



ENTRE NOSOTROS

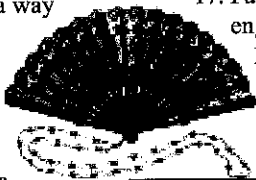
e-mail: svsecc@ksu.edu website: www.ksu.edu/ecc/svs 1-800-787-7088



The language of the Spanish fan

Beginning a love relationship in Spain or its colonies was much more challenging in the 19th century than it is today. Dates were almost always supervised in some way. Since strict social codes limited flirtation and verbal expression at this time, ladies often used their fans to communicate their feelings. When young *señoritas* went to dances, they were accompanied by their mothers or another adult person, called 'chaperona,' to guard their behavior. *Chaperonas* were very protective and became the reason young people had to invent a way to communicate with their beloved without being seen by the *chaperonas*. The women communicated by means of a secret code that existed in each movement of the fan, *el abanico*. They used the fan in different ways to send their intended messages.

The language of the *abanico* is composed of a large amount of movements that varies from country to country, and even from town to town. The movements presented here are the most commonly accepted and easy to recognize.



1. The fan placed near the heart: "You have won my love."
2. A closed fan touching the right eye: "When may I see you?"
3. The number of sticks shown answered the question: "At what hour?"
4. Threatening movements with a fan closed: "Don't be so imprudent."
5. Half opened fan pressed to the lips: "You may kiss me."
6. Hands clasped together holding an open fan: "Forgive me."
7. Covering the left ear with an open fan: "Do not betray our secret."
8. Hiding the eyes behind an open fan: "I love you."
9. Shutting a fully opened fan slowly: "I promise to marry you."
10. Drawing the fan across the eyes: "I'm sorry."
11. Touching the finger to the tip of the fan: "I wish to speak with you."
12. Letting the fan rest on the right cheek: "Yes."
13. Letting the fan rest on the left cheek: "No."
14. Opening and closing the fan several times: "You are cruel."
15. Dropping the fan: "Let's be friends."
16. Fanning slowly: "I'm married."
17. Fanning quickly: "I'm engaged."
18. Putting the fan handle to the lips: "Kiss me."

(Continued on p. 2)

PIROPOS

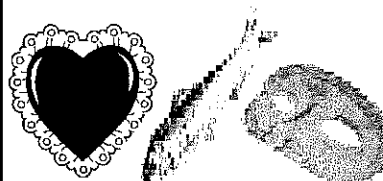
Wolf-whistles in words

There are some Spanish words that don't translate well; *piropo* is one of them. It's a flirtatious or poetic compliment to a woman — that she is obliged to ignore! There's an entire *piropo* culture in each Spanish-speaking country that can vary from region to region, but *don Juans* can be found everywhere. When well-constructed, these expressions of admiration are not only traditional, but approach an art form. The more clever the *piropo*, the more it is appreciated by its intended recipient.

When constructed poorly, *piropos* can be obvious and callous ("Don't get too close to me, I don't have fire insurance!"). Creative *piropos*, on the other hand, are subtle, with refined *machismo* that arrive quietly, like an anonymous gift.

Walking down the street, a man will "throw" (*echar*) *piropos* at a woman. A *piropo* can be funny, romantic, or

(Continued on p. 2)



REFRÁN (PROVERB)

Amigo en la adversidad, amigo de verdad.

Literal: Friend in adversity, true friend.
 English equivalent: "A friend in need is a friend indeed."
 (The true friend is the one that looks for your company and friendship even when you are going through hard times)

CONTENIDO

- Ideas for the Classroom: Presidents' Day, Valentine's Day, Carnival (Mardis Gras).. 3
- Buscapalabras / Wordsearch Puzzles 4

El lenguaje del abanico

(continued from p. 1)

19. Opening the fan wide: "Wait for me."
20. Placing the fan behind the head: "Do not forget me."
21. Placing the fan behind the head with the finger extended: "Goodbye."
22. Fan in right hand in front of face: "Follow me."
23. Fan in left hand in front of face: "I want to meet you."
24. Fan held over left ear: "I wish to get rid of you."
25. Drawing the fan across the forehead: "You have changed."
26. Twirling the fan in the left hand: "We are being watched."
27. Twirling the fan in the right hand: "I love another."
28. Carrying the open fan in the right hand: "You are too eager."
29. Carrying the open fan in the left hand: "Come and talk to me."
30. Drawing the fan through the hand: "I hate you."
31. Drawing the fan across the cheek: "I love you."
32. Presenting the fan shut: "Do you love me?"



Nuestras majas Our beauties!

SVS Program Administrator **Carmen Thurlow** and SVS Assitants **Jill Johnson** and **Sarah Albrecht** are shown below, left to right, demonstrating some of the *abanico* language. Can you guess the meaning of each? The answers are with the wordsearch keys above.



PIROPPOS

(continued from p. 1)

daring, but should be made with wit. Some examples in Spanish (with translations) follow.

— *¿Qué haces aquí tan temprano?*
¿No sabes que las estrellas siempre salen por la noche? What are you doing here so early? Don't you know that the stars always come out at night?

— *Si amas a Dios que murió por tanta gente, ¿por qué no me amas a mí que muero por ti solamente?* If you love God, who died for so many people, why don't you love me, who dies just for you?

— *Si la felicidad es agua y el amor es fuego, como me gustaría ser tu bombero.* If happiness is water and love is fire, how I would love to be your fireman.

— *¡Ahora resulta que las estatuas andan!* And now even statues walk!
— *Mírame un poco que me estoy muriendo de frío.* Just look at me for awhile, as I'm dying of cold.

— *Si la belleza es pecado, tú nunca serás perdonada.* If beauty is a sin, you'll never be forgiven.

— *Ahora sé que existe el cielo porque he visto un ángel.* I'm now sure there is a heaven because I've seen an angel.

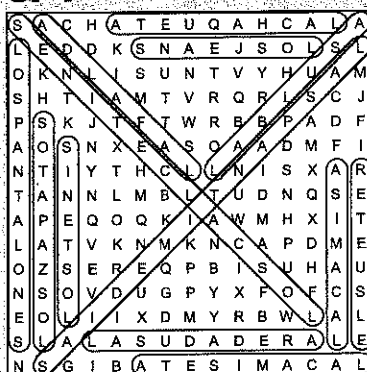
— *Te mueves como el balet de Bolshoi.* You move like the Bolshoi Ballet.

— *Por donde tú vas, todo florece.* Where you go, everything blooms.
— *Tantas curvas, y yo sin frenos.* So many curves, and me without brakes.

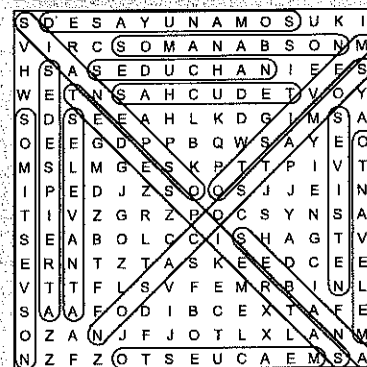
The Hispanic woman will usually only respond to a *piropo* from a man in whom she is interested, and then only after a long period of time. If she does respond, it will be with nothing more than a smile or meeting of the

Wordsearch answers

SP I



SP II



Lenguaje del Abanico Answers

a. 1 b. 8 c. 5 d. 6 e. 11 f. 7

eyes. In other words, Hispanic women pretend not to hear *piropos*.

To someone coming from modern U.S. culture (with the threat of sexual harassment accusation ever present), the *piropo* may seem chauvinistic, even insulting, but American women visiting Spanish-speaking countries need to remember that they're *not* at home, and try not to take offense. For all of its machismo, Hispanic culture reserves much reverence for women, and their role in each country's society is constantly evolving. Who knows? Maybe someday there will be another kind of *piropo* — *¡para los hombres!*