

## Whistling a language

10:00:21:00

- I can't do it!

10:00:40:00

- My name is Willeni Albornoz. I'm 11 years old. I arrived 4 months ago and I go to "La Lomada" school.

10:00:48:00

- ... and now you've got this accent...

10:00:54:00

- Over there in Venezuela there were 4 of us: my mother, my father, my brother and myself. My father is still in Venezuela. We hope he will come over next year... My mother lives here with us 2. Here we live with my cousins and my aunt, and the 2 little boys of the house and my cousin's husband...

10:01:20:00

- Now you have to learn, mami ! You've got yourself into this mess, so now you have to be strong and carry on ...

10:01:27:00

- My mother took both of us, my brother and myself, and said to us: the situation in Venezuela is not good, and your aunt is giving us the opportunity to stay with her for a while and, well, at the beginning we said good. But then, my brother and I, we asked : are we going to leave behind our friends, our family, our father... who is there now. It was difficult, but then we accepted it, my brother and myself.

10:01:58:00

- Hello ! Hello, my love. How are things? Are you all right ? Yes, here is the boy, my love. Ciao !

10:02:14:00

- ... I'm not supporting Real Madrid any more... I'm for Barcelona...

10:02:23:00

- for 15 days now he has not spoken to his father. Not because he didn't want to, but because he wants him to be here and he feels sad...

10:02:32:00

- my mother is a good worker, who doesn't stop because of the problems she has now. She's strong. She's a worker. She likes to earn her own money. She doesn't like others to feel sorry for her.

10:02:57:00

- I also feel sad leaving my father behind, so does my brother. But we don't show it like my mother. My mother cries every time she remembers.

10:03:12:00

- Last Wednesday, every Wednesday we have whistling classes, but it would be better to have them every day in order to learn more, the teacher told me that I've progressed a lot. I've progressed, because before only air came out and now I can do it a little, not a lot, but I can do it.

10:03:34:00

- I can't do it...

10:03:38:00

- the fingers have to close the end of the mouth a little, the end of the tongue over the finger and then, you have to blow out ...

10:03:53:00

- I know that with real effort and determination you can do things. And if I haven't whistled yet, it's my own fault, because I haven't tried hard enough yet. That's why I haven't learned whistling.

10:04:13:00

- And now I'm going to the library to read!

10:04:19:00

- Hi, Iballa ! Have you got any books about "El Silbo" ?

10:04:24:00

- Yes, there are some... Wait a moment at a table and we'll bring them to you.

10:04:40:00

- Here, you have these.

10:04:45:00

- What I like about the whistling language is the way you place the fingers to whistle, and the fact that you whistle from one place to another and that others can understand you...

10:04:56:00

- What I think most about is how somebody had the idea about the whistling language, because...

10:05:01:00

- Yes, really it's...

Are you going to read ?

10:05:05:00

- No, you...

10:05:09:00

- Like a perfect articulated language, the "Silbo gomero" is unique in the world. There are only a few similar examples, like the Zapatecas Indians of Mexico. The "Silbo" only exists in La Gomera and they are trying to stop it from dying out, because a while ago it began to die out and then the people of the Canary Islands and the Silbo teachers began to try and save this language.

10:05:41:00

- I agree... I would like to help, but I can't whistle yet ...

10:05:48:00

- Then learn it.

10:05:50:00

- I would like to, but...

10:05:52:00

- Yes, it's a little bit difficult, but you have to practise every day...

10:05:56:00

- I know, like my teacher says. Not just practise it every class day, and that's it. You have to practise it every day !

10:06:19:00

- I'm going to teach you to whistle, ok ?

10:06:43:00

- I'm doing it better now. I feel that if I do it well, I will feel better...

10:06:52:00

- My silbo teacher is somebody who helps you a lot. If you don't know how to whistle, he gives you good advice, to try. He shows you tricks and games, how to speak through the whistle and so much more things you can do. He shows you the origins. At the same time he teaches you silbo, you learn about history and culture...

10:07:15:00

The first day I arrived we had silbo class and the teacher, when he learned I'm Venezuelan, explained me he lived in Venezuela long time years ago and he liked it there, it's a nice place. He told me not to worry about the silbo. The silbo is something that happens naturally, but that you have to practice a lot to learn it.

10:07:49:00

Here, on this place, you can understand the importance of the whistled language, the value of the whistled language. Imagine that it depends on knowing whistling, that we have to cross this valley and walk up the mountain, and that by whistling we can save ourselves all that effort.

10:08:10:00

- How did you chat with the girls ?

10:08:13:00

- We, how did I chat with girls, the same as everyone else does !

10:08:18:00

- No, but being here alone on the mountain ?

10:08:20:00

- I was never alone here. You know why ? Because I whistled from here, the girls whistle too, they know the Silbo, and with the Silbo we communicate, without seeing each other. Like you do now on the internet.

10:08:36:00

- Eugenio !

10:08:38:00

- Tell me !

10:08:46:00

- Take your cap down !

10:08:50:00

- Ok, ok, I take it down ;

10:09:01:00

- To Kevin ! OK ! Do it !

10:09:12:00

- I didn't like it ! Repeat this. It was ok, but it came out very low. I don't know what happened to you...

10:09:21:00

- Now, yes ! Make it longer, but ok.

10:09:25:00  
- Tell me !

10:09:28:00  
- Come here !

10:09:34:00  
- Good !

10:09:41:00  
- Very good !

10:09:51:00  
- Very good ! This “all right, all right” was very good !

10:10:00:00  
- I’m afraid of the exam, because I’m afraid of failing this subject, because it’s compulsory and could lower my Spanish language results. I could say I’m a little afraid. But, because I’ve made progress, I’m not so afraid now.

10:10:19:00  
- Call Carlos !

10:10:28:00  
- Put your hand up, Carlos... Try to answer him with the whistle, let’s see how you do the Silbo...

10:10:38:00  
- Once again, answer him.

10:10:40:00  
- Stronger, stronger, yes.

10:10:43:00  
- Stronger !

10:10:45:00  
- Well done !

10:10:48:00  
- Say something, let’s see if we understand you.

10:10:55:00  
- Did you understand him ?

10:10:58:00  
- Let’s see how you are learning the Silbo. Try to whistle a little...

10:11:10:00  
- Let’s see, let’s see... Don’t place them so high, leave them there...

10:11:28:00  
- Try to touch this point with your tongue. Let’s see...

10:11:38:00  
- You’ll soon be whistling.

10:11:46:00  
- That I undo my pigtail...

10:11:48:00  
- Very good. Let’s see, Willeni...

10:12:02:00  
- I understand that I’m to get up from my chair, but the other thing I didn’t understand.

10:12:12:00  
- Now, he called.

10:12:22:00

- Again !

10:12:37:00

- He has called you.

10:12:39:00

- And you. The rest I don't understand.

10:12:58:00

- Look. You've passed the Silbo exam.

10:13:01:00

- Aaah !

10:13:02:00

- Well done, kid!

10:13:36:00

- There's only one thing left : for my father to come over soon.  
When my father gets here, then I will be happy, I will be complete.