

Exploring issues of fluency in a foreign language

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CONTEXT

Today's world is vastly different from what it was few decades ago. The world has become one big global village with borders breaching and distances shrinking with quicker travel time.

The countries are opening up to immigration and foreign investment with businesses having multi national operations and cross border trade resulting in flow of goods and services and the need for mutual understanding of cultures and language

Language is an indispensable part of culture. Learning a foreign language is a gateway to understanding the country and its citizens. This article seeks to explore the issues of learning a foreign language and resolve them

FLUENCY

Fluency is defined as being able to speak and write quickly. It is the ability to converse on a variety of topics with a native speaker without much strain awkward pauses and stops. Fluency should be contrasted with literary knowledge of the grammar semantics vocabulary and lexicography of a language. Surely you do not become fluent in a language by walking around with a dictionary

ISSUES IN LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Perception of being difficult:

Young students put off learning a foreign language because they think it is too difficult. The learning should not be for boosting CV but to challenge the intellect understand cultures and reap communicative rewards.

Fear of making mistakes:

The cold hard fear of falling flat on your metaphorical face can literally stop people before they get going. The scariest part is usually thinking about what might happen rather than dealing with what is happening. Practice hard practise often and

learn to laugh at yourself in the process.

Lack of opportunity:

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If you do not have a native speaker or resources to invest in learning there is an issue. However internet offers a huge chance to download apps and take free podcasts or lessons. You can also trade with persons who wants to learn your language by mutually teaching each other.

Rigidity:

Some languages are written left to right; others vertically; others use feminine and masculine endings to describe inanimate objects. You should have the flexibility to accept the language as it is instead of being rigid in your ways.

Lack of time:

It is important to set priorities and accommodate language learning in your busy schedule.

Wiring of cognitive brain:

Men having stronger brain connections between brain centres involved in speaking and reading are better in learning a new language

Aiming for perfection:

The process of learning a language is skill learning (something you do) rather than object learning (something you know). You should start speaking the language with lots of errors and learn from every mistake instead of keeping silent till perfection

Lack of clarity on goals:

Why are we learning the language? is it for pleasure or professional reasons? clarity on goals helps filter what you need and what you don't

Curiosity and immersion:

Children learn fast as they are curious with flexible brains. Immersion and play are key.

Pronunciation is the key and not speed:

Observe the native speaker to catch the pronunciation and repeat the word in your mind numerous times

Focussing on wrong vocabulary:

Each language has a large volume of words. It is important to know only those words that are relevant to your work hobby and interests of life

Mastering a wildly different writing system:

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Languages like Chinese and Japanese have complex writing system though they are not hard to speak. The strategy is to read repeat write and review

Listening comprehension at native speaker speed:

To achieve this consistency and time are important. Download tv and movies in your target language listen to the radio watch the local news and get the gist of what is going on

CONCLUSION:

As with any other skill learning a foreign language is largely a result of high motivation curiosity consistent practice and hard work using technology and enriching vocabulary through immersion with native speakers

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