

RECURSO GRATIS • NIVEL PRINCIPIANTE

Voces en la radio

A B1 story about community media, language, and learning who gets to speak for a neighborhood.

VOICE

IDENTITY

LISTENING

APRENDE GRATIS EN [EZINGLES.COM](https://ezingles.com)

ANTES DE LEER

Prepare to read

Mariana volunteers at a local radio station. When she creates a bilingual program, she discovers that translating information is not the same as representing a community.

Think before you read

Whose voices do you usually hear in local news? Whose voices might be missing?

Reading goal

Notice vocabulary for broadcasting, language, and representation. Pay attention to how Mariana's understanding changes.

THE STORY · PART 1

A quiet studio

Every Saturday morning, Mariana volunteered at KRVL, a small community radio **station** above the public library.

Her duties were simple: answer telephone calls, prepare announcements, and make sure the host's coffee remained far from the equipment.

Mariana loved the moment when the red ON AIR sign illuminated. Inside the **studio**, an ordinary voice could travel into hundreds of kitchens and cars.

One morning, a caller asked for information about a road closure. He spoke Spanish, but the host could not understand him. Mariana translated the question and later explained the answer.

After the program, she suggested adding a short bilingual news **segment**. Nearly one third of the town spoke Spanish at home, yet every local broadcast was entirely in English.

The station director, Ms. Hall, agreed to a four-week **trial**. She gave Mariana eight minutes on Saturday afternoons.

Mariana called the program Two Languages, One Town. She translated school notices, bus changes, and city announcements into Spanish.

The first episodes were accurate and organized. However, very few listeners called or sent messages.

'Maybe the community doesn't need it,' Ms. Hall said gently.

Mariana refused to believe that. Still, she began to wonder whether speaking clearly was enough.

More than translation

At a neighborhood market, Mariana asked several Spanish-speaking customers whether they had heard the program.

A bakery owner named Doña Celia answered honestly. 'You give us information, but we never hear people like us having a **conversation**.'

Another customer said the formal translations sounded like government documents. The words were correct, but the program had no humor, stories, or familiar **expressions**.

Mariana realized she had treated listeners as an **audience** that needed instructions, not as neighbors with knowledge to share.

For the next episode, she invited Doña Celia to discuss the market's twentieth anniversary. Celia described arriving with one bread recipe, a borrowed oven, and enough English to say 'good morning.'

Her laughter filled the studio. Callers shared memories of buying birthday cakes from her children, who now helped run the bakery.

Halfway through the interview, an email appeared on Mariana's screen: 'Local radio should sound professional. Heavy **accents** make the station difficult to understand.'

Mariana felt defensive and wanted to ignore it. Instead, she asked Celia whether they should discuss the comment on air.

Celia paused. 'An accent is the sound of someone carrying one language into another,' she said. 'Why should that be hidden?'

Mariana read the email aloud, then invited listeners to respond respectfully.

THE STORY · PART 3

When listening becomes public

The telephone lines filled. Some listeners agreed that broadcasters should use standard pronunciation. Others said the station had always included regional accents without questioning them.

A high school student called to say that hearing Celia made him less **self-conscious** about speaking English in class.

An older English-speaking listener admitted that she had understood almost everything and enjoyed learning about a business she visited every week.

The discussion was occasionally uncomfortable, but it remained respectful. Mariana translated key points in both directions so no caller became invisible.

Afterward, Ms. Hall extended the program. She also changed its description from 'Spanish community information' to 'bilingual community stories.'

Mariana formed a small **advisory** group of listeners who suggested guests and topics. The program featured farmworkers, teachers, musicians, shop owners, and teenagers.

Not everyone approved. Yet the station's purpose was not to make every voice sound identical; it was to create enough trust for different voices to share the same space.

Months later, Mariana listened to a recording of her first episode. Her pronunciation had been confident, but her idea of community had been narrow.

She had believed representation meant speaking on behalf of people. Now she understood that it often meant moving closer to the microphone—and then making room.

A community does not find one voice. It learns how to hear the many voices it already has.

Words for media and representation

station	emisora / estación
studio	estudio
segment	segmento / sección
trial	periodo de prueba
conversation	conversación
expressions	expresiones
audience	audiencia / público
accents	acentos
self-conscious	cohibido/a
advisory	consultivo/a

COMPREHENSION

Read between the lines

A. Choose the best answer

1. Why does Mariana propose the segment? a) A caller needs translation b) The host resigns c) The library requests it
2. Why do few people respond initially? a) The signal is weak b) The program lacks community voices c) Mariana uses slang
3. What criticism arrives during Celia's interview? a) It is too long b) Accents sound unprofessional c) The bakery is unpopular
4. How does the program description change? a) It focuses on grammar b) It becomes bilingual community stories c) It removes Spanish

B. Interpret

1. What is the difference between translating for a community and representing one?
2. Why does Mariana read the critical email on air instead of ignoring it?

C. Write

Write a 4-6 sentence introduction for a community radio guest. Explain who they are and why listeners should hear their story.

ANSWER KEY

Review and reflect

A. 1. a 2. b 3. b 4. b

B. Suggested answers

1. Translation gives people access to information, while representation also lets them contribute their experiences and ideas. 2. Discussing the email turns criticism into a public conversation and gives affected listeners a chance to respond.

Sample introduction

Today we welcome Rosa Méndez, who has driven a city bus for fifteen years. She knows how transportation shapes work, school, and family life across our town. Rosa will share what passengers have taught her and what changes would make the system more accessible. After the interview, we invite your questions.

KEEP GOING

Discuss: Does sounding 'professional' mean everyone should sound the same?