



Diane's Domain...

In learning Spanish, there are many, many more "rules" of grammar than there are in English. Of course, we as English speakers, don't think about the grammar rules, we just know when someone's saying something incorrectly. Well, in Spanish, there are dozens of rules for when to use the verb SER (to be) and when to use ESTAR (to be); when to use POR and when to use PARA (both of which I used to think meant "for"). Also, when do you use the Preterito Imperfecto tense and when do you use Preterito Perfecto tense when speaking about the past? Did it happen once, or was it a habitual occurrence? Are you describing a situation in detail, or is it a string of verbs without much description in between? Yikes! Every verb can be conjugated in 16 different tenses, and within every tense there are six different endings, depending on who's doing the action. And, of course, there are always exceptions to the rule, and "special cases".

EVERYTHING always depends on the context. If you want to say "I wanted to call you yesterday" you first have to think about, did you just think about it, and then not do anything about it? Well, then you use the conjugation "quería" for wanting. But, if you thought about it, and really tried, but maybe my line was busy the first time you tried, and then you couldn't get to a phone later, and you really were trying to do it but just were not successful, then you use the conjugation, "quise" for wanting. The context. At first, it frustrated me; now, when our teacher says, "por lo general", (which means, "generally"), I just shake my head and laugh, because I know there are many exceptions to the "rule" that she is about to explain to me. You gotta just laugh, or else you'll cry! And then, of course, when we get to Venezuela, many rules are gonna change!

Yesterday was a nice, sunny day ... oh yeah, and yes, it rained. They call this particular light mist of a rain, "hair of the cat". Well, our neighbor next door, and the new missionary family across the street, both lost their telephone connection for a while. I tried to ask the next door neighbor if he wanted to use my phone to call the phone company, and report the problem. He came over, and while waiting for someone to answer his call, he kept asking me questions. I only know this because at the end of every sentence, the intonation in his voice raised just a little, as if asking a question. I could also tell because he looked at me as if expecting a reply. So, sometimes I would say "Si", and sometimes I would say "No", because I wasn't quite sure exactly what he was meaning. The teachers at school speak very clearly, and rather slowly, and in words that we pre-schoolers can understand. But, in the real world, WHEW! I'm supposed to be the old pro help-



ing the new gringos communicate with our tico neighbor, but they never did understand what each other was trying to say. However, the ticos (people from Costa Rica) are so incredibly patient and kind, and I just kept smiling through all my confusion. Thankfully, somehow, the phone problem was resolved, but absolutely NOT because of my fine intervention!

The other day, as I stood in the aisle of a careening bus, hanging on for dear life, with probably twenty other sardines, I kept silent as I listened to some of our fellow missionaries describe how discouraging it is for them, that the people "back home" just don't understand what we as missionaries are going through. I want you to know how encouraging you have been to our family. These are just a smipet of examples; you can not know what a huge joy it is to receive a hand-written letter from our fourth grade friend Amy C., McDonald's kids' meal toys from Joni T., Easter basket goodies from Josephine P., a kid's video from Terry O., an encouraging e-mail from Mary Y., visits from two Grandmas and Aunts, packets of instant cappuccino in care packages from Carol B. and Pat H. (thanks to all our wonderful California WMU ladies!), kids' books from Barbara T., a phone call from Pastor James A. in San Francisco, red-white-and-blue t-shirts from Grandma, and above all, the faithful prayers of so many. We are SO GRATEFUL to God for you all! The Lord is our Sustainer, and yet I fully believe He has used many of you to keep us encouraged, to feel connected to the large family we have there in the U.S. You may never know the unique struggles that come with living long-term in a foreign culture, but I hope you realize how VERY MUCH we appreciate the ways in which you've stayed connected to us, and have supported us these past months. You are a huge encouragement to us, and we thank God for giving us such a strong network of support. THANK YOU!

Of the kids, by the kids, and for the kids...



Daniel:

Right now we are in summer school. I like it a lot. On Fridays we go swimming and on Thursdays we go on field trips. I hope everyone back there in the US is having fun!



Alyssa:

I really miss my friend Caroline and playing with her, and sometimes I think that she is going to visit. I really miss Caroline's cat, too. I like my bedroom, and we have a little TV now, and sometimes we go to the beach. Sometimes we send stuff, and I will be sending a box to one of my best friends, Noah, who lives in Bangladesh.

Recreational Trips

Our most recent excursions have been when our relatives have visited. Diane's mom, Peggy, and Aunt Joyce visited in late April for two weeks. We went to the Arenal volcano, but it was socked in by clouds most of the time. One vivid memory of that time is when one very early morning we awoke to an overwhelming chorus of loud and varied birds quite close to our room. After a couple nights there, we went on to the Monte Verde Cloud Forest Reserve for a few days. It is in the mountains, and is primary ancient forest. It has a "feeling" like nowhere else we have been: lush, primal, remote, unchanged.

When Jeff's mother, Beth, and sister Mary were here in early June, we went to a remote camp in the Río Savegre region, also in the mountains, for a few days. Along with a large number of other bird species, we were able to see the Resplendent Quetzal, which is, in a word.....resplendent. Río Savegre is a special place, and we hope to get back there.

Recent Events:

Diane is now helping with the kids' Sunday school each week at Cinco Esquinas church. There is one class for grade schoolers. There are definitely a lot of differences from the kids' Sunday school we were used to in Lincoln. It's taking some getting used to by both Diane and the kids.



Daniel got a bicycle in April, when a language school missionary family on our street left for their next country and willed it to Dainel (by the way, you can't "own" a street in Spanish; you have to say: "the street by my house"). He will do the same when we leave. He loves riding it.

Diane and Alyssa accompanied our next door neighbors, a mother and her two adult daughters, on a trip to the city of Cartago. For them it is somewhat of a pilgrimage to visit the Catholic cathedral of the black virgin there. There is a rock that people go there to touch in order to try to be healed of various physical and emotional ills. Also, they get some of the holy water that flows in a dugout space outside the cathedral.

Jeff "preached" in Spanish at our church (actually "talked while standing behind a pulpit" is more accurate) in June. The subject: God's vision of the church in Acts, chapter 2.

Also in June, we hosted the church youth group for a meeting at our house. About 16 youth were here for singing and teaching from Jeff and the pastor on evangelism. Three of them, apparently friends of church youth (we didn't know these three), decided to become Christians that evening.

News from Jeff & Diane

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Lincoln, NE
Permit No. 968

New Covenant Community Church
6000 S. 84th
Lincoln NE 68516

"It Takes a Village...."

Again we highlight the contributions of some of our friends, because it takes a community of people to successfully prepare, move, and support a family going overseas to serve.

- ★ Kandra Brummett and Pat Skammer, Daniel's teachers at MLC in Virginia, for helping to prepare him for this journey.
- ★ Doris Card of Lincoln for helping Diane organize files and other things from her USA life in preparation for moving.
- ★ Jim & Ramona Catsinas of Lincoln for taking our unused third crate off our hands; this is the kind of seemingly "small" act that reduced our stress immensely before leaving.
- ★ Jim Cichoracki of Los Angeles for bringing us Goodrich milk shakes and helping in any way needed during the final stages of moving out of our already sold home.
- ★ Marcia Claesson of Lincoln for joining our "publishing empire" to produce our Prayer Letters.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A HUGE THANK YOU to New Covenant Church for the supplies that Monte and Adam Froehlich were able to bring to us! We are MOST GRATEFUL for the families and friends who sent other much appreciated books, markers, etc. etc. Thank you so much to Lisa Froehlich, Sue Thomsen, Karen (Luke & Claire) Shinn, Barbara Thomas, Tim & Mitzi Dungan (!!!) and everyone who contributed to our extravagant care package! THANK YOU!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

If you know somebody who would like to receive **BROWNEWS**, send their address to:

Sue Thomsen at either:
7650 Cross Creek Circle
Lincoln Ne 68516; or
glrthomsen@juno.com.

If for some reason you would like to discontinue receiving these newsletters, or would like information about our Prayer Community, let Sue know.

"Browns' Contact Information"
Costa Rica mailing address:
Jeff and Diane Brown
Spanish Language Institute
Apartado 100-2350
San Francisco de Dos Rios
San Jose, COSTA RICA

E-mail address: caracasbrown@bigfoot.com
Website: www.townbeacon.com/caracasbrown