



Construction Site: Language in Building Blocks

When we use language, every word is like a Lego. We put these Legos together to build different sentences, just like we would to build a Lego house. What about in other languages, though? When we move words or phrases from one language into another language, we are using a whole other set of building blocks. What happens when we use another set of building blocks to build a Lego house? How can we do it?

Take a look at the Lego house pictured below:



Now, try to build that house with the building blocks provided. They're not Legos! Tricky, right? How can you put together the blocks to make something that looks like the Lego house in the instructions? Get creative! What parts of the house will you try to keep? What parts of the house will you have to get rid of?

When you feel done building, look at your house and consider the following questions:

1. Does your house look like the model? Does it look like the other houses people have made?
2. What's similar? What's different?
3. Why did you have to make changes?
4. How is building a house like translating?

Activity inspired by Javier Calvo's *El fantasma en el libro: La vida en un mundo de traducciones* (2016) and created by Olive Amdur for The Carle's book exhibition *Read The World: Picture Books and Translation*, as a part of the Amherst College course **Spanish 451: Translation Roots of a US Literary Landscape** (Fall 2021) taught by Professor Regina Galasso (UMass Amherst).