technique but old habits die hard and all that. So, maybe he knew that would happen, and that's why he knew it was 'wrong'. Who knows?

But on a serious note, the whole age joke thing, is not funny. Some 37 year olds can't hold and use a pen well, let alone 17 or 7 year olds. I mean, I'm not being harsh, you've been to the doctors, right? It's a serious issue. How is anyone supposed to communicate with each other when what's being communicated simply isn't clear? And that's just being able to identify the symbols we use for a start. We haven't even touched on whether or not they are in order to make what we believe are actual words, or sentences that make sense. We are just talking about being able to read the symbols! GIVE US A CHANCE!!!

My point is, when you are learning language, practising handwriting or even cursive is well worth the effort. Like, you know when kids used to get given 'lines' to do at school, as a punishment? Like Bart Simpson at the beginning of each episode of The Simpson's? Well, what he's doing there is actually becoming an absolute boss at handwriting. He's improving his vocabulary, he's improving his hand writing. With respect to his punishment, well the issue the punishment is related to probably isn't being addressed very well. He's probably more likely just to build up resentment towards his teacher for having to do lines. But that's a different matter entirely. He is on the other hand gaining a better understanding of language, improving his handwriting, and developing his vocabulary. Because of definition and repetition.

But think about it, when you are writing with a pen it requires a lot more of you. It requires much

more of your body and mind. Lines, curves, curls, dots, crosses, swoops, bends, flicks. ALL SORTS OF COOL INTRICATE DETAILS. Every symbol requires its own unique attention and detail. But when you are typing on your phone or on a keyboard it's more like,

Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.

Plonk. Plonk. Plonk. Plonk. Plonk. Plonk.

Nowhere near as much articulation and detail is required. Every symbol is associated with the same movement.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Plonk. Plonk. Plonk.

But writing. Line. Dot. Helps creating a much more detailed picture in the mind. We all know 'Line. Dot' is probably a lower case 'i'.

Circle. 'O'

Circle. Flick. 'Q'

Big Cross. 'X'

Little Cross. 'x'

Line, curl to the left. Dot. 'j'

Don't get me wrong, typing is great for speed. But I'm not convinced it's great for quality. It's like playing a guitar. If you play an electric guitar with distortion no one really knows how good you are. The distortion hides any 'imperfections' that might be occurring. But playing an acoustic, well you can't really hide your mistakes in the same way. You are exposed for what you are. As far as I'm concerned the same thing kind of goes for writing vs. typing. And don't get me started on predictive text, spell, rubbers and correction fluid. Hahaha. We all know I mean Tippex.

There are primitive techniques out there to be learned, understood, and appreciated. If you can get to grips with those, then I think the more sophisticated forms of communication, the luxuries if you like, are much easier to come to terms with, manipulate, and utilise.

Besides, we all know your phone is going to run out of battery, break, or get lost at some point. Then what are you going to do?!

Oh yeah, and to the die-hards out there who question what had this got to do with linguistics? Read between the lines a little bit. There's concepts and theories being discussed and explored here. It's about breaking things down and building them back up again.

That's is what we are trying to do, right? Build more things, but build them better?