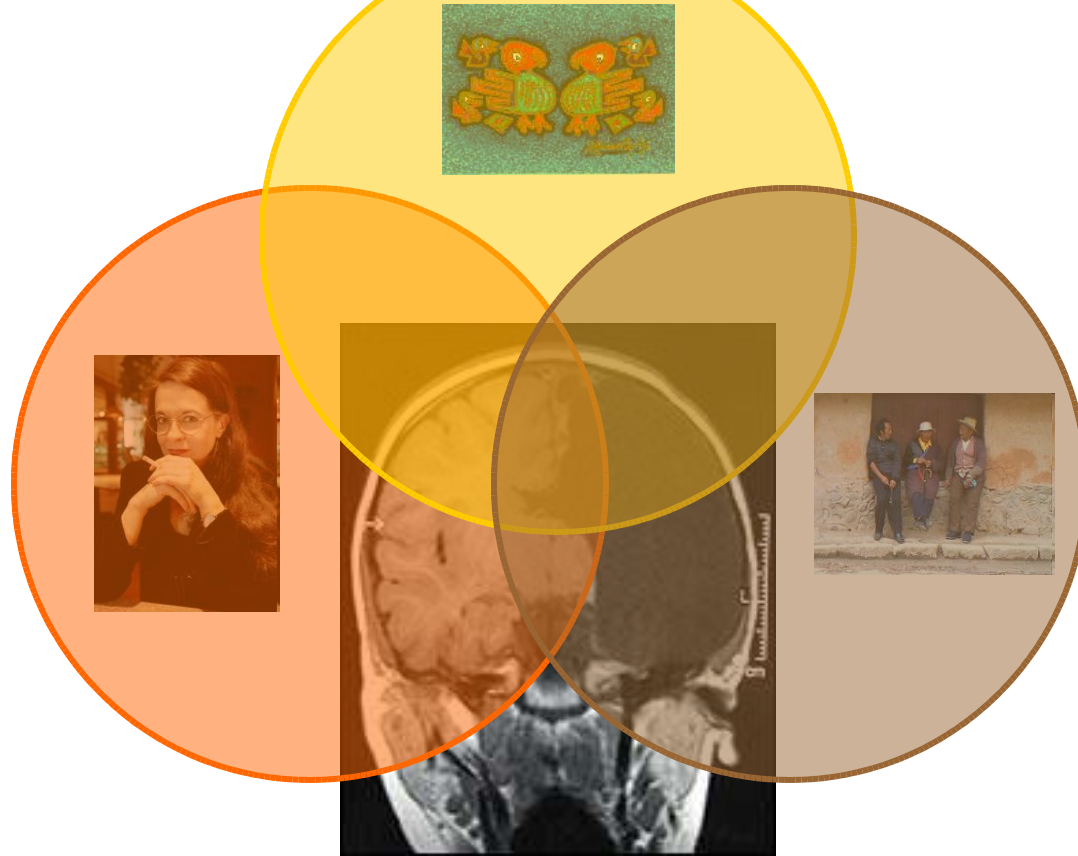


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- The following presentation is intended to serve as a summary and amplification of the ideas outlined by Graham Fuller in his Audio CD *Secrets of Learning a Foreign Language*.
- For a more a more complete version of this material, please, refer to his Audio CD:
 - Fuller, Graham. *Secrets of Learning a Foreign Language*. Penton Overseas, Inc., 2002. ISBN: 1591252288

Guiding Chinese Proverb



One language one man; two languages two men.

Mindset

As in anything we do in life,
liking what we do always makes the task
easier.



Practicality

- Practical goals can be rewarding and so can studying a language for practical reasons.
- Studying a language helps you earn your degree.
- While studying another language, you learn more about your own.
- While studying another language, you learn to think in an entirely new way.
- Studying another language allows you to operate in a bigger world and gain access to other parts of this country as well as other countries, too.
- By studying another language, you become more sensitive to the barriers foreigners encounter as they learn English.
- It helps you learn to live and deal with other cultures that are not like your own or from unknown or unrecognized parts of your own.
- Eventually, sounds and images related to your newly acquired language will begin to bring back special memories that you associate only with that language. In this sense, language is like good friends and food.

Educational
Rewards

Cultural
Awareness

Cultural
Access

Memories



Intelligence



- Learning Spanish does NOT depend necessarily on one's intelligence.
- If learning depended on intelligence, then every faculty member would be recommending language learning.



The Curious Mind

- Asking questions about one of the many cultures that speak a particular language is a key to learning that language.
- Learning a language is like getting inside someone's mind, gives us the flavor of the culture and its people.
- Safari into the mind and culture of another people!
- While using another language, new facets of life become interesting; cab drivers and common people in the other culture begin to give you whole new ways of looking and processing information.



Imitation

- Imitating and role-playing are important in learning a language.
- Language is like linguistic clothes.
- Learn to put aside your prejudices and learn to imitate new sounds.
- Imitating an accent, words and expression, allows us to understand the personality of another other person.
- It is almost impossible for an imitator or role player to be shy and passive.
- You learn to laugh at yourself and become humble.
- Take turns laughing together; it can be fun this way.



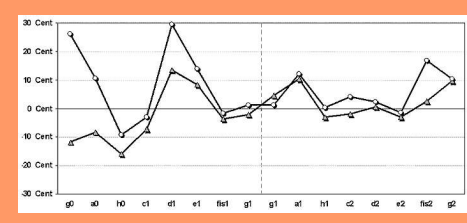
Pronunciation

- No language is inherently easier to pronounce.
- It depends on how many sounds in the new language are different from your own language.
- Luckily, English is closer to Italian and Spanish in pronunciation.
- Nevertheless, we shouldn't confuse an accent with the delivery of meaning.
- **When learning a new word, take it easy. Sound it out slowly, letter by letter.**
- Don't let your eyes trick you. Say what is written, not what you think is written.
- A sound-image link creates a new reality in your mind.
- Since age allows you to associate and make connections faster as you learn a language, memorizing a new word and its sound becomes the difficult task.





Intonation



- The intonation, lilt, or tune of a language is as different its individual sounds.
- If you ignore sound patterns too much, you will bear a a very distinctive accent and make it difficult for native speakers to understand you.
- Native speakers will have to either cut your accent with a knife or seek an interpreter to help them figure out what foreign language you are speaking.
- If others strain to understand you, you need to put more effort into studying intonation patterns.
- People who are think or live in a manner very culturally centric or people with little exposure to other cultures or less education will always show a low tolerance for foreign accents.
- Hearing sounds in your mind and in your sleep is a good sign you are paying attention to the foreign sounds and intonation.
- Periodically listen to yourself on a taperecorder and compare your voice to a native's voice.
- More times than most an exaggerated imitation comes closer than a timid imitation.

Thinking in a Language

- Get away from the idea of translating words; associate new sounds with images directly.
- Translation is imitating a foreign sound and adding it to the English image-sound system; whereas, speaking another language is building in another language framework.
- Sound-images are put together like building blocks (bundled concepts), not word-for-word equivalencies.
- By learning new sound-image associations and how they fit together in blocks of meaning, you will be learning new paths through the mind.
- The size of sound-image building block is relative. Sometimes groups of ideas (one or maybe four words) in English are expressed in another language as one word.

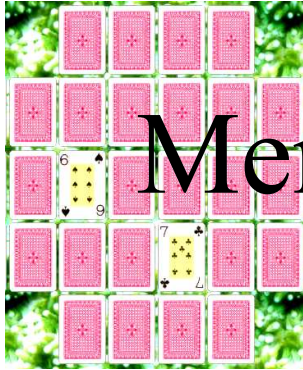


Language Families

- Every language is related to another language and shares a common heritage.
- Languages share large amounts of words (vocabulary) and some related grammar structures.
- Thus, learning one language opens the door to learning another language in the same family of languages
- More importantly, you get a head start towards learning Germanic and Romantic languages because English shares vocabulary and grammatical structures with these sister languages.
- Memorizing new words is easier when new words bare a resemblance to your own language. Related words or cognates help you generate a memory jog more quickly.
- When finding a cognitive or grammatical similarity fails, look for any other way to associate words and grammatical concepts.
- The more remote a language is from ours in the language tree, the more creative and imaginative you will need to be to make the memory links.

Memorization: General

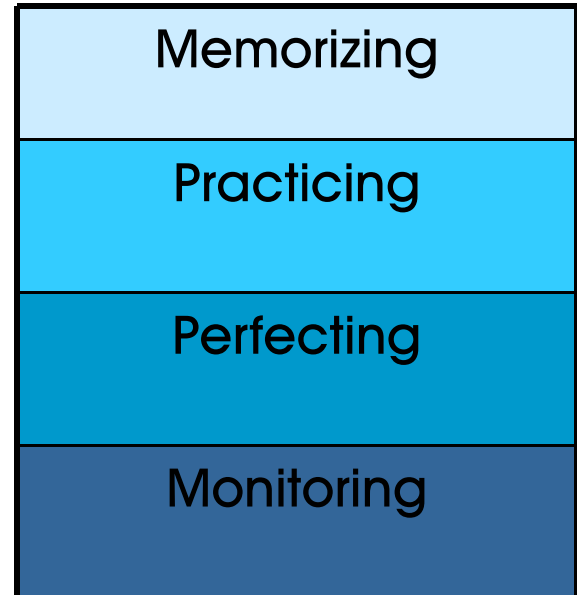
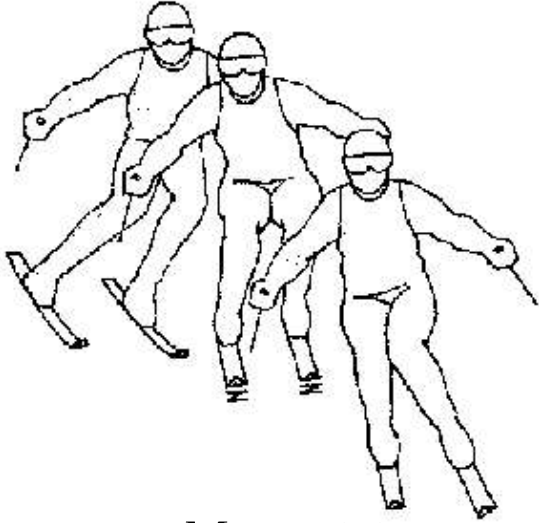
- Creating your own memory devices is a key to success in learning a language.
- Always use positive, pleasant images. The brain often blocks out unpleasant ones.
- Funny or peculiar things are easier to remember than normal ones.



Memorization: Devices

- Create **ACRONYMS** to memorize group of words or grammatical concepts. Example, NBA (National Basketball Associations), SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus), and LASER (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation).
- Create **ACROSTICS** to memorize group of words or grammatical concepts. Example, My Dear Aunt Sally (mathematical order of operations: Multiply and Divide before you Add and Subtract)
- Create rhythms, melodies, and rhymes to aid memory.
- Create a **LOCI** or focal point to memorize words or grammatical concepts. Example, associate a piece of information that you need to remember with every piece of furniture in you room. Walking through your room mentally will jog your memory. Make sure the visual map in your mind is of familiar place and imagine moving through the space in a systematic manner.
- Memorize in **CHUNKS** of information. People can only remember between 5 and 9 things at one time, so group your concepts or words together. Spend time memorizing and reviewing each new chunk before adding a new one. And, as you add master each new one, go back and be sure to review the last chunks. This will cement them in your more long term memory.

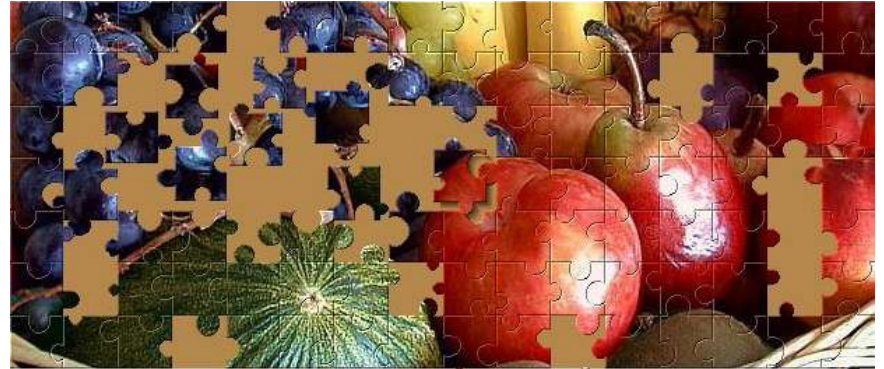
Memorization: Technique



- *Memorizing*: Create memory handles or jog words (see: Memorization: Devices)
- *Practicing*: Say the words out loud.
(Writing the words down on a small chalkboard will help reinforce your verbal practice.)
- *Perfecting*: Increment and set goals for your recall speed
(Puzzling over a word before recognizing or using it is a sign of failure)
- *Monitoring*: Make sure to memorize from English > 2nd Language and vice versa.
(2nd Language to English is only passive language learning.)

Languages as Word Building Systems

- You cannot learn a language without learning lots of words; they are the nuts and bolts of languages
- Every language builds its complex words from a common set of roots (basic words); thus, patterns exist



- for the creation of new vocabulary. Languages develop from human social usage; language grows like a tree. New words come from old words.
- More often than not, these patterns are irregular and not always predictable due to the social and evolutionary nature of language usage. You just have to learn to recognize them.
 - Nevertheless, there are some common patterns of word evolution.
 - Many words are compound words. Example, firefly, secondhand, softball, childlike, cross-town, redhead, keyboard, makeup, and notebook.
 - Some words share the same word base, prefix or suffix. For example, describe, subscribe, prescribe, proscribe, inscribe, transcribe, conscribe, ascribe.



More About Words

- At any stage of language learning, use all the words you know.
- FYI:
 - Basic needs can be expressed 200 or more words.
 - A general topic discussion requires at least 2000 words.
 - Reading a newspaper requires at least 5000 words.
- Word lists help you cheat, because you only remember where the word is in the list and not what the word means. Word cards are much more effective.

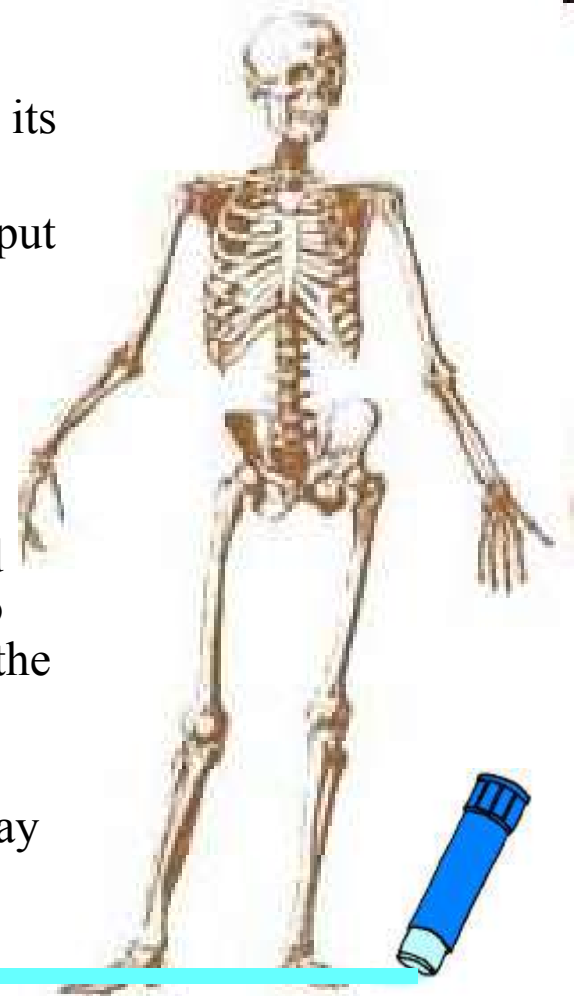


More About Words 2

- After learning vocabulary, create sentences with it. (This is active learning, not passive.)
- Memorizing dialogues imprints grammar unconsciously in your mind. (You'll notice this, because after memorizing a dialogue you can substitute words and create new dialogues).
- You should be able to put newly learned words in the context of those language strings (sentences) you have already learned.
- Conversation eventually will build up; so, don't get frustrated with simple conversations at the beginning.
- Polite phrases are great filler words and work well to make friends in another culture.
- Thinking in another language does NOT mean thinking profoundly. It means putting together patterns of thought and does NOT indicate the degree of profoundness in your thought.
- Listen to a recorded conversation several times as a whole. Then, repeat each individual sentence by itself. This seems like a 10-yearold's task, but it trains your ear—it is VERY powerful.

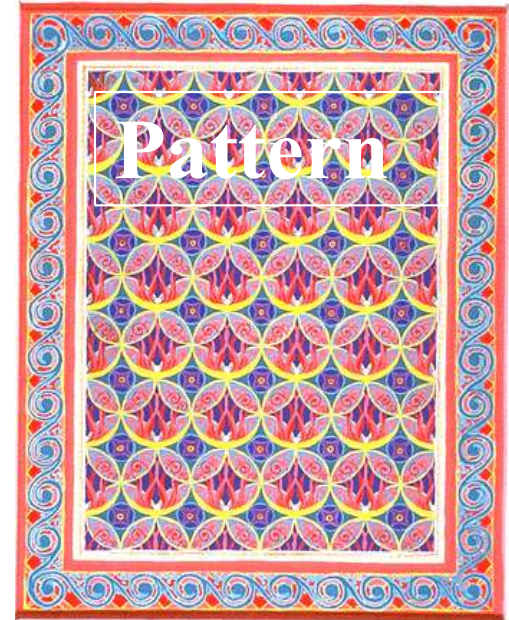
Grammar: Preliminary Thoughts

- Grammar is the skeleton of the language; words are its flesh.
- Lists of words are useless without knowing how to put them together. **Grammar is a language's glue.** Without using proper grammar, you will talk like a caveman or one of Freud's patients.
- Learning grammar is like driving a **car**. Grammar structures are equivalent to putting on the breaks or going forward. Being able to express or understand the nuances of a language comes from being able to use all the grammar rules in combination—driving the car on the road.
- Grammar is the key to a new world, because it embodies the basic building blocks of a culture's way of thinking.



More About Grammar

- Babies are not tape recorders; they learn by hearing and recognizing grammatical patterns.
- A child will say “I singed a song” even though s/he has never ever heard this sentence being said in the house of a native speaker of English.
- Unfortunately, learning languages like a baby is NOT very practical. It requires at least 4 years of complete language immersion.
- Therefore, as adults we must learn grammar in a more organized way.
- First, we should try to listen to tape recordings of a language. (This is the adult equivalent of childhood immersion)
- Then, we should try to take grammatical shortcuts--compare the grammatical structures that our language shares with the language learned.
- Finally, we should spend time trying to understand, to memorize, and to practice more distinct foreign grammatical concepts.



Tape Recordings

Shortcuts

Study and Practice

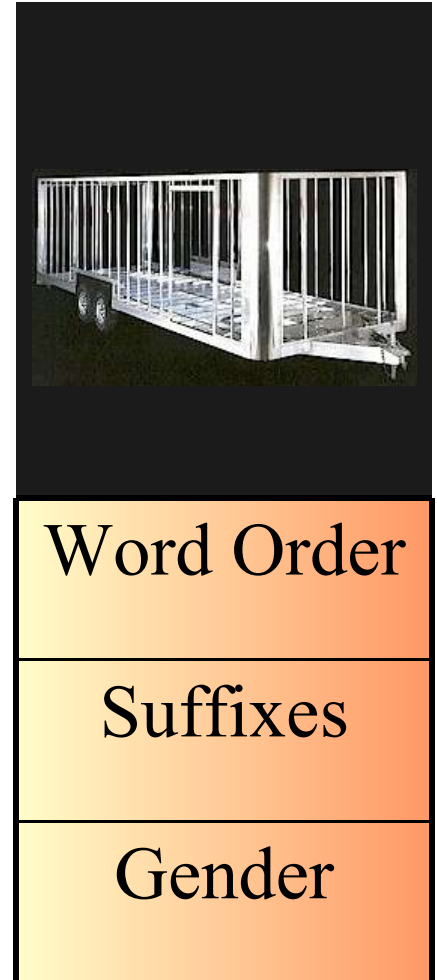
More About Grammar 2

- Languages are not intrinsically logical, nor even purely logical. Not one language is more logically correct than another.
- What seems necessary for some languages is not for others.
- You waste your energy arguing about which language is more natural or right.
- Grammar has nothing to do with correct speech rather correctly conveying meaning--clarifying the relationship between words.
- We have to learn to distinguish some new grammar patterns and learn to stop believing our way of thinking is so important, for grammar clarifies the relationship between each word developed within the context of the new language system being learned.
- Nothing replaces classroom practice and lab drills, as they help you feel comfortable with new grammatical patterns.
- Use of the wrong ending or bad grammar does not just simply confuse others, it can give an unintended meaning.
- **Think of grammar like food.** You have to digest well what you have eaten to add more, else you feel uncomfortable or get sick.



More About Grammar 3

- Here are some **common grammatical concepts** that many languages share:
 - **Word order** in English conveys meaning, however, in other languages word order doesn't necessarily alter meaning rather the suffixes added to verbs and/or nouns do.
 - In some languages, **suffixes** can indicate subject, possession, prepositions, or motion towards or from nouns.
 - In every European language and even in Hebrew and in Arabic, a grammatical feature exists that assigns **gender** to words.
 - Unlike English which only limitedly assigns gender (hen /rooster, cow/bull, woman/man, goose/gander), every single noun in these languages falls into a masculine and feminine category. Only Chinese, Turkish, and Persian escape using gender registers in grammatical syntax.
 - Rules exist in each language that let you guess the gender of the words.



Language Plateaus



- The sense of rapid progress in learning a language is part of the novelty of learning the language; nevertheless, as we continue to learn a language we will confront language learning plateaus—moments of seemingly slower learning.

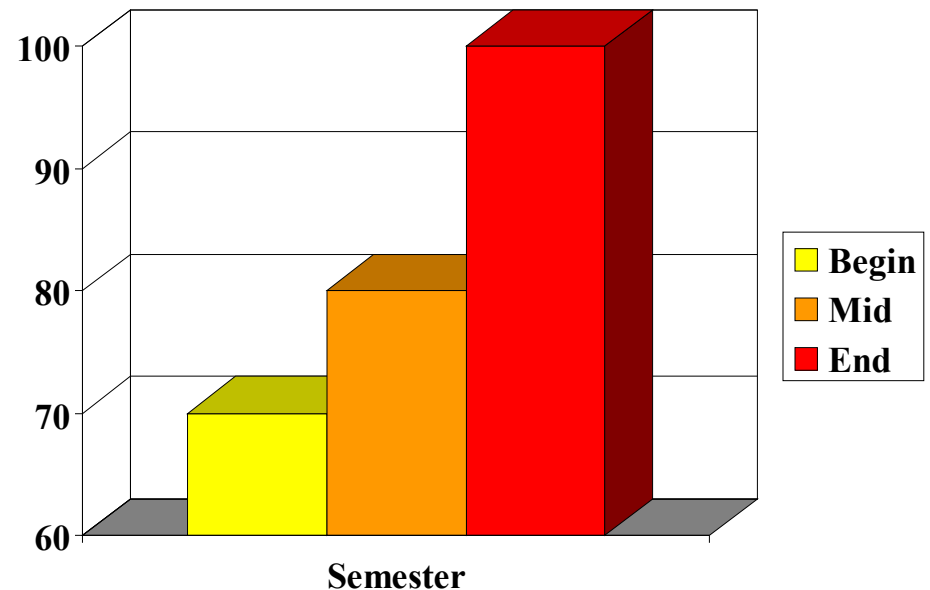


Relieving Plateau Anxiety

- When you feel stalled or as if you are on a plateau, review what you have learned already in order to gain a sense of how far you have come or look at another textbook and see how much you know without having to study that book.
- Learn a number of set expressions (sentences that are “in-style” with native speakers). These expressions help you stall for time and hide awkward pauses in communication. They make crossing the Language Plateau easier.
- **Amplify your learning** (see Amplifying Your Learning)
- Don’t expect to understand too much as you amplify your learning, because all these alternative language sources will include new words and unknown expressions, which sometimes are very hard to understand.
- Nevertheless, every new word you learn independently will come in handy much quicker than you think.
- Time is your friend--plugging away ensures progress.
- After you’ve hit a plateau, you will again feel a rush when you get past it.
- Plateaus are a delayed timing problem--some new concepts just take time to sink in.

Amplifying Your Learning

- Buy a children's book or comic book written in the language you are studying.
- Buy and then browse a dictionary or traveler's book.
- Turn-on a short wave radio or listen to a radio station over the Internet.
- Watch a foreign film (avoid watching dubbed films).
- Buy or download from the Internet a foreign newspaper.
- Invent a conversation with yourself or find a native speaker to talk to.



Practical realities



- A language is like an ocean; it seems to go on forever.
- Thus, it takes years of study to become fluent.
- Nevertheless, what and how you study will surprise you in terms of how far they will let you get from shore.
- Negotiating different situations in a foreign language presents different levels of difficulty. For example, talking one-to-one is much easier than in a group. Or, for example, certain topics may seem easier for you to handle, especially after you've practiced them in class.
- As in any exercise of exploration, guessing and venture-taking are assets to language learning. Always try to guess the meaning of a statement or question, despite not recognizing every word.

Some Last Observations

- Practice is the single most important rule for making progress in a language.
- You will not be able to operate as well outside of the classroom as in it, because local native accents and a different professor's accent are bound to throw you off.
- Don't expect to express yourself like a native speaker; you will never know all the facets of a language like a native speaker. This takes years of living in another country.
- A conversation with a native speaker will almost always seem too fast or will almost always include too many new words, so try steering a conversation towards easier topics for you—this truly helps.
- Beware of the telephone! Be prepared for the worst in a telephone conversation, because you cannot see the mouth of the other person. We lip read much more than we think. Also, in a phone conversation the sound is not as clear as in face-to-face conversation.
- Beware of jokes! Jokes can be sudden death even to intermediate students, because understanding jokes depends on sudden changes in a storyline or plays on words. These aspects of a language are the hardest to follow for new speakers. Nonetheless, jokes are very revealing in terms of cultural values and thinking.
- Use curse words at your peril! If you use curse words in the wrong situation or do not understand the full impact of the word you can set off some very strong negative dynamite.