

# Mosaic

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# Mosaic

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The language graduate who never reads a professional journal and participates only minimally, if at all, in professional meetings, will stagnate. There is an onus on the profession in all areas to upgrade and keep abreast of current developments in the field.

– Peter Heffernan

Anthony Mollica

## French, German, Italian and Spanish Tongue Twisters in the Classroom

*Tongue twisters are a useful source to teach pronunciation in the language classroom as well as a tool which provides moments of humour and relaxation.*

Tongue twisters consist of a sequence of words whose sounds – often repeated – when spoken quickly are difficult to pronounce correctly. They probably arose from the human tendency to alliterate – putting together words with sounds – usually at the beginning of each word. Alliteration is a natural habit and the alliterative art, which predates rhyme, can be seen in such familiar phrases “When there’s a will, there’s a way”, etc. Tongue twisters, then, are alliterative sentences in statements, in the form of a question, or in verse which, when spoken, result in a considerable oral challenge.

Nowadays, tongue twisters are regarded as a form of amusement suitable for children. In spite of this perception, they have been used for serious purposes. Speech therapists and elocutionists have often employed them to teach and/or improve a patient’s or client’s pronunciation. Who can forget the classic line in *My Fair Lady*, the musical version of George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion*, where the demanding Professor Higgins finally succeeds in getting Eliza Doolittle to pronounce impeccably, “The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain!”

Tongue twisters are constructed in such a way that the sequence of letters, syllables or words will render quite difficult their correct pronunciation. Tongue twisters, in fact, are designed so that anyone

reciting them will inevitably make errors in pronunciation.

The word “tongue twister” has an equivalent in Italian (“*sciogli-lingua*”), in Spanish (“*trabalenguas*”), and in German (“*Zungenbrecher*”), but, for some unknown reasons, it does not have an equivalent in French, a language which paraphrases it as, “*mots ou phrases difficiles à prononcer*”. In Québec, one of Canada’s provinces, it is common to use *virelangue*.

Tongue twisters vary in length and in format. There are some consisting of very few simple words; others are long and complex. The longest, and perhaps the most challenging tongue twister in Italian, is probably the following which appeared in the late 18th century.

Se l’arcivescovo di Costantinopoli  
si disarcivesconstantinopolizzasse  
Voi, vi disarcivesconstantinopoliz-  
zereste  
come si è disarcivesconstantino-  
polizzato lui?

There exist variations of the above which are equally difficult to pronounce:

Se l’arcivescovo di Costantinopoli  
si volesse arcivescovocostantino-  
polizzare,  
vi arcivescovocostantinopoliz-  
zereste voi  
per arcivescovocostantinopoliz-  
zare lui?

(<http://digilander.libero.it/tatone2001/bambini/scigilingua.html?>)

Se l’arcivescovo di Costantinopoli  
si disarcivescoviscostaninopo-  
lizzasse  
tu ti disarcivescoviscostaninopo-  
lizzeresti  
come si è disarcivescoviscostanino-  
polizzato  
l’arcivescovo di Costantinopoli?  
([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/it.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/it.htm))

This particular tongue twister even found its way into Spain but, in that country, it has a royal twist as well as a variation:

El arzobispo de Constantinopla  
se quiere desarzobispoconstantino-  
polizar.  
El desarzobispoconstantinopoliza-  
dor  
que lo desarzobispoconstantino-  
police  
buen desarzobispoconstantinopo-  
lizador será.  
([www.filastrocche.it](http://www.filastrocche.it))

El rey de Constantinopla quiere  
desconstantinopolizarse.  
El desconstantinopolizador que lo  
desconstantinopolize buen  
desconstantinopolizador será.  
([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm))

There are several tongue twisters which imitate this structure in both

### FRENCH

Dis-moi grosgrasgrandgraind’orge,  
quand te dégrosgrasgrandgrain-  
d’orgeras-tu ?  
– Je me dégrosgrasgrand-graind’  
orgerai quand tous les grosgras-  
grandgraind’orge se dégrosgras-  
grandgraind’orgeront.  
([fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virelangue#\\_Exemples\\_de\\_virelangues](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virelangue#_Exemples_de_virelangues))

and

### SPANISH

El cielo está enladrillado.  
¿Quién lo desenladrillará?  
El buen desenladrillador  
que lo desenladrille  
en desenladrillador será.  
([club2.telepolis.com/pitufasaltarina/trabalenguas/trabalenguas.htm](http://club2.telepolis.com/pitufasaltarina/trabalenguas/trabalenguas.htm))

Tongue twisters take a variety of forms.

## 1. They may appear in verse:

## FRENCH

Si ton bec aime mon bec  
comme mon bec aime ton bec,  
donne-moi le plus gros bec  
de la Province de Québec !  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm>)

Quand un cordier cordant doit  
accorder sa corde,  
Pour sa corde accorder six cordons  
il accorde,  
Mais si l'un des cordons de la corde  
décorde,  
Le cordon décordé fait décorder la  
corde,  
Que le cordier cordant avait mal  
accordée.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm>)

## GERMAN

Sie brauchten gar nicht  
umzusteigen,  
drum gab sie sich ihm stumm zu  
eigen.  
Doch weil verkehrt die Weichen  
lagen,  
fuhr man zurück im Leichen-  
wagen.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

Nicht alle Leute können es  
ertragen  
wenn Lautenspieler laut die Lauten  
schlagen,  
drum spielen heute laute Lauten-  
spieler leise Laute,  
weil manchen Leuten vor den  
lauten Lautenlauten graute.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

Das kleine Mädchen reibt sich leise  
das Knie, wenn ich nach Leipzig  
reise.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

## ITALIAN

Pel ritratto del trattore  
tratteggiando in trattoria  
non ho chiesto, in fede mia,  
per compenso soldi assai.  
Chè dal conto gli ho detratto  
(ciò parendomi corretto)  
i tortelli, trote e torte  
che goloso mi sbafai.  
([www.filastrocche.it](http://www.filastrocche.it))

## SPANISH

No me mires,  
que miran

que nos miramos,  
y verán en tus ojos  
que nos amamos.  
No nos miremos,  
que cuando no nos miren  
nos miraremos.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

## 2. They may be in dialogue form:

## FRENCH

Ta tante t'attend.  
– J'ai tant de tantes. Quelle tante  
m'attend ?  
– Ta tante Antoinette t'attend.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm>)

Madame Coutufon dit à madame  
Foncoutu :  
– Bonjour, madame Foncoutu ! Y  
a-t-il beaucoup de Foncoutu à  
Coutufon ?  
– Il y a autant de Foncoutu à  
Coutufon qu'il y a de Coutufons à  
Foncoutu.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm>)

– Combien sont ces six saucissons-  
ci ?  
– Ces six saucissons-ci sont six  
sous.  
– Si ces six saucissons-ci sont six  
sous, ces six saucissons-ci sont trop  
chers.  
(<http://french.about.com/cs/francophonie/a/tonguetwisters.htm>)

## GERMAN

Beim Friseur:  
– Tag, Karl.  
– Wie geht's, Karl?  
– Gut, Karl.  
– Kahl, Karl?  
– Ja, Karl, ganz kahl.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

## ITALIAN

– C'è il questore in questura a  
quest'ora?  
– Il questore in questura a quest'ora  
non c'è.  
(I librotti, *Scioglilingua*. Disegni di Walter  
Casiraghi. Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1989. p.  
87)

– Buona sera. Buona sera.  
– Ha *il Corriere della sera* di ieri sera?  
– No. *Il Corriere della sera* di ieri sera  
non ce l'ho. Ho *il Corriere della sera*  
di stasera.  
– Buona sera. Buona sera.

(<http://digilander.libero.it/tatone2001/bambini/sciglilingua.html?>)

## SPANISH

Un podador podaba la parra y otro  
podador que por allí pasaba le  
preguntó:  
– Podador que podas la parra. ¿Qué  
parra podas? ¿Podas mi parra o tu  
parra podas?  
– Ni podo tu parra, ni mi parra  
podo, que podo la parra de mi tío  
Bartolo.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

– ¿Usted no nada nada?  
– No, no traje traje.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

¿Quién fue el caricaturista que te  
caricaturizó?  
(<http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trabalenguas>)

3. They may express or describe  
the obvious:

## FRENCH

Dans la gendarmerie, quand un  
gendarme rit, tous les gendarmes  
rient dans la gendarmerie.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm>)

La jolie rose jaune de Josette jaunit  
dans le jardin.  
([http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virelangue#Exemples\\_de\\_virelangues](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virelangue#Exemples_de_virelangues))

## GERMAN

Eine Diplombibliothekarin ist  
Bibliothekarin mit Diplom,  
eine Bibliothekarin mit Diplom ist  
eine Diplombibliothekarin.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

Wenn der Benz bremst, brennt das  
Benz-Bremmslicht.  
(<http://www.mckinnonsc.vic.edu.au/la/lote/german/materials/zbrecher.htm>)

Der Zweck hat den Zweck den  
Zweck zu bezwecken; wenn der  
Zweck seinen Zweck nicht  
bezweckt, hat der Zweck keinen  
Zweck!  
(<http://www.kidsaction.de/zunge.htm>)

## ITALIAN

La capra che crepa a Capri  
non è più una capra di Capri.  
([www.filastrocche.it](http://www.filastrocche.it))

Ciò che è, è;

ciò che non è, non è;  
 ciò che è, non è ciò che non è;  
 ciò che non è, non è ciò che è.  
 (www.locuta.com/gli\_scioglilingua.htm)

**SPANISH**

Otorrinolaringólogo trabaja en la otorrinolaringología.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm)

Historia es la narración sucesiva de los sucesos que se sucedieron sucesivamente en la sucesión sucesiva de los tiempos.  
 (http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trabalenguas)

4. They may narrate an imaginary or fictional “historical” event:

**FRENCH**

Le général Joffrin nous dit :  
 À Toul, ai perdu mon dentier.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

Gal, amant de la reine, alla, tour magnanime,  
 galamment de l'arène à la tour Magne à Nîmes.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

**GERMAN**

Der Leutnant von Leuten befahl seinen Leuten, nicht eher zu läuten, bis der Leutnant von Leuten seinen Leuten das läuten befahl!  
 (http://www.serve.com/shear/twister.htm)

Kaiser Karl konnte keine Kümmelkerne kauen, warum konnte Kaiser Karl keine Kümmelkerne kauen? Weil Kaiser Karl keine Kümmelkerne kauen konnte.  
 (http://www.kidsaction.de/zunge.htm)

**ITALIAN**

Apelle, figlio di Apollo  
 Fece una palla di pelle di pollo  
 Tutti i pesci vennero a galla  
 Per vedere la palla di pelle di pollo  
 Fatta da Apelle figlio di Apollo  
 (I librotti, 1989, p. 12; Lironi, 1998, p. 137)

Povero pittore padovano  
 pitturava  
 per papa Pio primo  
 per pentitosi  
 per poca paga  
 parti

per Porta Pia.  
 (I librotti, 1989, p. 82)

**SPANISH**

El perro de San Roque no tiene rabo porque el carretero Ramón Ramiro Ramirez con la rara rueda de su carro se lo ha arrancado.  
 (es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trabalenguas)

5. They may appear in the form of a question:

**FRENCH**

Pourquoi les alliés ne se désolidariseraient-ils pas ?  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

Suis-je bien chez ce cher Serge ?  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

As tu été à Tahiti ?  
 (http://french.about.com/cs/francophonie/a/tonguetwisters.htm)

Tonton, ton thé t'a-t-il ôté ta toux?  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

Je suis ce que je suis et si je suis ce que je suis, qu'est-ce que je suis ?  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

**GERMAN**

Weisst du das, dass das “das” das meistgebrauchte Wort im Satz ist?  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm)

**ITALIAN**

Sei tu quel barbaro barbiero che barbaramente barbasti la barba a quel povero barbaro barbone?  
 (http://junior.virgilio.it/passatempi/scioglilingua/s5.htm)

Ti ritiri tu?  
 (www.filastrocche.it)

È la mamma che ti sveglia o la sveglia che ti sveglia? E chi è che sveglia la mamma che ti sveglia?  
 (www.filastrocche.it)

**SPANISH**

¿Cuánta madera roería un roedor si los roedores royeran madera?  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm)

Si tu eres tu,  
 y yo soy yo,

¿quién es el mas tonto de los dos?  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm)

6. They may be “philosophical” or “proverbial” in nature:

**FRENCH**

Si ça se passe ainsi, c'est sans souci.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)  
 Je veux et j'exige; j'exige et je veux.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

**GERMAN**

Denke nie gedacht zu haben, denn das denken der Gedanken ist gedankenloses Denken. Wenn du denkst, du denkst, dann denkst du nur du denkst, aber denken tust du nie.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm)

**ITALIAN**

Pensa prima parla poi  
 Perché parole poco pensate portano pena.  
 (I librotti, p. 69)

**SPANISH**

De generación en generación las generaciones se degeneran con mayor degeneración.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm)

El amor es una locura que solo el cura lo cura, pero el cura que lo cura comete una gran locura.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm)

7. They may describe an event:

**FRENCH**

Cinq chiens chassent six chats.  
 (www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

Trois tortues trottaient sur un trottoir très étroit.  
 (www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm)

**GERMAN**

Am Zehnten Zehnten um zehn Uhr zehn zogen zehn zahme Ziegen zehn Zentner Zucker zum Zoo.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm)

Im Potsdammer Boxclub boxt der Potsdammer Postbusboss.  
 (http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm)

Fischers Fritz fischt frische Fische,  
frische Fische fischt Fischers Fritz.  
(<http://www.mckinnonsc.vic.edu.au/la/ote/german/materials/zbrecher.htm>)

## ITALIAN

Apelle, figlio di Apollo  
fece una palla di pelle di pollo.  
Tutti i pesci vennero a galla  
per vedere la palla  
di pelle di pollo,  
fatta da Apelle,  
figlio di Apollo.  
(Martino Lironi. p. 137)

Un empio imperator  
di un ampio impero  
scoppiar fece una guerra  
per un pero.  
Credeva conquistar  
il mondo intero  
l'imperator  
ma perse l'ampio impero.  
([www.filastrocche.it](http://www.filastrocche.it))

## SPANISH

Tres tristes tigres tragaban trigo en  
un trigal.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

Ñoño Yáñez come ñame en las  
mañanas con el niño.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

El vino vino, pero el vino no vino  
vino. El vino vino vinagre.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

## 8. They may state a fact:

## FRENCH

Il y a deux espèces de fous :  
Il y a les fous ronds, et les fous  
carrés.  
Les Fourons sont carrément fous,  
et les fous carrés, ca c'est un cas  
Happart !  
([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm))

– L'oie niche bas, la pie niche haut:  
où niche l'hibou ?

– L'hibou niche ni haut ni bas.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O147>)

## GERMAN

Eine gute gebratene Gans mit einer  
goldenen Gabel gegessen ist eine  
gute Gabe Gottes.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

Schnellsprechsprüche spreche ich  
schwer schnell.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

## ITALIAN

Pasquale pescatore  
è uno sprecone  
che pesca bene  
e poi la pesca spreca.  
(I librotti. *Scioglilingua*, p. 74)

Sono solo  
e so solo  
di non essere solo  
ad essere solo.  
([www.viandante.com](http://www.viandante.com))

## SPANISH

Debajo de la puente de Guadalajara  
había un conejo debajo de la agua.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

En la plaza de Constantinopla  
había una esquina, en la esquina  
una casa, en la casa un balcón, en  
el balcón una estaca, en la estaca  
una lora. La lora está en la estaca  
en el balcón de la casa en la esquina  
de la plaza de Constantinopla.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

## 9. They may appear in a story-telling format:

## FRENCH

Il était une fois, un homme de foi  
qui vendait du foie dans la ville de  
Foix. Il dit :  
– Ma foi, c'est la dernière fois que  
je vends du foie dans la ville de  
Foix.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O19>)

Tatie, ton thé t'a-t-il ôté ta toux,  
disait la tortue au tatou.  
Mais pas du tout, dit le tatou,  
Je tousse tant que l'on m'entend  
de Tahiti à Tombouctou.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O28>)

## GERMAN

Es war einmal ein Mann, der hatte  
drei Söhne.  
Der eine hieß Schack,  
der andre hieß Schackschaw-  
werack,  
der dritte hieß Schackschaw-  
werackschackommini.

Nun war da auch eine Frau, die  
hatte drei Töchter.  
Die eine hieß Sipp,  
die andre hieß Sippsiwwelipp,  
die dritte hieß Sippsiwwelip-  
psippelimmini.  
Und Schack nahm sie Sipp,  
und Schackschawwerack nahm  
Sippsiwwelipp,  
und Schackschawwerackscha-  
ckom-mini nahm Sippsiwwelip-  
psippelimmini zur Frau.  
([http://www.labbe.de/zzebra/index.asp?the\\_maid=341&titelid](http://www.labbe.de/zzebra/index.asp?the_maid=341&titelid))

## ITALIAN

C'era una volta una cincibiri-  
ciaccola, che aveva centocinquanta  
cincibiriaccolini.  
Un giorno la cincibiriaccola disse  
ai suoi centocinquanta cincibri-  
ciaccolini:  
"Smettete la di cincibiriaccolare  
sempre, altrimenti un giorno non  
cincibiriaccolerete più."  
(<http://junior.virgilio.it/passatempi/scioglilingua/s5.htm>)

## SPANISH

Había una madre godable,  
pericotable que tenía un hijo  
godijo, pericotijo y tantarantijo.  
Un día la madre godable,  
pericotable y tantarantable le dijo  
a su hijo godijo, pericotijo y  
tantarantijo:  
– Hijo godijo, pericotijo y  
tantarantijo traédme la liebre  
godiebre, pericotiebre y tan-  
tarantiebre del monte godonte,  
pericotonte, pericotijo y tanta-  
rantijo y tantarantonte. Así el hijo,  
godijo, pericotijo y tantarantijo fue  
al monte godonte, pericotonte y  
tantarantonte a traer la liebre  
godiebre, pericotiebre y tanta-  
rantiebre.  
(Enviado por Maria Fernanda Ruiz de  
México D.F.)  
(<http://www.elhuevodechocolate.com/trabale/trabale2.htm>)

## 10. Some involve famous people:

## FRENCH

Le général Joffrin nous dit :  
À Toul, ai perdu mon dentier.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O20>)

Napoléon, cédant Sedan, céda ses

dents.

([http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/French\\_tongue\\_twisters](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/French_tongue_twisters))

### GERMAN

Bismarck biss Marc, bis Marc  
Bismarck biss!

(<http://www.mckinnonsc.vic.edu.au/la/lot/german/materials/zbrecher.htm>)

### ITALIAN

Torquato Tasso,  
andando a spasso,  
cadde in un fosso  
e si fece male all'osso  
del dito grosso!

([www.filastrocche.it](http://www.filastrocche.it))

Il Papa pesa il pepe a Pisa,  
Pisa pesa il pepe al Papa.

(<http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scioglilingua>)

### SPANISH

El obispo vasco de Vizcaya busca  
el obispo vasco de Guipúzcoa.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

11. Some tongue twisters are designed so that, when pronounced very quickly, the outcome will be an obscenity.

### FRENCH

C'est pas beau mais tentant de  
tenter de tâter, de têter les tétens  
de tata quand tonton n'est pas là.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O36>)

### GERMAN

Hinter dichtem Fichtendickicht  
picken dicke Finken tüchtig.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

Flankenkicker Flick kickt flinke  
Flanken, flinke Flanken kickt  
Flankenkicker Flink.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

### ITALIAN

Stiamo bocconi  
cogliendo cotoni,  
stiamo sedendo  
cotoni cogliendo.

([www.locuta.com/gli\\_scioglilingua.htm](http://www.locuta.com/gli_scioglilingua.htm);  
[www.ac-poitiers.fr/italien/peda/scioglii.htm](http://www.ac-poitiers.fr/italien/peda/scioglii.htm))

### SPANISH

Tengo un tío cajonero  
que hace cajas y calajas

y cajitas y cajones.

Y al tirar de los cordones  
salen cajas y calajas  
y cajitas y cajones.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

Los cojines de la Reina.

Los cajones del Sultán.

¡Qué cojines!

¡Qué cajones!

¿En qué cajonera van?

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

13. They may recall a grammatical structure.

### FRENCH

(the present tense and past  
participle of "dire"):

Je dis que tu l'as dit à Didi ce que  
j'ai dit jeudi.

([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm))

### SPANISH

(the past participle of "decir"):

Me han dicho que has dicho un  
dicho, que han dicho que he dicho  
yo. El que lo ha dicho mintió, y en  
caso que hubiese dicho ese dicho  
que han dicho que he dicho yo,  
dicho y redicho quedó, y estará  
bien dicho ese dicho que han  
dicho que he dicho yo.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

(the present tense of *querer*):

¿Cómo quieres que te quiera  
si el que quiero que me quiera  
no me quiere como quiero que me  
quiera?

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm#92>)

(the verb "contar"):

Cuando cuentas cuentos, cuenta  
cuantos cuentos cuentas, cuando  
cuentos cuentos.

([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm))

14. They may be in the form of a  
palindrome:

### SPANISH

Dábale arroz a la zorra el abad.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

15. Some tongue twisters, when  
pronounced, may indicate an  
"absurdity".

### FRENCH

Mon père est maire, mon frère est  
masseur.

([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm))

16. But, above all, tongue twisters  
are very often "nonsensical":

### FRENCH

Des blancs pains, des bancs peints,  
des bains pleins.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O74>)

Seize chaises sèchent.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O95>)

Six jeunes gens juchés sur six  
chaises chuchotaient ceci: sage  
chasseur au front chauve, au sang  
chaud, aux yeux chassieux, sachez  
chasser le chat chauve qui se cache  
sous la chiche souche de sauge  
séchée.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm#O126>)

### GERMAN

Schnecken erschrecken, wenn  
Schnecken an Schnecken  
schlecken, weil zum Schrecken  
vieler Schnecken, Schnecken nicht  
schmecken.

(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/de.htm>)

Zwanzig Zwerge zeigen  
Handstand, zehn im Wand-  
schrank, zehn am Sandstrand.

([www.mckinnonsc.vic.edu.au/la/lot/german/materials/zbrecher.htm](http://www.mckinnonsc.vic.edu.au/la/lot/german/materials/zbrecher.htm))

### ITALIAN

Fra le fresche frasche al fresco  
fra freschi frati francescani.

### SPANISH

Tras tus tres tristes tigres que triste  
estás Trinidad.

([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm))

As nonsensical statements, the  
tongue twister's main purpose in  
the language classroom is to stress  
pronunciation. There are sounds  
in French, German and Spanish  
which are difficult for Allophones  
to repeat. Tongue twisters provide  
a humorous and less threatening

way of practising such sounds. See the 3<sup>rd</sup> suggestion in Pedagogical Applications, below.

### Pedagogical Applications

The following are some suggested activities focussing on tongue-twisters:

1. Teachers may wish to post some tongue twisters on the bulletin board and ask students to read them from time to time.
2. Competitions can be held between two students or two groups (once the class has been divided in to half). This could be an activity used during the “warm-up” period, at the beginning of the of the lesson. It may be done a daily or intermittent basis. In either case, the activity would provide some “relaxation” at the beginning of each class.
3. Students may be asked to illustrate some of the tongue twisters and place their illustrations on the bulletin board. Other students may be asked to identify the tongue-twister by looking at the illustration.
4. Teachers may wish to select tongue twisters to highlight different sounds as in the pronunciation of

#### FRENCH

[ch] sound

Un chasseur sachant chasser sait chasser sans son chien de chasse.  
([www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm](http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/fr.htm))

Il faut qu'un si sage garde-chasse sache chasser tous les chats qui chassent dans sa chasse.  
([http://french.about.com/cs/francophonie/a/tonguetwisters\\_2.htm](http://french.about.com/cs/francophonie/a/tonguetwisters_2.htm))

#### GERMAN

[pf] sound

Pferde mampfen dampfende Äpfel.  
Dampfende Pferdeäpfel mampft niemand.  
(<http://www.schulzens.de/Grundschule/>)

Deutsch/Zungenbrecher/zungenbrecher.html)

[Sch] sound

Der froschforschende Froschforscher forscht in der froschforschenden Froschforschung.  
([www.nebelbank.de/mixtur/zungenbrecher.htm](http://www.nebelbank.de/mixtur/zungenbrecher.htm))

#### ITALIAN

[gli] sound

Si sbaglia il coniglio se sceglie un giaciglio di foglie di tiglio.  
Va meglio la paglia.  
(I librotti, 1989, p. 35)

the z: [dz] vs. [tz]

Una zolletta di zucchero nella tazza di zia Zita.  
([www.filastrocche.it](http://www.filastrocche.it))

#### SPANISH

the trilled “r”:

Erre con “erre” cigarro, “erre” con “erre” barril.  
Rápido corren los carros, Cargados de azúcar del ferrocarril.  
(<http://www.uebersetzung.at/twister/es.htm>)

5. In order to involve students even more in this language activity, teachers may wish to give them a series of words containing a similar sound from which they will create a tongue twister. For example, In Italian the words:

sciatore, sciacquare, sciagura, scialle, sciame, scienza, scienziato, scilinguare, scimmia, scintilla, sciocco, scioglilingua, scioperare, scivolare.

may yield the following tongue twister:

Lo sciocco sciatore sciava scilinguando scioglilingua.

6. An alternate or additional activity if for the students themselves to suggest both words and tongue twister.

### Conclusion

Whatever the activity, tongue-

twisters are bound to provide moments of humour, relaxation and learning in the classroom.

**Editor's Note:** A version of this article with examples only in Italian appeared in *Italiano per Stranieri* (Athens, Greece: Edizioni Edilingua) No. 3 (July 2006), pp. 4-10, with the title, “Gli scioglilingua nella glottodidattica: cenni di analisi e proposte di di attività.”

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### Websites

- FRENCH:** Search “virelangues” in [www.google.fr](http://www.google.fr)
- GERMAN:** Search “zungebrecker” in [www.google.de](http://www.google.de)
- ITALIAN:** Search “scioglilingua” in [www.google.it](http://www.google.it)
- SPANISH:** Search “trabalenguas” in [www.google.es](http://www.google.es)

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