

How to become a polyglot in 2020



DID YOU KNOW?

There are now real-time speech translation apps. That way you can say a phrase in Dutch and have it repeated in almost any language. How cool is that?

Translation apps are amazing inventions. But actually learning a language is something different still. Because when you learn another language, you learn to understand another culture too. So what is the best way to learn a new language?

EXERCISE 1

Team up with one of your classmates. You will have a conversation with each other using WhatsApp. But you won't speak the same language.

Step 1

First choose a language. Make sure you and your classmate choose different languages (English or Dutch are not an option).

Step 2

Think about what you want to say in English and use Google translate to translate it from English to your chosen language.

Step 3

Send your translated message via WhatsApp to your classmate. First, he/she translates it to his/her chosen language using Google Translate, and then back to English. He/she thinks of a response in English, translates it to his/her chosen language, and sends it back to you and so on.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 2 billion people in the world speak English, but only about 1 in 4 is a native speaker. The rest had to learn later in life, like you ;)

EXERCISE 2

You are going to watch a Ted Talk called 'The Secrets of Learning a New Language'. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_XVt5rdpFY

a. Watch 0.00 to 3.40. Lýdia researches how other polyglots like herself learn languages. What is Lýdia's main discovery?

b. Continue watching until 5.33. The learning methods below all come from the video. Discuss with a classmate if you think these methods would work for you or not. Write down your conclusions.

- start speaking from day one – learn from mistakes
- adding strangers on skype
- imitating the sounds first
- learn the 500 most common words first
- start with the grammar
- cook from recipes in foreign language
- read your favourite book in foreign language
- watch your favourite series in foreign language
- listen to podcasts in foreign language
- practice self-talk (describe photos from your phone to yourself)

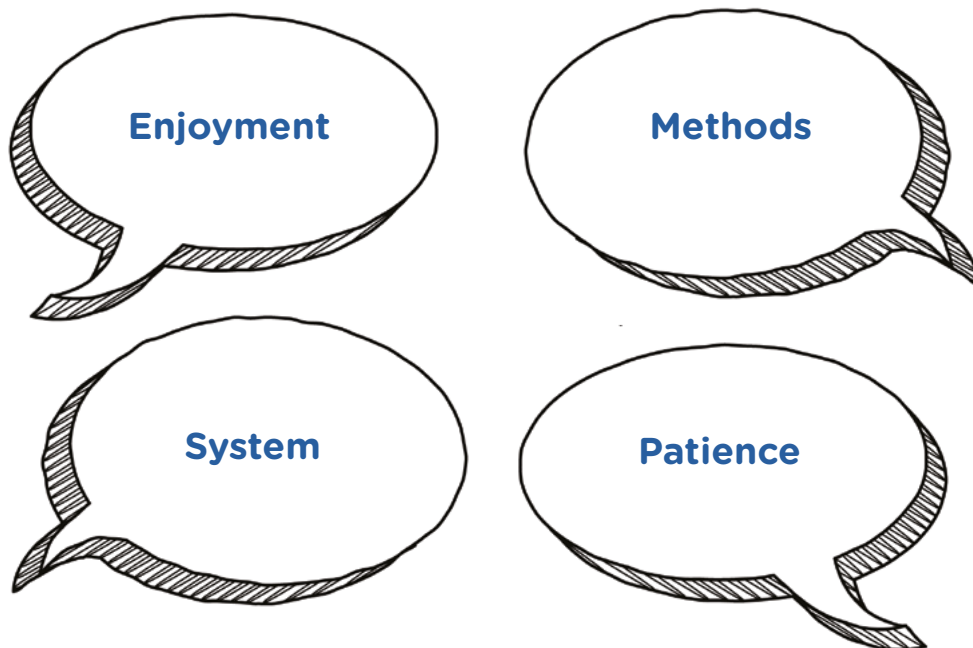
Fits for me

Doesn't fit for me

c. Which of the methods above do you think are most useful if you want to learn a language quickly? Write down two.

EXERCISE 3

You are now going to watch the rest of the video, where Lýdia will talk about the four elements that will make your language learning experience a success.



While watching the video, take notes about what she says.

Afterwards, talk about your notes with a classmate. What is the most important thing to remember about each element? What have you learned?

EXERCISE 4

In the video Lýdia mentions apps for language learning. You are going to research some of these apps yourself to find the best one(s) for you!

- a.** Work in groups of three. Choose one app each – make sure that everyone has a different app. You are each going to research a different app and then discuss the results.

App #1 Memrise

App #2 Duolingo

App #3 HelloTalk

- b.** Find videos that describe the apps. Often these apps will have their own YouTube channels with videos explaining and promoting the app.
- c.** Answer the following questions:

- d.** App name _____

What can you do with it?

What is so special about this app according to the makers?

- e. Find reviews for these apps in the App Store on Google Play. Write down what the pros and cons (voor- en nadelen) are according to users.

Pros:

Cons:

- f. How much does the app cost?

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EXERCISE 5

Discuss the results with your two classmates. Write down which app you prefer in the end and why.

I prefer because

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★ TIP

Speaking to native speakers is one of the best ways to learn a language. You can meet native speakers anywhere online – by talking to people in games or on forums for example. There are also apps for exactly that purpose: they match you with native speakers online to practice speaking or writing. If you ever plan to use an app like that, make sure that you protect your privacy. Don't mention your full name, address or other personal information in any conversations you might have. Be aware of catfishes!