



ENGLISH | MARC HUCKLE | @ www.intercambioidiomasonline.com

Intercambio Idiomasonline Online

DO YOU NEED TO
PRIORITIZE TO ENHANCE
YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS?

If you have been asking yourself questions like, “How often do you need to practice to become fluent in a language?” or “What is the best way to learn?”, this post is well worth having a look at.

There are many contrasting case studies on the topic and it can be very confusing for someone who wants to learn a foreign language. *We just want to emphasise that this advice is from real language learners who have gathered their experience and would like to help you save time and effort.* There are many language experts such as Olly Richards who insist that immersion and exposure to new language through things like stories is the best way to learn, whereas there are many apps such as Babbel that insist that you need to prioritise language and learn little by little. What we are going to do is explain the advantages of each of these methods and give you some practical advice.

Remember that it is not about working hard, but learning effectively. Just because you spend a lot of time studying, does not mean that you will become fluent.

How much language can you take in?

When you are learning a language, especially at a basic level, it can be very confusing and also feel that you are not making fast progress. In this case it is recommendable to base your study time on prioritising high frequency (what you will use most often) language and repeat the same basic language so that it can be transferred into the long-term memory. You need to be realistic about how many words you can learn each day, do not try to memorise 100 words each day, it is impossible to memorise so much. You should focus on doing little and often, for example, 10 words each day... that is 70 words a week and about 300 words a month... and 3600 words a year. It is recommendable to make sure that you develop an effective way of learning a new word, we recommend the super sentences technique as it is easier to learn a short phrase than an individual word.

Is immersion an effective way to learn?

The contrasting view is that learners need to expose themselves to a lot of language in order to learn effectively. This is evident in reading and listening. It is essential to get used to doing these skills as they are essential to become fluent in a language. The key is to repeat and recycle language to make sure that you learn it long-term. The important thing to do when you try to learn through immersion is to organise your language learning, you should always carry a notebook with you and write down new words and phrases that you find useful. You should always write down the new language with its meaning (avoid translating if you can and relate new words to synonyms in the target language) and write example sentences with the new words. You should always put new language into different contexts, but **YOU MUST MAKE SURE THAT THE EXAMPLES ARE THINGS YOU ARE LIKELY TO USE AND SAY.**

The science behind it...

There is no one way to learn a language that is effective for all people, the method you choose depends on your personality type and the way you like to learn. The key is to stay motivated and enjoy the way you learn, this way, you will learn consistently. The science behind long-term memory, however, is very clear. For information to pass from the short-term memory into the long term memory, you need to repeat. Repetition is a key part of all language learning techniques. This is why it is better to learn with short 15-30 minute sessions and to learn every day. The next thing that is demonstrated scientifically is the need to relate language to different contexts and situations so that you can access the language in your memory bank when you need it. You should think of the memory as a web that needs as many connections as possible in order to work effectively. This is why it is so important to link new words to synonyms and similar phrases and avoid translating as soon as possible.

So, what should I do to improve and learn quickly?

The most important aspect of language learning is to be realistic and not expect to learn it in a week, this is impossible. You need to make steady progress and practice in a consistent way. This is why our START METHOD stresses the importance of repetition and learning every day. You should do a combination of prioritising language by focusing on what you will use most often and also immersion by reading and listening every day. It is essential to try to have fun and be confident with your language use, this is the reason that learning fixed phrases can help you a lot as you can use them without thinking. Through enjoyment you will want to learn more and spend more time using language, so try to relax and have a good time. That and THE SOONER YOU STOP TRANSLATING, THE BETTER.