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### **Language learning: an interview with Dr. Jaime Magos Guerrero.**

#### **Summary**

Last May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dr, Jaime Magos Guerrero visited the city of Tecate, BC to share his experiences and impressions about language learning and the researches in this area during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Languages Conference. We had the opportunity to conduct a brief interview with this research professor of the Universidad Autónoma de Queretaro. Next, we present the questions and answers of the interview, selected for being related with the language learning and research field.

Dr. Magos has been an Italian teacher for many years. His professional career goes around the study of the Italian language. He has published articles in this field, and he has participated in national and international conferences. His researches deal with the training of researchers in the field language teaching. He has been a visiting academic at several universities, such as Perugia, Verona, Venice, and Siena.

Dr. Magos states that the language teaching-learning process is the key of the development of language, cognitive and social skills. He believes that “the education of the youth in Mexico should be based on the discipline and joy, so they could become citizens of the world and assume their rolér from a humanistic and historic perspective.” (Program of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Language Conference, 2012)

Next, we present part of the interview with Dr. Magos.

**Interviewer (I):** Why learn a new language?

**Dr. Magos (D.M.):** A language, for traditional things that we all think like a collective imaginarium, to be more educated, to have a tool to study and work in contact with people from other cultures, but above all, we must learn languages from cultures from other parts of the world to peek into the world. As I was saying in the talk, distances have been eliminated; a person in Mexico- in any place in Mexico- can get in contact with people from any part of the world, but having the opportunity is not enough, he must also have the training, must be able to live with people of the world and this is achieved with the study of a language and its culture.

**I:** What is the best way to learn a language?

**D.M:** I think the best way to learn a language; I mean at college, with students who attend five or ten hours per week; I think the best way to learn a language is coexistence; coexist with the teacher that is teaching the language. This also has a methodological foundation, from the methodological point of view we are talking about the communicative approach and the methods of the communicative approach, of course the notional functional method, the situational method and one that is very important, the action competition. For example, if my Italian 101 students come to me, and they have to prepare a bulletin board where they talk about their families, that is the work, that is the action we are making and it is the classroom coexistence that helps us get the work done. The language teacher's classroom has to be a *Célestin Freinet* classroom like, with working tables instead of desks, where the students work in teams, coordinated by the teacher but with the coexistence activities proposed.

**I:** What is the role of motivation within the language teaching/learning process?

**D.M:** Let's remember that motivation does not only mean to smile; sometimes, in order to be able to smile, you have to cry, you have to get mad. So, motivation plays a role *si ne qua non*; if there is not motivation, you can't learn. But we want them to be prepared to self-motivate, because it is not only the game, not only the easy smile; motivate sometimes mean to get things ready, and it may hurt; but that is what the students are there for. That is the reason for my concept of getting linked with the student's life plan. When a student has a life

plan and he tells me how I can help him, is part of the daily motivation. I can even say that he motivates me more than I do to him. But when I ask my students “What’s your life plan and what is the role of learning on it?” and he doesn’t know, then we start a discovering process that can be painful to create a life project. Anyway, a language student must have a life plan when he leaves the classroom.

**I:** Pain as an effort?

**D.M:** Sure, the pain as time step and not as what is going to characterize us.

**I:** Do you think that a teacher as a researcher can solve any language learning current problems?

**D.M:** Yes, of course. And these problems deal with attitudes, skills, and the talent of the student to learn languages. There must be the four skills and the three reflections. Skills are: speaking, reading, listening, and writing; the reflections are: meta-linguistic, meta-cognitive and cross-cultural. I believe that we can make research work on these seven fields, but they are not the only ones; they are the center though. But, there are more things around it. The teacher could get involved with his student to help him solve any problem, and be able to make a research project for that.

Tecate, B.C., Mexico, May 3rd , 2012.