

THE HYPERPOLYGLOT HANDBOOK

**A Gigachad's Guide to
Language Learning**

LANGUAGE SIMP

The Hyperpolyglot Handbook

A Gigachad's Guide to Language Learning

By Language Simp



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For my grandfather, who sadly passed away unexpectedly in May of 2024.

No one wanted this book to come out more than you. Upon hearing the idea for the book, you were enthused and supportive. You even generously gave me money to help fund this book's creation. You were excited to read it, even though you didn't understand my videos and surely wouldn't have understood much of this book.

As you knew, this project turned out to take a lot longer than expected. You asked me every month for updates, and constantly reminded me how excited you were about it. One and a half years later, it is finally out, and I'm sorry that you'll never get to read it. I hope this book will inspire and guide aspiring language learners in your memory.

For my dear friend, who tragically passed away in June of 2024 at the young age of 26.

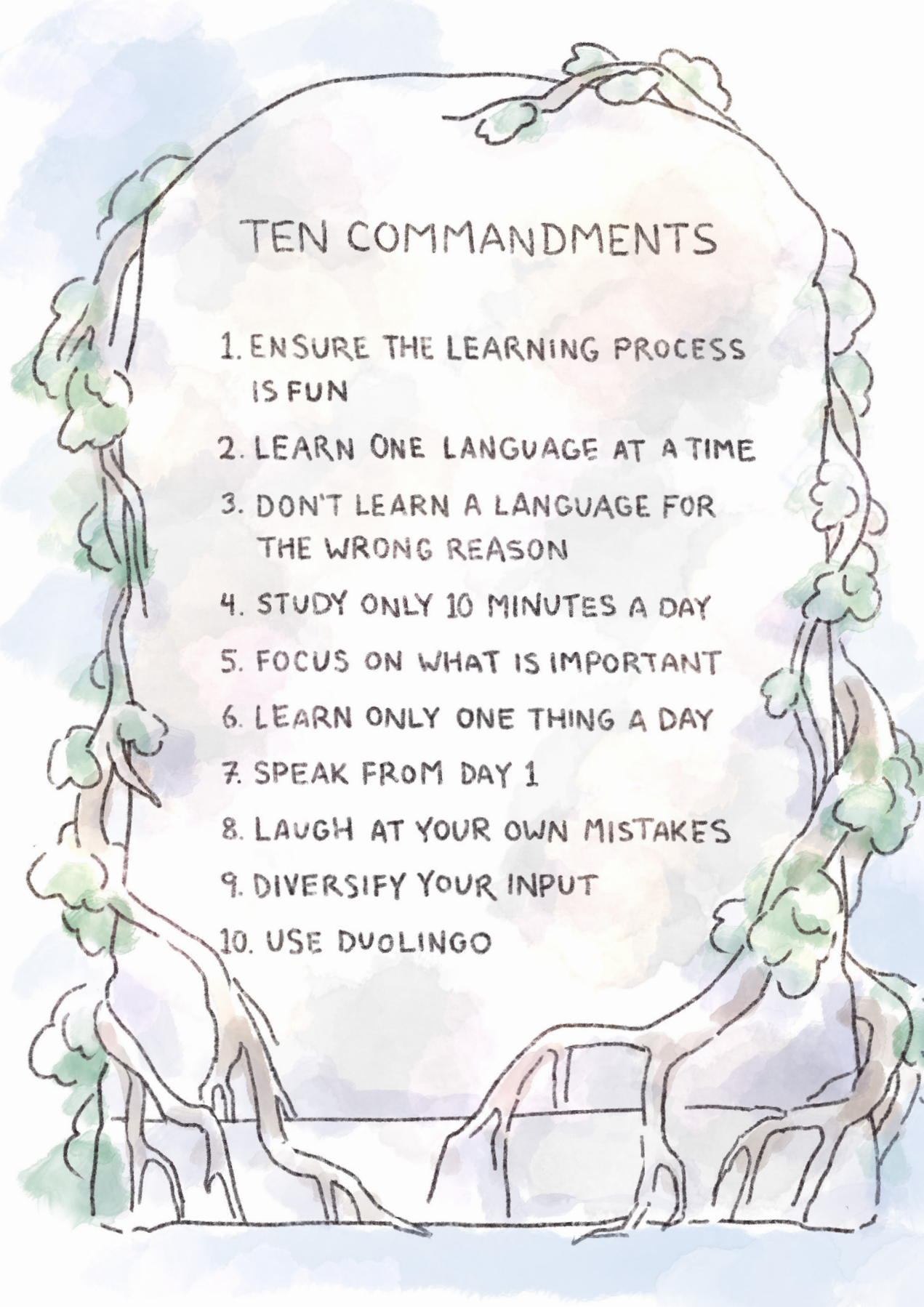
Your involvement in some of my most viral videos on the channel propelled me to where I am today. You were always down to film anything, and you were pretty great at memorizing lines in foreign languages that you had no knowledge of. Your "wa alaykumu s-salam" was legendary, and I will miss always greeting each other in Arabic even though that's the only sentence you knew.

I am forever grateful for your friendship, and I will never forget you.

May you both rest in peace.

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TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. ENSURE THE LEARNING PROCESS IS FUN
2. LEARN ONE LANGUAGE AT A TIME
3. DON'T LEARN A LANGUAGE FOR THE WRONG REASON
4. STUDY ONLY 10 MINUTES A DAY
5. FOCUS ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT
6. LEARN ONLY ONE THING A DAY
7. SPEAK FROM DAY 1
8. LAUGH AT YOUR OWN MISTAKES
9. DIVERSIFY YOUR INPUT
10. USE DUOLINGO

Act 1

The Death of the Monolingual Beta

CHAPTER 1

Welcome to the Language Learning Cult

The Birth of Language Simp

Howdy! Wesh la street! Хелло! Olá! Hola! Hallo! My name is Language Simp, and I am a full time language learner, language comedian, and language YouTuber. At the time of writing this book, I am 26 years old, and I have recently quit my comfortable engineering job to pursue being a hyperpolyglot gigachad alpha male full time. Like most people in the modern day, I was a lost, overweight teenager with no idea what I wanted to do with my life. From the ages of 12 to 18, I attempted to become a professional video-game player, an international touring punk musician, and an online furniture salesman. I was very confused, and I jumped from hobby to hobby and aspiration to aspiration desperately hoping that something would stick. I had small amounts of success in most things that I attempted, but I couldn't find anything that I cared about enough to really dedicate myself to.

That is until one day in November of 2018, when my friend forced me to watch the movie *Inglourious Basterds* with him. Little did I know at the time that this movie would become my favorite movie of all time, give me that one perfect hobby I so desperately searched for, and change my life forever. The movie is set in Nazi-occupied France during World War 2, and it uses languages as a major plot device. Specifically, it uses the characters' knowledge or lack of knowledge of languages to add suspense to captivating and realistic, albeit exaggerated, situations. Without spoiling anything major (because I recommend that every language learner goes and watches it), American, French, German, and Italian are all spoken in the film, and the characters' ability to speak any one of them is often the reason for their survival or death. I was absolutely flabbergasted by these peoples' ability to flawlessly switch from one language to another, and it planted the polyglot seed within me.

As a proud American, I had never even considered that it would be possible for someone to learn multiple languages. Of course I had heard of people being raised

bilingual or learning a bit of Spanish since I live in a country with a lot of Spanish speakers, but it never occurred to me that someone could learn multiple world languages to a high level with no prior connection to where they are spoken. I specifically had an overwhelming fondness for the French spoken in *Inglourious Basterds*, and I knew that I had to learn to speak it. Therefore, I decided to give it a go. Shortly after beginning French on January 1, 2019, I discovered polyglot content creators online, my favorite being the grandpa hyperpolyglot gigachad himself, Steve Kaufmann. From watching Steve Kaufmann and other greats, I instantly got hooked like a fish on the idea of learning multiple languages. I remember falling asleep while fantasizing about which languages I would learn after French. For the longest time I thought I'd learn Korean after French, but that has yet to happen. After French, I became interested in other languages, and flashing forward to 2025, I now have functional ability of varying levels in French, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Danish, Arabic, German, Hindi/Urdu, Toki Pona, and most recently Vietnamese.

Throughout my five years of studying languages, I have had many ups and downs, many successes, and many failures. I have learned from all of my experiences, and I have pinpointed the surefire method that allows me to learn any language from zero to fluency in a reasonably short amount of time. I used to be scared of languages and see them as insurmountable Mount Everests that I would never be able to conquer. Now I have full confidence that I could easily learn any language on the planet, or any alien language (which I hope will one day arrive on Earth as DLC). Now I know that no matter what language I am tasked with learning, I am capable of getting it to a conversational level within months, and to an advanced level in a year (or somewhat more depending on the language). Now it is time that I share all of my wisdom with you, so that you can jump right into your target language and find great success. This book is the culmination of all of my language learning experience, as well as the experience of other successful polyglots that I surround myself with.

Meet Gigachad Chad and Beta Bob



Before we move forward, allow me to introduce you to my two good friends that you will find often in this book.

This is Gigachad Chad. He is a hyperpolyglot gigachad alpha male who is very attractive to every woman... and man on the planet. He speaks 10 languages fluently, and he is currently learning Irish. He is the perfect role model for a language learner, and he follows all of the advice that I give in this book. You want to be like Gigachad Chad.

This is Beta Bob. He is a monolingual beta, even though he's been trying to study languages for 30 years. He is currently learning Esperanto. Neither women nor men will go anywhere near him, as his stench reeks of monolingualism. He ignores all of the advice that I give in this book, even though I've explained it all to him before. You do not want to be like Beta Bob.



Why Learn a Language?

Ensure the learning process is fun

"Language learning is a relaxing and enjoyable hobby"

- Commandment no. 1

Language learning is one of the most fun and rewarding things that a human being can do. For each and every language on the planet, there are a billion amazing reasons to learn it, and nothing makes me happier than seeing new language learners freak out

over how excited they are to begin the process. Chances are that you already are well aware of the many fantastic reasons to learn a language, but in case you need a refresher, here is a list of my top reasons:

1. To travel like a local and experience authentic culture
2. To pretend like you are a foreigner in your own country
3. To eavesdrop on people and listen to them talking about you in public
4. To shock native speakers (this is memed a lot by me but if we forget the YouTube polyglot jokes, you can truly make an immigrant's year by speaking even a little of their language)
5. To watch or consume authentic media from other countries
6. To move to another country and not be treated like a foreigner
7. To find a foreign significant other if you're into that type of thing
8. To literally JUST HAVE FUN studying it (underrated)

New language learners typically get very excited about the first 7 items on this list in addition to the many other personal reasons that they may have to learn a language. If you listen to a new learner discussing their desire to speak many languages, you'll notice that there is usually no shortage of passion. When I started the hobby, my friend and I would have five hour long phone calls simply fantasizing about which languages we would learn and in what order we would learn them. Now, four years later, I speak to many new learners online who tell me that I inspired them to become a polyglot, and they all sound incredibly passionate. Everyone in this community has a burning desire to study languages. However, I very often see even the most motivated language learners fail. That is because people have internalized the following three lies:

- Language learning is difficult
- Language learning is not fun
- Language learning is expensive

Unfortunately, the vast majority of people quit due to one or more of these lies. But none of them are even remotely true. Language learning IS easy, language learning IS

fun, and language learning *can absolutely* be free. Unfortunately, it is very difficult for beginners to see this, and even intermediate and advanced learners can often lose sight of how enjoyable and relaxing the process is. This greatly frustrates me, as I have watched hundreds of people quit due to these misconceptions.

It appears to me that the majority of internet polyglots or language learning gurus have a stick up their butt. That's to say that they treat language learning like it's this overly academic, difficult activity that requires intense focus and is only attainable by a select few. The reason there are so few polyglots in the world is not because it is hard to learn many languages, it is because people assume it is impossible to do so. They are scared and think that studying has to be stressful or boring, and so they make it stressful or boring. Then they quit and abandon the hobby altogether. All throughout my journey, people have been consistently *shocked* at how quickly I learn and how much fun I have doing something people typically assume is boring and academic. Now it is **your** turn to learn languages while enjoying the process.

This is precisely why I decided to write this book, to set the record straight and put you on the right path. If you follow the methods I will outline here, you WILL be able to learn a language easily while having a fun time. If you want, you could even go on to learn multiple languages while having the time of your life. How do I know this with such certainty? I know, because I have been informally coaching friends and strangers on the internet in language learning communities for years, and every single person who listened to me and put my methods into practice has found the beauty and fun of language learning, followed by great success. For example, I have a Swedish friend I met on Discord three years ago who was learning French, and at the time he was only a beginner and was incredibly discouraged. After a two-hour rant from me about how to actually study correctly, he began to make excellent progress. Now he speaks fluent French, and he credits his success to my methods. That is one of the hundreds of examples that I could give you, and I am not telling you this to brag or anything like that. If you're reading this, I don't need to convince you to buy the book, but I still do need to convince you to believe in yourself. I am simply trying to build your confidence in the method. The last thing I want is for you to learn my method and then assume it wouldn't work for you for some reason. Anyone can learn a language, but you have to believe that you are capable. I don't mean that in a spiritual sense where you have to

manifest fluency or some pie in the sky Batman thing like that. I mean it in a practical sense. Absolute morons have learned languages all around the world for ages, so as an intelligent Language Simp enjoyer, you shouldn't have any problem.

By the end of this book, my goal is to help you completely understand how to learn a language and have the confidence to do so in an enjoyable way. There will be no room for excuses or made-up reasons why you are the exception. I will set you up for the journey that you need to take, from even before you begin, all the way up to fluency. I will lay out every step in the most concrete manner possible in order to leave little up to the imagination. You will know exactly what to do, and most importantly, it will be a blast. Of course, people are different. If you are new to the hobby or you are frustrated with a lack of progress, I encourage you to follow this guide strictly. Despite this, I could reasonably see how an experienced language learner could choose to deviate from my method. I look forward to hearing about your stress-free, exciting, and successful language learning journey.



Gigachad Chad

- Trusts that Language Simp's method will work for him
- Firmly believes that anyone can learn a language, including him

Beta Bob

- Does not trust Language Simp's wisdom
- Believes that he can't learn a language. Thinks he is the exception



CHAPTER 2

Before You Start Your Quest

Choosing a Language

One of the hardest parts of this hobby is picking which language to learn in the first place. I rarely see internet polyglots or language gurus discussing this, but I can promise you that this step can be *extremely challenging*. If you're lucky, you may only have one language that you've been itching to learn. However if you're like many of us who've gotten into the hobby with the dreams of one day becoming a hyperpolyglot, chances are that you have tons of languages that you fantasize about learning. The problem most likely is not that you struggle to find a language that interests you enough to study. It's most likely that you have too many languages that interest you, which prevents you from properly committing to one for long enough to see results. I personally am like a kid in a candy store when I think about all the languages of the world. How could I possibly choose one when I feel like I want to speak all of them?

Only learn one language at a time

"There just isn't enough time in a day to juggle multiple languages"

- Commandment no. 2

One common mistake that I see new learners make is trying to learn multiple languages at once, from zero, and at the same time. I've seen other polyglots do this to varying degrees of success, but I **strongly** urge you to learn one language at a time and stick to it until you reach a high level. This is because I do not believe that language learning ends the moment you stop actively studying. I see language learning as a lifestyle, and it is something that I do passively all day. I will expand on that idea of passive learning in later chapters. Learning two languages at a time from zero is ALWAYS going to slow down your progress in both of them. I think that even other polyglots who study multiple languages at the same time would agree with me on that. I have made the mistake of trying to start two languages at the same time before, and it has always led to

suboptimal results.

Eventually, as you progress in your polyglot journey, you could potentially learn two at the same time. However, this is only a good idea once you are already at an advanced level in one of the languages. Learning at an advanced level looks different from learning at a beginner level, so the efforts will not conflict as much. At an advanced level, a language is already such an ingrained part of who you are as a person that starting another language will not affect you. In contrast, at the beginner level, complete focus and attention on that one language to the exclusion of others is imperative. If you are just starting out, I implore you to only choose one language. Doing so is the ultimate cheat code that will already set you apart from the majority of aspiring polyglots. So many failures that I have observed stem from beginners trying to linguistically conquer the entire world in all directions, all at once.

So if there isn't one language motivating you intensely, how should you choose which to study? Chances are, you've got a handful in mind that you know you want to learn, so I'll operate on the assumption that you already know which ones generally interest you. If literally nothing comes to mind, I recommend that you go on YouTube and watch travel videos all around the world and see what kind of cultures and places inspire you. You could also search up the sounds of various languages and see what captivates you. You would be surprised what may sound gorgeous to you. For example, Kazakh sounds like a diesel engine starting up, but I and many others find that charming.

I find that emotion rather than logic will best guide you to the language that you can commit to in order to reach true fluency. It's important to have a fantasy attached to the languages you want to learn, an ultimate goal, a situation you can realistically see yourself in once you become competent. Here are a few of my own examples from when I began learning some of my languages:

1. I personally think that French sounds very high class and sophisticated, so I imagined myself at nice fancy dinners in Paris speaking this elegant language to business partners. I also dreamed of trolling French people by telling them how much better the USA is compared to France.
2. I love how accents in Spanish are so diverse and how there are so many Spanish

speakers in my country, so I fantasized about the frequent interactions I could have with the mainly Mexican Spanish speakers in the USA while I speak with a European accent from Spain. I always thought that it would be awesome if I could pass as British in my own language around Americans, so speaking Spanish from Spain finally gave me an opportunity to seem foreign in a unique way.

3. For Russian, I was inspired by YouTubers who travel around Eastern Europe, especially those who go to the dangerous parts. I imagined myself traveling all of Russia, meeting locals, and partying. The inspiration can be shallow, but as long as it genuinely motivates you and excites you for the future, you are on the right path.
4. A large part of my motivation to study Arabic is to be a white guy who fluently speaks Arabic with no accent. I also have just always been generally fascinated by Saudi Arabia. Of course, over time I fell in love with so much more about the Arab world, but I still fantasize about shocking locals in Egypt.

This emotion-based approach works well and I encourage you to not overlook how fundamental it can be to your success. You must learn what you are passionate about. If you are passionate about a popular language spoken in dozens of countries, that's great. But even if you are interested in a smaller or lesser studied language like Catalan, Uzbek, Basque Icelandic Pidgin, Ancient Albanian Sign Language, or Irish, I strongly encourage you to learn that. Do not let anyone tell you that a language is useless, or that there is a better, more useful one for you to learn. Learning a language just because it is "useful" is the absolute worst idea if you want this to be a fun and rewarding hobby.

Don't learn a language for the wrong reason

"You can't force yourself to like a language enough to learn it"

- Commandment no. 3

I unfortunately have seen many learners ignore their passion and attempt to choose a language using a logic-based approach. When I say logic-based approach, I am referring to when people choose a specific language for a concrete and often enticing reason that they are NOT passionate about. Someone using the logical approach may for example

learn French because they think it may help them in business. They may learn Chinese just because it is the most spoken language that is set to grow even more. They may learn Spanish only because they live in the United States so it feels like the only good choice as an American. These reasons seem suitable, but I promise that unless you are a robot, they are not sufficient to keep your motivation consistently high enough to go all the way to fluency. I have fallen into this trap many times, and I can give concrete examples. I once started learning Chinese **only** because I thought that it would be the most impressive language to master. I didn't have any burning passion for anything Chinese-related, so I failed within a few weeks. I started learning Swahili because I had coworkers who spoke it, but I couldn't stay interested. I started learning Indonesian because I heard that it is the easiest Asian language. Can you guess what happened? After a few weeks without any emotional connection with the language or the country of Indonesia, I abandoned it!

With that being said, I am fully aware that some people may have no choice as to which language they must study. Perhaps you've been displaced by circumstances beyond your control, and you must now learn to speak the language of another country. If this is the case for you, you can still apply the principles that I have discussed. Every country and language is full of rich culture, interesting history, and fascinating people. I encourage you to actively seek out something that inspires you and motivates you to learn the language. This may be difficult at first, but the ultimate goal is to get to a point where you feel like you aren't being forced to learn it. The pressure of that perceived obligation is going to dramatically slow down your progress, so if you can instead come to see this as an awesome opportunity to have fun, you will achieve incredible success.

Emotion-Based Approach - Gigachad Chad



Learning the language because:

- Thinking about speaking it genuinely excites him
- He absolutely adores how it sounds
- The country or countries where it is spoken really intrigue him
- The achievement of conquering it will make him feel complete

Leads to:

- Tangible, meaningful, and long-lasting motivation
- A fun learning experience
- Fluency

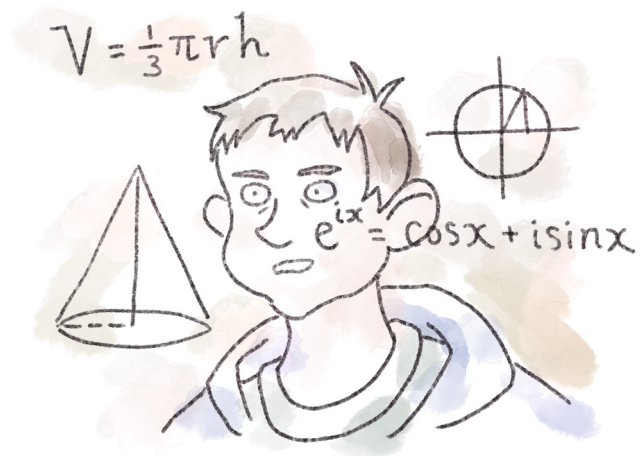
Logic-Based Approach - Beta Bob

Learning a language because:

- It will get him a job
- It is spoken in his country
- It is very popular

Leads to:

- Superficial motivation
- A miserable learning experience



Choosing an Accent or Dialect to Study

This section won't apply to everyone, as it really depends on the specifics of your target

language. After choosing your language, another important thing to address is how to choose which accent/dialect of the language you should concentrate on. For the purpose of this discussion, I'll consider accents and dialects to be roughly the same thing. Although in general I would say that "accent" refers to a language variant's unique pronunciation, whereas "dialect" is a term referring to not only its pronunciation but also the unique words used in it, the slang, the unique grammatical features, etc. The vast majority of languages that I can think of are either spoken in multiple countries or have regional dialects within one country. A dramatic example of a language with differing dialects is Spanish. The biggest divide is between Spanish from Spain and Spanish from Latin America. Although even within Spain or across Latin America, there is a tremendous amount of regional dialectal variation.

In general, with the exception of some languages like Arabic, the dialects of a language are typically *mutually intelligible* from one country or one region to another where it is spoken. Therefore, you can choose to concentrate on one without sacrificing

Mutually Intelligible

A term used to describe languages or dialects that are very similar and therefore understandable by speakers of the different languages or dialects being referred to.

comprehension of another. Of course, if you learn Spanish from Spain, you may not understand Argentinian slang. However, who really wants to understand Argentinian slang? I am joking, but your lack of knowledge of the country's Spanish will make for a funny conversation in the future when you meet an Argentinian. However, if you are learning Arabic for example, the dialects are often more like completely different languages, so I have separate advice for this that will be discussed in the section on Arabic.

So there are two ways I see that you could approach this:

1. Focus on one accent in particular

If your desire is to sound like you're from a certain country, or if your motivation to learn the language centers around one country, I recommend focusing on learning one accent in particular. Similarly to when choosing which language to learn, I recommend

following your heart with this as well. If you love how a rarer, less common accent sounds, I encourage you to learn it. A great example of this is the divide between French from France and French from Quebec. Even though there is much more content online in French from France, if you like the Quebecois variant, you should go for that.

While using my language learning method, you will consume a lot of media online in your target language. If you're learning one accent in particular, you should only consume media in that accent at the start. You should also try to only practice speaking with people who use that accent. I find that the people you speak with do not influence you nearly as much as the media you consume, although limiting both to your target accent is the best idea. As you reach higher levels, you can begin to listen to accents other than your target one, but it is important to restrict yourself at the beginning if you have one in mind. This will greatly improve your chances of sounding like a native in your target language. If you don't select a specific accent and restrict yourself to consuming media in it, you may risk sounding like a mutt who has a strange accent. This will be an immediate red flag exposing you as a non-native imposter (sus).

The biggest downside to concentrating on an accent is that, depending on the prevalence of the accent you want to learn, you may struggle to find content in it. For example, there is no shortage of media online from Mexico and Spain, but you may struggle to find a ton from Guatemala. That is sad, as Guatemala is the greatest country on Earth (besides America). Although as long as there are a few hundreds of thousands of people who use the accent, there should be enough content to use my method (except for if you want to learn North Korean Korean).

2. Learn the language in general not worrying about which accent you focus on

You could alternatively choose to not focus on a particular accent. This will allow you to consume any content you want in that language from the beginning, and it will allow you to be less selective when choosing speaking partners. This will most likely hurt you if you ever decide to try to sound like a native, as you'll likely have formed habits from a variety of accents that will prevent you from convincing a native that you're from a certain country. This is, however, truly the stress-free approach. Despite this, I personally believe it is less fun, as trying to sound like a native is a huge part of the

enjoyment of learning a language for me.

Since I concentrated on the general accent from Spain for Spanish, I only consumed content in that accent for a long time before broadening my horizons. I did find it a bit limiting, as there are so many more speakers in Latin America. However, when I began to learn Portuguese, I fell in love with the Brazilian accent. The vast majority of Portuguese speakers are from Brazil, so I rarely had to filter out content, as other accents were super rare.

Regardless of which accent you choose, or if you decide not to choose one, the learning process will look the same. Do not stress out about it and let it hold you back from starting if you are struggling to choose one, as you'll most likely discover what you like soon enough through the process of studying.

My General Study Philosophy

At this phase you should have pinpointed which language and dialect you will be learning. How exciting! You won't be a monolingual beta anymore! I'm sure that you made an excellent choice, since there are nothing but excellent choices when it comes to languages, unless you are learning Japanese solely to watch anime. Before I discuss the concrete methods themselves, I'd like to outline the general study schedule that I recommend.

First of all, there are two parts to my language learning method: active learning and passive learning. When most people think of language learning, they are usually only thinking of active learning. Active learning is where you sit down and very deliberately study the language, while passive learning is everything else you do in a day while focusing on other things. Both of these aspects will be covered in great detail throughout the rest of the book, but it is important to first outline exactly what active learning will look like.

You should be actively studying your target language every single day. Consistency is key in this hobby, as you need constant contact with the language in order to quickly progress in it. Studying every single day is **far more** important than studying a lot in a single day. My pursuit of consistency and my perseverance are truly what have set me apart from other language learners across the years. However, I know that life can get in

the way. There are a million reasons why you may miss studying some days. You could be very pregnant, busy at work, or going scuba diving all day, for example. So of course it is perfectly permissible to take a day off here or there when life becomes a serious roadblock. But with my unique way of remaining consistent, you'll very rarely need to take days off.

Study only 10 minutes a day

"Only study more than 10 minutes if you're still enjoying the process"

- Commandment no. 4

I study languages every single day of my life with few exceptions, but I do not specify how much time I study in a day. This is because the amount of time I dedicate to my target language in a day greatly fluctuates. *Commandment no. 4* is purposely provocative. Of course you can, and most likely will, study for more than 10 minutes a day. However, some people try to force themselves to study each day for an arbitrarily long amount of time. I firmly believe that with only 10 minutes a day over many months, immense progress can be made. Some days I study for only 10 minutes, while other days I study for 5 hours or even more. My rule is that I study every day up to the point that I get bored, frustrated, or tired, and never more. I find that on average I end up actively studying for about 30 minutes to 1 hour a day, a lot less than you may expect from someone whose life revolves around languages. If I continue pushing myself after the process has become boring, I will quickly begin hating the language and the hobby as a whole, as I will feel like I am back in school again being forced to learn. I'll forget my passion and desire to speak the language, and I'll lose sight of my emotional fantasy that is tied to reaching fluency.

My relaxed learning schedule is what allows me to keep language learning fun and lighthearted while staying consistent and seeing amazing results. Stressing out about spending a certain amount of time studying everyday is only going to lead to burnout and leave a sour taste in your mouth. It is so much easier to get yourself to sit down and learn when you don't have a specified period that you force yourself to study for. Remember, this is a fun hobby! You should be learning the language for your enjoyment, not to meet a deadline.

I recommend choosing one time of day that nicely fits in your schedule to actively study. For me, this is right when I wake up. When I used to work as an engineer, I would wake up early and study before work. I've found that having my caffeine in the morning while studying after waking up puts me in an excellent position to remain very engaged. The time of day does not matter, but I advise keeping it around the same time every day. Some obvious options are to study in the morning, on a lunch break, after school/work, or at night. This will help you significantly with remaining consistent and it will integrate active language learning into your daily routine. Then, when you sit down at that time, you should study only for as long as you continue to enjoy it.

In addition to active learning, I also employ a technique I call passive learning. This is separate from your deliberate sit-down daily study sessions, and it can be done all day long. As such, there should be no worry as to how you will fit passive learning into your schedule. Generally speaking, passive learning consists of me trying to recall words or phrases that I've learned, as well as speaking to myself out loud, at random points in the day. Moving forward I will outline what both active and passive learning should look like on your journey to fluency.

DISCLAIMER

Throughout this book, I will lay out certain ways to learn a language that I believe are most effective at different steps of the process. These have all been tested by me, as well as the circle of polyglot gigachads that I surround myself with. I have no doubt that following my method will get you to fluency.

However, a language learner is at their best when they are HAVING FUN. This means you must chase fun more than anything else. If I tell you not to study in a certain way at a certain step of the journey, there is a really good reason for it. But if you LOVE doing it at that stage, you absolutely should. If you like slamming a dictionary for your target language on your head until you see stars, who am I to judge you? If you are having fun with the language, you are learning it. Period. And, if you try a method and dislike it, that is also fine. You should feel free to adapt it and make it your own.

The Two Phases of Language Learning

Progress in language learning is very fluid and hard to define. Some people tend to describe levels of competence using terms such as beginner, intermediate, and advanced, while others opt for a more technical metric, referring to levels such as A1, A2, B1, all the way to C2. I believe that both of these systems are incredibly flawed and lead to counterproductive stress, anxiety, and self-judgment. People focus way too much on defining their level and ensuring that they are then using the perfect learning method at their given level. These people often concentrate on their label with regard to their competence in the language instead of actually learning the language.

I thus offer you a simpler, less stressful way of looking at language learning progression. The way that I see it, there are two phases that someone will enter into over the course of their journey with a language. Keep in mind, however, that these phases can blend together, leaving the exact boundary unclear. The learning methods remain similar in both phases, but the exact details of the approach and your attitude towards the language change. For simplicity's sake, and to avoid falling into the same trap that the more complicated categorization systems fall into, I will call these two phases Phase 1 and Phase 2. If I had to compare these two phases to commonly used words, I would describe Phase 1 as the beginner level, and I would describe Phase 2 as encompassing both the intermediate and advanced levels.

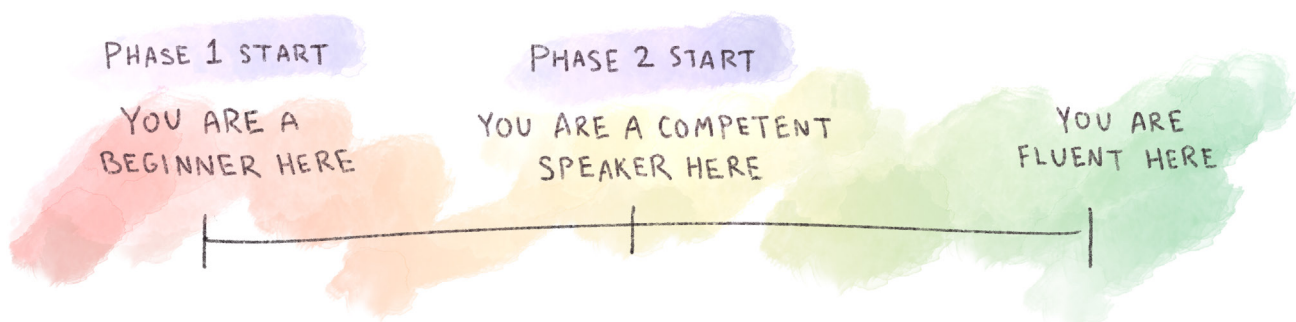
Phase 1 is the introductory phase that kicks off the moment you decide which language you're going to learn as well as which accent or dialect you will focus on. It is the period of time that lasts from the very beginning of your journey up until the point where you become a competent user of the language. By competent user of the language, I mean that you are able to understand a large amount of the language, as well as speak it, while still making mistakes. At this inflection point, you are neither perfect nor fluent in the language, but you are able to use it.

Phase 2 is what follows, and it starts from the point where you become a competent user and lasts all the way to the point where you become a truly fluent speaker of the

language. I will discuss both of these phases in great detail in the following two acts, but I want to first give an example to hopefully illustrate for you the distinction between these two phases right now.

When I was learning French in Phase 1, I often felt completely lost. At the very beginning, I couldn't understand a word of what anyone was saying, and I couldn't get very much of anything useful to come out of my mouth. I was unable to use the language in any meaningful way. But little by little, I started to understand more and more French. Phase 1 was long, and it consisted of me exerting a lot of deliberate effort to try and make sense of the language. It was a period of discovery where everything was new and confusing to me. I uncovered new words, new meanings, and I slowly became capable of understanding bits and pieces of the language. Phase 1 continued on for many months, until I reached a point where I realized that I was able to use French. I was far from perfect, but I was able to understand enough to get by and I could get the gist of some videos. I was also able to have conversations with people, albeit while making frequent mistakes. Crucially, however, I no longer felt completely lost. It is at this point of realization that Phase 2 began.

When I was learning French in Phase 2, I felt very comfortable. I was more familiar with the language, so I didn't feel as overwhelmed as I did during Phase 1. I was already capable of understanding people and getting my overall point across in French. Yes, there was still a ton that I didn't know, but I was easily able to address those gaps in knowledge because I had already developed a strong foundation in the language. The learning process became smoother and more automatic in this phase. Little by little, I ironed out my mistakes, filled my gaps in vocabulary, and continued to practice until I reached fluency.



Act 2

The First Phase

Congratulations on making it to the beginning of Phase 1. Surprisingly, many aspiring language learners quit before the beginning of this phase and instead fantasize for years about which languages they will learn.

Phase 1 is the true beginning of your language learning journey. At the start of this phase, you presumably have little to no knowledge of the language, and your objective is to change that. Your goal here is to take something that previously made no sense to you and turn it into something that you can somewhat understand and use. It will require a lot of deliberate effort, and I estimate that it should take anywhere between 3–15 months depending on your target language. If you speak German and you are learning Dutch, it could be closer to 3 months. If you speak American and you're learning Arabic, I would bet that it would be closer to 15 months.

I like to say that I am “booting up the language” during Phase 1. If I were to start learning Bengali, I would proudly state that “I am booting up Bengali”. When you “boot up” a program on your computer, you go from a state of it being completely inactive to a state where it is now active and ready to use. I currently know nothing in Bengali, so my goal would be to uncover the language up until the point where it's no longer a complete mystery to me. My objective would be to boot up the Bengali language system in my brain. After a lot of time and deliberate effort, Bengali would then be activated in my brain and ready for me to use, thus ending Phase 1.

Another strange way that I like to discuss my learning in Phase 1 is to say that I am “pregnant with the language”. If I began learning Bengali, I would publicly say that “I am pregnant with Bengali”. Booting-up a language in Phase 1 feels a lot like being pregnant with a language baby. You have to care for the knowledge inside of you and help it grow until it reaches a point of maturity where it can be autonomous.

An additional way to illustrate this is by thinking of an airplane. There is always a long, slow, and steady climb to cruising altitude when a plane takes off. It takes a lot of effort, and the plane has to fight gravity and the weight of hundreds of fat American tourists to reach its desired altitude. But once the plane reaches that point, the journey is smooth and easy — the plane is on autopilot. Think of this climb as it relates to Phase 1 of language learning. You must overcome all of the challenges and mysteries of the language in this phase in order to reach the point where you can comfortably use it.

Regardless of how you choose to see Phase 1, remember that *this* is the hard part

of the journey. This is the part where many people quit, but I will provide you with the tools and methods needed to stick with it and boot up your target language effectively. The chapters that follow in this act will outline precisely how to do this.

CHAPTER 3

Getting Started

To properly begin booting up your target language, there are a few necessary steps that you first must take. The steps outlined in this chapter will provide you with the framework that you will need to begin making sense of the language you are learning.

Incomprehensible Input

The first thing that you need to do in Phase 1 is warm yourself up to the new language. You cannot get good at something if you don't even know what that something is. If one day you decided that you wanted to learn how to play a sport, it would obviously be a good idea to watch some matches of that sport. That way you would know what the sport looks like and what exactly it is that you're aiming for. It would be a huge disadvantage to have never seen the sport played before, as you would not understand what it even is that you are trying to emulate. An even better example is learning how to drive a car. By the time you reach the legal age to learn how to drive, you have seen many cars and you have watched people drive them countless times. You know what you're aiming for. You know how a car should move, and you've seen the behaviors drivers exhibit. You've watched people turn the steering wheel, check their mirrors, switch lanes, and park. If you tried to teach an alien how to drive who didn't know what a car was, it wouldn't know what it was even trying to do.

You are the alien, and your target language is the car. You can't learn a language if you don't even know what the language sounds like. This may sound trivial, but when someone sits down to begin learning a new language, they typically dive head first into it with a very narrow perspective. They may begin using an app that teaches them vocab. They may create a flash card deck to memorize words. They may read explanations of grammar on the internet. Or, they may begin asking native speakers how to say certain things. These methods are not nearly as effective without first having accumulated sufficient experience listening to people speaking the language. All of these

starting techniques skip the fundamental step of getting accustomed to the sounds of the language. The first thing I recommend you do is to spend a short amount of time attentively listening to the language, even though you won't understand it, prior to studying it. This will keep your starting motivation high, and you will be able to clearly envision the goal of successfully booting up the language to the point where you can use it yourself. I call this commonly skipped step "Incomprehensible Input", which I define as listening to the language as a beginner without understanding a single word.

You should go on YouTube, Spotify, or whatever you use, and simply listen to native speakers talking about any subject. Do not worry about understanding anything, as that is not the goal. The idea is simply to get used to how the language sounds in order for you to understand what it is that you are about to learn. You'll begin to subconsciously notice the rhythm, speed, and intonation of the language which will begin preparing you for studying it. This is a very short part of the process, but it is nonetheless a very important one. You should only spend a few days on this before you move on to the next step. I would recommend somewhere around two hours in total. Just sit and enjoy the language while wrapping your head around the fact that you too will soon speak it. I remember doing this many years ago specifically by listening to the French presidential debates. I had no idea what they were saying, but it helped me envision my end goal. After about two hours of incomprehensible input, you'll be in a much better position to begin learning words, as then you won't be biting off more than you can chew. You will have primed your brain to now begin making sense of things, which will set you on a good trajectory throughout Phase 1.

How to Learn a New Alphabet

The first concrete thing that you must learn in Phase 1 is the alphabet of your new language. Although, the way that you should approach this varies greatly depending on the language you are learning. Three possible circumstances exist:

1. *The language uses the same writing system as a language you already know (or a very similar one)*

An example of this circumstance would be if you are a native speaker of French or Polish and you want to learn Swedish. The languages in this case share the Latin (American) alphabet with a few, yet sometimes drastic, differences. Another example would be if you are a Ukrainian speaker learning Bulgarian. Similar to the previous example, while the base Cyrillic alphabet is the same, there are some big differences.

If this case applies to you, I recommend barely spending any time learning the alphabet. The writing system is already so close to something that you are very familiar with that it would be a waste of time to focus on mastering those differences right away. I have watched tons of monolingual American betas waste weeks focusing on all of the different accent markers in French or on the various letters with the cute little dots on top of them in German and, by my observation, it never benefits them in the long run. The reason that it doesn't benefit them is that direct, forced memorization of the letters and their sounds is never as good as slowly becoming used to them, in context and over time. In this situation, you already have enough context to move forward without being an expert on the pronunciation, since you're already familiar with the base writing system. I've met people learning the same language as me for the same amount of time who could flawlessly explain the language's phonetic system like a nerd, but they couldn't speak at all. I, on the other hand, knew little about the *phonology*, but I was having meaningful conversations after the same amount of time. I would much rather be shocking natives after a few weeks with a thick accent than be that guy who is only able to explain the difference between similar vowels after the same few weeks.

Phonology

The speech sounds that make up a language and the rules of pronunciation associated with them.

Therefore, I recommend only spending a short amount of time looking over the alphabet and getting a general idea of what the new sounds and letters are in the language. I would simply watch a short video on YouTube that goes through the pronunciation of the alphabet or find a website that shows the letters with their sounds. Do not watch or read anything that is too in-depth. Just choose something that briefly quenches your curiosity about the new sounds. As you continue to boot up the language throughout Phase 1, the unique letters and sounds are going to stick out like a sore thumb, and you'll get used to them quickly as a result.

2. *The language has a completely new writing system that you are unfamiliar with*

An example of this circumstance would be if you are a native speaker of German or Polish and you want to learn Russian. The languages in this case do not share a base alphabet. German and Polish use forms of the Latin alphabet, while Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet. Another example would be if you are a Bulgarian or Italian speaker who is learning Arabic. The Arabic writing system would be completely new compared to anything you would have ever used before.

If this case applies to you, I recommend deliberately studying the alphabet before beginning to learn the language. Jumping into the language without some knowledge of the writing system would be a significant disadvantage during the subsequent steps. So how should you go about learning the writing system?

First of all, the goal in this step is not to perfectly memorize the alphabet and become an expert on it. The goal is to become generally familiar with which letters correspond to which sounds in the language. If you obsess over this step too much, you could waste weeks, or even months, on the alphabet and phonetic system without actually progressing in the language. Instead, you should become just familiar enough with the alphabet to be able to start learning meaningful things.

You will never see me advocate the use of flashcards for anything language learning related, except for when you are learning a new alphabet. I believe that creating a flashcard deck, either online or using physical cards, is one of the fastest ways to achieve the goal of becoming generally familiar with which letters generally correspond to which sounds. I personally do not use flash cards for this step, but I basically do the exact same thing I would do with flashcards just by looking at pictures of the letters online. Regardless of how you do it, simply look at a letter and say what sound the letter makes out loud (or in your head). During this process, DO NOT make effortful attempts to sound like a native or perfect the correct pronunciation. Just recall which sound the letter generally makes. Below is a detailed example of what I mean by this.

Ш - This is the letter that makes a deep *sh* sound in Russian

ш - This is the letter that makes a light *sh* sound in Russian

These two letters look and sound very similar. If it is not immediately obvious to you, do not waste time trying to differentiate their sounds at this step. Through context and experience with the language, the difference will become very clear. At this stage, you should just learn that they both make a *sh* sound in the language. You could waste a week becoming a nerd trying to master the difference between these letters, when you could have been having fun learning Russian while building confidence and motivation.

Р and ر - These are the letters that make an *r* sound in Russian and Arabic, respectively.

Both of these letters make a rolled *r* sound, but do not focus on nailing the rolled *r* pronunciation at this stage. Again, if you are not immediately able to do it, simply memorize them as being some arbitrary version of an *r*. *R* sounds are notoriously hard, and I've watched people go insane over trying to master them before they can even speak their target language. The same friend that I used to fantasize about languages on the phone with for hours a day had to spend the last two years in the psych ward for this very reason.

ﺩ - This is the letter that makes a normal *d* sound in Arabic

ﺽ - This is the letter that makes the emphatic *d* sound in Arabic

Do not waste time learning what the word emphatic means or trying to differentiate these pronunciations if, again, the difference is not immediately obvious to you. I promise that they will become clear through context in later steps. Just memorize these as both making a *d* sound.

There are many more examples here, but I assume you've gotten the point. We aren't being lazy here, we are just being realistic. Without context and experience as a beginner, it is going to be extremely difficult to truly understand the small differences between novel letters or sounds that you have never heard before. You might not get good at these for months, by my estimation. You could waste days or weeks pinpointing the differences and nailing the pronunciation, but then you would be at a disadvantage compared to gigachads like me who quickly jumped into speaking and interacting with

the language. You should continue learning the alphabet until you can comfortably recall what general sounds about 90% of the letters make. The last 10% of the letters, as well as any other confusion with the alphabet, will slowly be addressed over time throughout Phase 1. If flashcards or just staring at a computer aren't for you, you could also look online for alphabet learning games. They do the same thing as flashcards, but they gamify the process in a more stimulating way. I often just watch a YouTube video showing the letters and their sounds multiple times across a few days. This way probably takes longer than the flashcard method, but I find it to be effective and relaxing.

3. The language is Chinese or Japanese

If you are learning Chinese, the writing system consists of thousands of characters (each a single syllable) that can form words either on their own or in combination with other characters. It would be extremely difficult and very unwise to attempt to memorize a ton of these before diving straight into the language. I recommend that you focus first on the *pinyin*, which is Chinese written in the Latin (AMERICAN) alphabet. It is very common online, so you should have no trouble finding it. Pinyin is frequently paired with characters in learning resources to help you immediately be able to read unfamiliar characters. Memorizing the characters for words should then be done over time as you gain exposure to them. Since Chinese characters are so complex, yet crucial, a 21st century hack for minimizing the headache they'll give you is to put off (or even completely ignore) learning how to handwrite the characters. Under most circumstances, any writing you do will be on some sort of keyboard (pinyin input), and learning to simply recognize the characters, their associated pinyin, and their meanings is much easier and will occur naturally over time, with some focus. If you absolutely must scratch your itch to become a calligraphic master (either out of interest or due to a need to move to or live in a Chinese-speaking country), I urge you to focus on fully learning just one character a day at the start. Feel free to increase this over time with your level of comfort. This will snowball rapidly, and it will prevent you from becoming overwhelmed like many more unwise learners.

Chinese also has a tone system where there are 4 (but really 5) tones that dictate the intonation that a word must be said with (these tones are indicated by accent marks

in the pinyin system). These are falsely thought to be impossible or very difficult for language learners to master, but I know about a dozen fluent Chinese learners who say they are very simple. People get scared and then assume they are impossible, which in turn makes learners believe they can't learn them. When starting Chinese, I would watch videos explaining the tones, just so that you can have an understanding of what to listen for. But, while I would spend some time trying to get a feel for pronouncing the different tones since they are important in Chinese, I would not waste time perfecting them at the beginning. Much like with learning the characters, it is much more important that you learn to hear the tones properly, after which you can slowly master how to produce them yourself over time. Being able to recognize the tones will not only greatly improve your ability to understand spoken Chinese, but it will also make it much easier for you to eventually master pronouncing the proper tones. Excellent productive accuracy will then become a matter of time and experience. Note though, that even *if* you never fully master tones, nothing close to perfect accuracy is necessary to be understood.

If you are learning Japanese, there are three writing systems in total. Two of them, “hiragana” and “katakana” are normal alphabets (technically *syllabaries*) that should be approached in the same way outlined in Situation #2. The third writing system, known as “kanji”, is made up of Chinese characters (many are written slightly differently from their Chinese counterparts) that are used in conjunction with the two other systems in an unholy mixed writing system. While it is a good idea to get a general understanding of how kanji are used, do not spend time trying to memorize lists of kanji in the beginning. Get familiar with hiragana and katakana as described earlier, and learn kanji slowly, in context, as an ongoing part of your journey.

Syllabary

A writing system where the characters each represent a syllable (or mora [don't worry about this]) which make up the words.

Texts or subtitles in content meant for younger native speakers or for learners will often come with what are called “furigana”, which are the in-context pronunciations of kanji characters, written above those characters, in hiragana. With those, you'll be able to learn the contextually appropriate readings and meanings of kanji naturally, as you gain exposure to them. As with Chinese, I recommend starting by only focusing on learning to recognize kanji, and ignoring or putting off learning to handwrite them. Again, if you must learn to handwrite (out of interest or necessity), start by committing to fully

learning only one kanji a day and increase this with your level of comfort.



Beta Bob

- Studies the alphabet and phonology like a maniac until he could teach a college class about them
- Can't say a single word in the language for months, maybe years

Gigachad Chad

- Quickly gets enough knowledge of the alphabet to move on
- Slowly refines his knowledge of the writing system over time, in context



How to Use a New Alphabet

As described earlier, you should not straight up learn the alphabet to the point where you can perfectly use it right away. When you have a good, general idea of which letters make which sounds, you can slowly perfect the alphabet over the entirety of Phase 1. As alluded to earlier, we are well into the 21st century, so physical writing with a pen and paper is not very popular anymore. However, if you enjoy that type of thing, I encourage you to learn how to handwrite the alphabet, which may include learning an entirely separate cursive alphabet. Some people suggest that it may even possibly help you to better remember the characters. But if you are like me, you are typing on your phone or computer 99.657% of the time.

You should enable your target language's keyboard on your phone, so you can easily switch to it whenever you desire. There are tons of language keyboards available on both Android and IOS, and so you should not have any problem finding one for your

language. Simply go to the settings and find the keyboard language option to enable it. You may need to look up a tutorial on how to activate this for your specific phone. I highly recommend doing this even if the new alphabet is very similar to your native one, as it will allow you to easily and correctly add accent markers or slightly unique letters. This may be very annoying at first, but I encourage you to stick with it until you're comfortable.

The biggest life hack when typing on your phone in a different language is ensuring that autocorrect is turned on. Remember, we are trying to have fun with the language, not stress out over spelling mistakes. Autocorrect will allow you to type faster and to see the correct way that difficult-to-spell words are actually written. One additional thing to mention at this point is that I personally do not recommend switching your phone's operating system language to that of your target language. Yes, it is true that it technically "immerses" you in the language. However, from my experience, this can be extremely frustrating and not that helpful. I used to do it thinking that I would learn a bunch of new vocabulary, but all it ever did for me was teach me a handful of niche phrases for various functions of a cell phone as well as a few phrases specific to social media. Over time, I discovered that these phrases aren't usually used outside of cell phone options menus. However, if you enjoy it because of the new aesthetic your phone has in a different language, it definitely will not hurt you. I just think that it is typically more frustrating than helpful.

You should also enable your target language's keyboard on your computer. I know this is easily done on both Windows and Mac. In addition to enabling it on the computer, you should also purchase a physical keyboard in the language. That being said, I personally just use stickers which are easy to find online (I found mine on Amazon). These stickers can be placed over the keys on your standard keyboard so you can see which letters correspond to which keys. I did this exact thing with Russian. At the start, even just typing at all was very difficult, but it quickly became easy on my phone with the help of autocorrect. After using the keyboard on my phone a lot, it became much easier to type on my computer. A few short months later, I was able to quickly type in Russian on a computer without looking at the keyboard. If you really want to master typing quickly, there are plenty of games for most languages on the internet meant to teach people how to type in them.

Learn Some Essentials First: Videos Explaining Things in Your Native Language

Now you should be eager to begin learning the language. Remember that the goal is to have as much fun as possible at every step of the process, including at the absolute beginner stage of Phase 1. Many gurus will tell you that you should not speak for the first few months or even a year. But to start things off with a BANG, I recommend speaking within the first few days. Of course, you aren't going to be explaining anything complex like the evolutionary tree of orangutans in the first week, but that's not the point at this step. The most fun and rewarding thing that you can do in language learning is to take a new language that was previously complete gibberish to you and begin saying meaningful things in it. So, that is precisely what you should do at the start.

In order to begin speaking at the absolute beginner stage, you need to learn what I consider to be the basics. Contrary to popular belief, the basics are not the colors, types of weather, articles of clothing, or kinds of food. Focusing on these things early on will severely hinder your progress. You would be surprised how little you need to discuss something like the colors, especially at the beginner level. When I say “the basics”, what I am referring to are just a few simple sentences that you will need to use practically every single time you open your mouth in the new language, from now until the end of the universe:

The Basics

Hello

My name is [insert your name].

I am from [insert name of your country].

I am learning [insert name of language].

You should learn these phrases through introductory language tutorials on YouTube. If you look up, “How to introduce yourself in [insert language]”, you should be able to find many videos explaining the same thing in American or your own native language. One excellent example of this would be a video titled “Introductory Phrases in Japanese” or “How to Introduce Yourself in Portuguese”. You can also easily find them listed on a

variety of different websites. You should take a few days to memorize these phrases and personalize them to fit your needs.

Once you have memorized each phrase individually, string them all together to form what I call an introductory monologue. An example is as follows:

Hello, my name is Josh. I am from the United States. I am learning Uzbek because I think that Uzbek is a beautiful language and I want to travel to Uzbekistan.

You cannot even fathom how many times you will need to introduce yourself, say where you're from, and explain why you're learning the language. These lines will remain important throughout the entirety of Phase 1, Phase 2, and long after you stop studying the language. You'll only potentially stop needing to answer the last two questions if you ever become indistinguishable from a native (which, realistically, may never happen), so it's a good idea to hammer them into your mind early on. This style of direct memorization of things that you deliberately search for will become less and less effective as you progress. Moving forward, you will focus on learning things that you've noticed in context while listening to the language. Memorizing specifically the basics in this way, however, is an excellent way to start saying incredibly meaningful things super early on.

Repeat your introductory monologue **OUT LOUD** to yourself a ton, a **ton**. Do it until you feel perfectly comfortable with those lines. There should only be around three sentences, so it shouldn't be terribly hard to memorize. Absolutely do not attempt to sound like a native when you are saying these things. You are a beginner, so you will most likely make multiple pronunciation mistakes at this phase. It does not matter. As you progress through Phase 1, you will master these phrases, as you will slowly correct yourself as you improve overall at the language. The goal for now is to be able to say them without hesitating. These few lines are going to give you the ammunition you need to both enjoy the act of speaking a new language and to convey meaningful information.



Gigachad Chad

- Whips out a meaningful, coherent introductory monologue on day 4
- He can instantly pull the important basics out of his butt when he needs to
- He doesn't care that he mispronounces half the words, as he knows he will fix that later

Beta Bob

- Thinks that you need input for 6 months before opening your mouth in a language
- He struggles and hesitates to say where he is from and fails with other introductory sentences, because he doesn't focus on repeating them out loud
- When he opens his mouth, he's worried about his accent so much that he has a mental breakdown and shuts up for another 6 months



Fun fact: A lot of internet polyglots stop after this step and then claim to speak the language.

CHAPTER 4

The Grind

You now have the tools and ammunition that you need to begin diving deep into the language. This in-depth chapter will describe exactly how studying should look like in order to efficiently and successfully boot up your target language in Phase 1. This chapter is called “The Grind”, because it will be the longest and most challenging part of your journey. However, despite how intimidating it may seem, you will soon see that there should be no reason for it to be especially stressful or difficult.

Focus on What Is Important

Focus on what is important

*“You will most likely NEVER need to know how to say “giraffe” in your target language”
- Commandment no. 5*

Learning a language is all about learning new words. Typically, the more words that you know in a language, the better you speak it. There is a well known linguistic phenomenon where a few commonly used words in a language make up the vast majority of everything that is said in that language. I often hear estimates saying something like 90% of everything that is said comes from only 10% of the words that exist in any given language. Clearly, some words are more important than others. Thus, if you learn the most commonly used words in a language, you will understand the vast majority of what is said. Below, I give a concrete example in my native language:

Group 1 - Important words used at a high frequency

“how”, “I”, “tomorrow”, “good”, “house”, “eat”, “think”

Group 2 - Less important words used at a lower frequency

“headphones”, “carpet”, “lemonade”, “helmet”, “philosophy”, “climb”, “giraffe”

The words in Group 1 are used at an exponentially higher frequency than the words in Group 2. It should be fairly obvious, then, why the words in Group 1 are better to focus on at the start than the words in Group 2. Not knowing what the word “how” means would severely diminish your chances of understanding people or conveying your own thoughts. In contrast, not knowing what a “carpet” is would only lead to a funny misunderstanding at worst. This is one of the core problems with certain language learning apps and methods. Often, an app will have certain lessons for “colors”, “days of the week”, or “furniture in the house”. While you certainly can learn these groups of words from an app, you’ll accelerate your linguistic pregnancy by learning the core building blocks of the language, rather than niche nouns that appear only seldomly. Who the heck cares how to say “lamp”?

Learning Words and Phrases in Context

So how should you go about acquiring the most commonly used words? New learners who find out about how important word frequency is will often search for lists of the top 100 or top 1000 most common words in a language so they can begin memorizing them. This is a horrible idea, as this method teaches you the words without any clue as to how they are used. The words must be learned in context (if you haven’t already, you will see that this is a common theme here), as without context it is impossible to use them properly. My beginner method works so well because it focuses not just on learning the most common words, but also doing so in their proper context.

The method itself is relatively simple, yet effective. I call it the Gigachad Method for obvious reasons. The overarching idea is that you will watch videos in your target language with subtitles in your target language (NOT your native language). While watching along and looking at the subtitles, you’ll notice some words and phrases that appear very often. Then you will translate those words and learn what they mean. There are two types of content on YouTube that I recommend using for this method.

Content Type #1 - Videos about a hobby or interest that you have

To study with this form of content, first identify a hobby or interest that you have. This

could be anything such as cooking, sports, fashion, competitive duck herding, chess, books, history, stamp-collecting, or a million other things. An equally valid interest would be language learning itself, which is one I choose very often. Once you have your hobby or interest of choice in mind, go to any online translator such as Google Translate, and translate the name of that hobby or interest into your target language. If your hobby is chess, you could translate the word "chess" or a phrase related to it, such as "how to play chess". Next, search the translated word/phrase on YouTube.

YouTube has a search option where you can filter by videos that have integrated subtitles. Use this, and from these filtered results, it will then be easy to find videos that are, again, in your target language with subtitles in your target language. Sometimes the videos will have subtitles in languages other than the one that the video is in, but this is less common. Simply click on any of the suggested videos and click the subtitles button to ensure that it has subtitles in the language. You do not need dual subtitles in American and your target language, although that sometimes can be nice as well.

Content Type #2 - Videos made for language learners

There are tons of videos on YouTube that are meant to teach you a language. However, in the majority of these the teaching is done in American, which defeats the purpose of this method. If you'd like to use this type of content to study with, your goal is to find videos teaching your target language IN your target language. You should ensure that the channel has subtitles that are ALSO IN your target language. This is incredibly common, so you should not have a problem finding videos satisfying these conditions for most languages. With this type of content, you'll effectively kill two birds with one stone. You'll be learning using my method, and you'll be exposed to explanations of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.

The Gigachad Method

Now we are going to get into the details of how you really make progress actively learning the language using the aforementioned Gigachad Method. I call it this, because it is truly the best way that I have found to effectively study a language while keeping the process

enjoyable. This method, and the guiding principles that it contains will be present in some way in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of your language learning journey.

Once you have found a suitable video, simply play the video and attempt to follow along with the subtitles. Of course, you aren't going to understand anything, but that is not the point. In fact, if the alphabet is new as well, you'll have an even more difficult time following along. Thankfully, you do not need to be able to follow along in order to benefit from this method at the beginner stage.

All that you need to do, in a very relaxed manner, is attempt to notice words or phrases that seem to be used frequently. When you discover a word that is said often, go to Google Translate and look up its meaning. You could alternatively look it up in a dictionary or on another site, but I find that Google Translate works well for me. Once you've looked up the translation, you will now know what the word or phrase means. The problem, however, is that you will likely forget the word or its meaning within a few minutes. Do not worry, as that is perfectly normal!

If you continue doing this, you will very soon reach the point where you end up seeing that same word or phrase that you have already translated again, but you will not be able to remember what it means. This will bother you a lot, as you will vividly remember translating it before. Again, this is no problem at all! That is precisely how this method works. Simply translate it again and move on. It is unrealistic to imagine that you will remember the meaning of a word the first time you seek out its definition. However, after the fourth or fifth time that you translate it, it will often stick. It is this repeated cycle of learning and forgetting then learning and forgetting that will hammer the word or phrase into your head.

Now I am going to give you a clear example. I'll demonstrate this with the French language, as I assume most readers are unable to read Cyrillic or Arabic. If you're learning French and watching a video in French, one of the first words you will see appear a ton is *avec*. Imagine that you have been watching the video for two minutes, not understanding anything, and you notice that you continually see the word *avec*. You then stumble upon the following sentence:

Vous pouvez le faire avec moi.

You notice the word again, so you pause the video, go to Google Translate, and type in *avec*. Google translate tells you that *avec* means "with". You've also seen the phrase "avec moi" a few times, so maybe you look that up as well. Google Translate tells you that "avec moi" means "with me". Both the word "with" and the phrase "with me" are clearly very common and important, confirming your suspicion. You then click off of Google Translate and begin watching the video again. You go back 10 seconds in the video to attempt to hear and read the word/phrase again, this time understanding its meaning.

Two minutes later after continuing to translate other things, you encounter the word *avec* again. This time it is in the following phrase.

Avec du temps, l'économie va s'améliorer.

Even though you clearly remember translating it a short while ago, you cannot for the life of you remember the meaning. That is perfectly normal. You search up the meaning again, and you have that "Aha! I knew what that meant!" moment.

It may take you two, three, or even twenty times translating the same thing before you truly remember what it means, but I promise that over time and with increased exposure you will not forget it. You might also note that in that last example *avec* was used in the phrase "avec du temps", which happens to be another commonly used phrase that you may identify as being worth translating. As you progress in your journey, you will become better at determining which words and phrases are worth spending time with.

When you see a word appear a few times and you find out that it means *faucet*, you should give that less attention than another word you find that means *happiness*, unless you are a plumber or for some reason you really like faucets (I'm not judging). However, don't stress over your efficiency or whether you are learning the absolute most ideal words, as you will naturally encounter and identify what is important very quickly.

This method is not limited to words and phrases that appear often. I also encourage you to search up anything that looks interesting to you. If you see a word that looks funny, sounds cool, seems difficult, or intrigues you in some other way, you should look that one up too. Often something that appeals to us, for any kind of reason, will be easier to remember.

When you get bored of a video you're watching, simply click off of it. The moment

a video gets boring, you should stop watching it. If, despite that, you still feel like continuing studying for the day, you should just click on another video. Don't worry if you're only watching a small fraction of every video you click on. As I discussed previously, quit studying the moment that you feel like you are bored or not having fun. This could be 10 minutes into your daily session, or it could be 3 hours. Over time, as you continue to boot up the language in Phase 1, this method will become more fun, as you'll understand more and be more engaged with the content.

Learn 1 Thing Concretely Every Day

What I just described is exactly what your daily, active studying should look like in Phase 1. It may seem overly simple compared to other, more complicated, methods, however, you will be surprised how much you'll understand if you do this daily for even just a month. You must not underestimate how effective this method is. You need to trust me. You may feel like other methods are more productive, but I can assure you that they are not.

Learn only ONE thing a day

"Trying to learn too much in a day will slow you down"

- Commandment no. 6

Every single day while you are noticing new things and translating them, you will slowly become more and more familiar with them. Within a typical 10 minute to 3 hour long study session, you could translate anywhere from 5 to 200 words or phrases, by my rough estimation. You will realize that a lot of them aren't incredibly important, but you will surely pinpoint a few words or phrases that are absolutely crucial or are otherwise enjoyable for you. From these few that you find are important or fun, you should pick ONE of them to fully learn for the day. This means that I advise that you only properly learn ONE new thing per day. This is the most important feature of the Gigachad Method, and it is another HUGE secret to my success. I don't overload myself with "trying to learn 20 words a day" or "reaching a certain amount of comprehensible input" or anything fancy like that. I just learn one concrete thing a day that I see and hear in context.

So let's say that I am studying and I translate things that I come across for 30 minutes.

Within these 30 minutes let's say I saw the word *avec* a few times, and I decided to make this be the one thing I learn that day. I typically type this word or phrase in the notes app of my iPhone, but you can write it wherever it is convenient for you. I also often record myself pronouncing it roughly as I hear it in the video or on Google Translate. Then throughout the day, I will repeat *avec* in my head and out loud, and I will sometimes think about it or try to recall the word. I will often check the notes app when I forget it, and I will even reference a dictionary, Google Translate, or the video I recorded of myself saying it if I forget how it was pronounced or what it means.

By the end of the day, I will know the word very well. It will have been, in fact, **THE ONE AND ONLY** thing that I forced myself to learn on that day. It didn't consume my day, but when I had a little downtime, I brought it to the forefront of my mind. When I wake up the next day, it is typically one of the first things I recall. If you do this, after 3 weeks I guarantee you will be pleasantly surprised, as you will have deliberately learned 21 words or phrases that are either common, useful, funny, or are otherwise interesting to you. You will have also seen these words and phrases used in context, and you will have passive knowledge of tons of other words/phrases you have translated. Above all, you will have learned all of these things in a very stress-free manner. Instead of overloading yourself, you'll have a good amount of time to wrap your head around one thing at a time. The amount of knowledge you gain from learning just one thing a day will snowball unbelievably quickly, and it will result in you acquiring much more useful vocabulary and booting up the language at a faster pace than other learners who spend much more time studying using more beta methods.

As with any skill, with some experience you will begin getting better at pinpointing what is a good word or phrase to make the one thing you learn for a given day. In Phase 1, you should simply use common sense to determine what one thing you should focus on. In general, you want to prioritize learning things that you know will help you in a typical conversation with someone.

With our previous example, *avec*, it makes more sense to deliberately learn "avec moi" (with me) as your one thing for the day than it does to just learn *avec* (with). This is because if you learn the word "with" devoid of context, it would always beg the question of "with who?" or "with what?". Learning it in a fuller context would clearly be more beneficial. Another example would be if you encounter the word "young" a lot.

This word would never be used on its own outside of some context, so I can predict that you may see the word in phrases like “He is young”, or “When I was young”. This is all to say that I recommend you learn a relevant phrase as your one thing a day instead of some individual word. However, keep it stress free. Any given word on its own would still be very valuable.

Here is a list of example words/phrases that would be a good idea to learn at the beginner level. There are thousands of other ones, but this will hopefully give you a good foundation:

Good phrases at the beginner level:

- *I would like*
- *There is a person*
- *In the future*
- *If I were*
- *How are you?*
- *In my country*
- *Can I have*
- *I have*
- *I want to speak*
- *I want to do*

I want to emphasize how important it is to repeat what you have learned out loud. You should say important words and phrases out loud, so that it becomes easy to use them in a conversation when you need them. I say the one thing I learn a day out loud to myself an absolute ton throughout the day so that I can never forget it. Over time, as you learn new phrases and words, you can string them together to recite complex monologues using what you’ve learned. Remember that you get good at what you practice. So if you want to get good at speaking, you should speak out loud a lot. It is unrealistic to believe that you will always have a native speaker to interact with all day. At the end of the day, you are your best speaking partner. Do not worry about mistakes, as the native speakers will correct you in due time.

Extra fun tip: I find it very enjoyable for the one thing I learn in a day to be something funny or goofy. For example, when I encounter a phrase like “I am stupid” or an insult like “You smell bad”, I will often memorize those. It keeps the learning process enjoyable.



Gigachad Chad

- Has a lot of fun just watching videos and being curious about the language
- Learns one thing very well each day

Beta Bob

- Stresses over memorizing the word for every type of t-shirt in his closet in the second week
- Forces himself to learn 30 new words a day, but he actually learns 0 in the process



Speaking Practice at the Beginner Level

I recommend having deliberate speaking practice at least twice a week, but I personally prefer to get it every day. Similar to when studying, this can last anywhere from 10 minutes to many hours. The important thing is that you do it consistently. Speaking to people in a new language can be scary, but keep in mind that it is the very reason why you are studying in the first place. **YOU** are the person speaking **THEIR** language, so any insult that could be hurled at you means absolutely nothing. You are the one making the effort to communicate with them, and not the other way around. Speaking a new language is a ridiculous amount of fun, so make sure that you keep it that way. If

it becomes scary or something that you dread, you need to reevaluate your approach.

Speak from Day 1

“You won’t speak well, but you WILL have fun”

- Commandment no. 7

The starting goal at the beginning of Phase 1 should be to acquire enough words and phrases so that you can start having conversations. At some point early within Phase 1, you should set yourself the goal of speaking to real, live humans. You theoretically could begin doing this as early as Day 1, but I would say that anywhere from Day 7 to Day 30 is a bit more realistic so that you have more of a base in the language.

I have seen many polyglots online saying that you should wait an arbitrarily long amount of time before speaking with natives, but I strongly disagree with this. Yes, technically someone who has had input in the language for six months is probably going to speak better at the start than someone who has had input for one week, but where is the fun in that? You are learning a language to have fun. Who wants to wait months to start speaking? The more fun you have, the more success you will have.

First, I have to discuss the best place to practice with native speakers: Discord. Discord is a social media platform on desktop and mobile where you can join communities formed around various interests, hobbies, and themes. These communities are called *servers* and they have text chat channels as well as voice chat (VC) channels. Over the past few years, Discord has become a booming hub for language learning on the internet. I in fact have my own server for language learners to interact with one another in just about every language (the invitation link is on my YouTube), but even besides mine there are hundreds of really fantastic ones for language practice. My Discord server is free, and as of writing this we have nearly 40,000 members. I see no reason to ever join a language server that has a paywall slapped on it, which I have seen being done by some polyglot creators. This is because it is not very difficult to find a free server that specializes in your target language. I have spent time in numerous servers for French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, Danish, Toki Pona, etc. To find a server for your target language, simply search “Learn [insert language] Discord server”. You’ll be surprised how easy it is to find servers for niche, or even dead, languages.

I personally love Discord for its spontaneity. If you find an active Discord, there will be people talking in VCs at seemingly every hour of the day. You can just pop into these calls and leave whenever you want. This means you have no obligation to stay there for any amount of time, and you don't need to help anyone with your language afterwards if you don't want to. If you need help with using Discord, there are several great tutorials on YouTube that will cover how to make an account and use the platform.

If Discord is not your thing, I completely understand. You absolutely do not need to specifically use Discord for your speaking practice. There are pretty much endless other ways to connect vocally with fellow language learners or native speakers online. You could find speaking partners on social media, through a language exchange app, or even in real life.

If you find a language exchange partner online, as part of the principle of exchange, you will also need to help them, which may be fun depending on what you like. The only thing is that I would be cautious of a few of the language exchange apps these days. They have honestly turned into glorified dating apps where people forget about language learning and will instead try and flirt with you. I know that a lot of these apps will allow you to select a setting where you will only be matched with users of the same gender, which could be helpful for some people here. Just be careful since I have heard horror stories from female friends of mine who have attempted to use these apps. If you opt for finding a language exchange partner, I recommend finding someone who you can tell **seriously** wants to learn. There are a lot of people who are just looking for someone to talk to, but you need more than that. You need someone who can match your motivation.

Once you are in a VC with a person, or multiple people, in whatever form you've chosen, it is now time to speak your target language for the first time. You might be wondering now, "But how can I speak if I'm a beginner and I only know a few words and phrases?" Well, at the beginning, of course you will not have enough knowledge to have a full blown spontaneous conversation about current events or anything complicated. That would be more absurd than claiming that America isn't the greatest nation on Earth. However, you can still have incredibly smooth, meaningful conversations during the first week.

Throughout my years of speaking to thousands of people from all over the world

on Discord in roughly 10 different languages, I can confidently say that 90% of internet conversations in a language learning environment closely match the pattern in the following sample dialogue:

Person 1: *Hello. How are you?*

Person 2: *Hello. I am doing well, and you?*

Person 1: *Where are you from?*

Person 2: *I am from the United States. I live in Alaska. Where are you from?*

Person 1: *I am from Mexico.*

Person 2: *Very cool!*

Person 1: *Why are you learning Spanish?*

Person 2: *I think that Spanish is beautiful, and I like Mexican history.*

This conversation is extremely basic, but it is very meaningful. Moreover, it is a conversation that you will continue to have for years to come. Through using the Gigachad Method and by watching videos explaining how to say basic things in your target language, you could easily have all of this vocabulary within a week. The first time you attempt to have a conversation like this, you may need to ask the other person to repeat something or to remind you how to say certain things, but that is perfectly fine! You might not get it on your first try, but if you continue having conversations like this, you will perfect this exchange very quickly.

If you do this on Discord, the beauty is that you can easily have this brief conversation with someone, and then instantly go have it with another person in another VC or server. You can get practice in while having very meaningful conversations, even at this early stage, on rapid fire. If you're with a language partner, I recommend repeating these conversations until they are committed to memory. Do not think for a moment that "memorizing" a conversation is a bad idea. Most basic conversations aren't that dynamic, and so the majority of people will construct introductory sentences in very similar ways within any given language.

Of course, you don't want to be having the exact same introductory conversation about where you are from and why you are learning the language, forever. While throughout Phase 1, conversations will continue to begin this way, you must slowly

build upon them in order to improve your range and flexibility of expression.

This is where you must develop the skill of predicting what people could say as well as predicting what you will need to say. Let's take another look at the conversation from earlier:

Person 1: *Hello. How are you?*

Person 2: *Hello. I am doing well, and you?*

Person 1: *Where are you from?*

Person 2: *I am from the United States. I live in Alaska. Where are you from?*

Person 1: *I am from Mexico.*

Person 2: *Very cool!*

Person 1: *Why are you learning Spanish?*

Person 2: *I think that Spanish is beautiful, and I like Mexican history.*

Here are a few different directions this conversation could easily go in.

Direction #1

Person 1: *Hello. How are you?*

Person 2: *Hello. I am doing well, and you?*

Person 1: *I'm well. What are you doing?*

Person 2: *Nothing. I just want to practice some Spanish. What are you doing?*

Direction #2

Person 1: *Hello. How are you?*

Person 2: *Hello. I am doing well, and you?*

Person 1: *I'm well. Where are you from?*

Person 2: *I am from the United States. I live in Alaska. Where are you from?*

Person 1: *I am from Mexico.*

Person 2: *Very cool!*

Person 1: *How is the weather in Alaska?*

Person 2: *It is very cold!*

Direction #3

Person 1: *Hello. How are you?*

Person 2: *Hello. I am doing well, and you?*

Person 1: *I'm well. Where are you from?*

Person 2: *I am from the United States. I live in Alaska. Where are you from?*

Person 1: *I am from Mexico.*

Person 2: *Very cool!*

Person 1: *What time is it in Alaska?*

Person 2: *It is 1:45 PM. I like turtles!*

I threw in the “I like turtles” there at the end not to try to throw you off guard, but because nonchalantly inserting a random, rehearsed, comical phrase that I have memorized into my conversations is a great way to spice things up. One example of this is how I’ll often tell Russians “Я им как младшая сестра,” which means “I am like a little sister to them”. Those are song lyrics from a famous Russian pop star who not many men my age would listen to. This sentence makes absolutely no sense in the context of a hairy, 6-foot-tall man saying it, and it is precisely for this reason that it never fails to make a Russian laugh. This opens them up to then actually helping me.

You should now be able to see what I mean by “the different directions a conversation can go in”. I hope that you are now also able to see how predictable these can be. You can expand your vocabulary substantially simply by anticipating the different paths that a conversation can follow. Keeping this in mind while you’re watching videos and choosing your one thing to learn a day will speed up how quickly you can learn to speak well.

These conversational paths are precisely the reason that using an app or curated vocabulary lists can’t be the only way that you study. For some reason, beginners often go off and memorize the days of the week or all of the most common colors on the visual spectrum. Yes, these things are important and should eventually be learned. However, they could speak so much faster if they focused on predicting what might *actually* be said in different conversational paths for common situations.

The big, important takeaway here is that repetition is what will get you good at

speaking during Phase 1. You must speak to yourself out loud a lot, and then try the phrases you've practiced on native speakers. Little by little, you will be able to progress your conversations further and further.

Making Mistakes as a Beginner

When you are practicing speaking, you must allow native speakers to correct you if you make a mistake or say something incomprehensible. You are a beginner, so there is no reason to have a massive ego at this step. I understand that it is difficult not to take corrections personally, but you must get over the fear and embarrassment of making mistakes. A gigantic cheat code that will make you learn so much faster than other people is learning how to not care about sounding like an idiot. You will sound like an idiot at the start because, while you're in Phase 1, you sort of are an idiot in the context of a foreign language. You don't have enough words to properly express yourself, you sound like a foreigner, and you don't understand much. The honest to god, fastest way to progress in a language is to let people correct you when you make a mistake. Think about it this way: since it feels like a personal attack or a punch to the gut, you will never forget being corrected, and therefore, you will most likely never make the same mistake again.

Laugh at your own mistakes

"It IS funny that you said that word wrong"

- Commandment no. 8

People **will** laugh when you speak their language. The best way to get over the fear of being laughed at is to realize that native speakers are not laughing at you, they are laughing at what you said. It is funny that you mispronounced a word in their language. Yes, some rude people will genuinely be mean to you, but those people aren't worth your time. Find nicer people to speak with. However, think of it from the perspective of a native speaker who isn't a piece of crap and doesn't just want to hurt your feelings for no reason. They have gone their entire life hearing a word be pronounced the same way tens of thousands of times. Then you come along, announce that you're from a place all the way across the world, and pronounce the same word in a completely unique

and goofy sounding way. That is hilarious from their point of view, and it would be the same way if a learner of your language did the same thing! The minute that you realize how funny it can be is the minute that you get over your fear of making mistakes. Now I embrace it wholeheartedly, and I make rapid progress as a result. When you become confident in this way, you won't be afraid to try saying new things that you are unsure of. Maybe there is a sentence that you aren't sure is correct. You should say it, and allow people to correct you if they don't understand or if they hear a mistake. And if they don't correct you, but they understood what you said, do not worry at all about whether you said it properly. Remember, speaking with mistakes is perfectly normal, and eventually someone will point it out if it becomes a problem.

Once a native has corrected you, you should repeat the correction to make sure that you have properly fixed your mistake. That way, you can be sure that you are now saying it correctly. If you commit a flagrant mistake, or do not understand something, you should learn how to address that at the beginner stage. I have already discussed the conversational paths that will usually be followed early on in a conversation. However, conversations will diverge rapidly into very different directions after a few short exchanges.

You should build a repertoire of phrases that you can use in the event that the conversation goes a little too off the rails. Helpful phrases include, "I don't understand", "Can you repeat that?", and "I need to leave, because aliens are invading my country." The necessity of those first two should be pretty self-explanatory, and the last one is meant to add some comic relief to a situation where you may feel embarrassed.

Some people may ask whether they should really straight up memorize a phrase like "I don't understand" or "Can you repeat that?" without fully understanding how those phrases are constructed grammatically or otherwise. My answer to that is yes. You should absolutely straight up memorize things like that at the beginning. People underestimate how amazingly beneficial it is to know how to say "I don't understand" in their target language. You seriously cannot begin to fathom how important a phrase like that is! You will use it until you die or stop using the language! When you identify a golden phrase like that, which you know you will use forever, you should search it up online and repeat it out loud every single day until it is etched permanently into your mind. It should be directly memorized just as you did with your introductory monologue. Babies don't get

panic attacks over having to memorize stuff when learning their native languages, and so neither should you when learning a new language as an adult.

Most of the time, native speakers and higher level learners are eager to help someone at the beginner stage. They may offer to teach you certain words or phrases without context. I have previously explained how to identify what is important to learn at the beginner stage, and this same philosophy applies here. When a native tells you how to say “What did you say?”, that is obviously an important thing that you should learn. However, if they try to teach you how to say *licorice* or some random slang word, I would shy away from it unless it is funny or interesting to you. This applies to grammar as well. When I’m a beginner in Phase 1, I’ll often be at the point where I’m barely introducing myself when I suddenly find someone trying to explain conjugations or grammatical cases to me. When this happens, I politely tell them that I am not yet good enough at the language to dive into that sort of thing.

Progressing Through Phase 1: When Does It End?

A lot of emphasis in this act was placed on the very beginning, that is, the very start of your journey with studying and speaking. That is because getting started is ***always*** the hardest part of language learning. I receive messages every single day about how to *start* learning a language, and now you know exactly how to start and begin booting up your target language. Phase 1 can sometimes last quite a bit of time, and I would estimate it could take anywhere from 3 to 15 months depending on your native language and your target language. Therefore, you will continue to use these principles and the Gigachad Method in the ways outlined in this act all the way until Phase 1 concludes. If you follow my advice on how to study and practice speaking, your abilities in comprehending and speaking the language should both improve at roughly the same pace.

Phase 1 will conclude when you become a competent user of the language, which I define as the point where you can confidently say that you understand a lot of what is being said, and when you can generally express yourself despite still making mistakes. It is the point where you feel comfortable around the language, and it doesn’t seem like a complete mystery to you as it did before. It is the point where you can now meaningfully use a new language that you previously had no knowledge of. I hope that it is now clear

just how blurry this boundary is.

However, the ambiguity of the boundary between Phase 1 and Phase 2 is no big deal. The methods and techniques in Phase 1 continue into Phase 2, and it is perfectly acceptable to test out things in Phase 2 at any time in order to see if you are ready for them. The learning techniques and ways of approaching the language in Phase 2 require a solid base in the language in order to get the most out of them. Therefore if you test the methods and philosophies in Phase 2 before you are actually ready for them, it will be obvious that you are in over your head. It will feel like you are a blindfolded toddler trying to fly a rocket while trading cryptocurrencies. Getting back on track in that scenario is as simple as putting your diaper back on and returning to the familiar playpen of the Phase 1 strategies until you feel ready to try and tackle the big leagues once more.

Act 3

The Second Phase

When you have successfully booted up your target language, you are now ready to enter Phase 2 of language learning. At this point, you should have a solid, foundational understanding of the language, and you should be able to use it in many different situations. However, your level in the language will still be far from perfect. There are tons of words and phrases that you have yet to discover, you can't understand everything being said, and you still make tons of mistakes. That is all perfectly normal at this point. Your objective in Phase 2 should be to iron out these weaknesses and take a deeper dive into the language. You will begin using new techniques to do so that previously would have been overwhelming.

In Phase 1, you are booting up the language and getting used to it, but in Phase 2, you are simply improving your skills to whatever level you ultimately desire. Since you have already developed skills in the language, this phase is much less of an uphill battle than the last one. Deliberate effort will still need to be made in order to progress further, but your foundation in the language will facilitate this process.

Another way to imagine Phase 2 is by using the airplane analogy explained previously. In Phase 1. You had a long, slow, and steady climb to cruising altitude. It took a lot of effort, and you had to fight gravity and air resistance to reach the desired altitude. Now you've reached it, and your mission is now to get to the destination and finish your journey. The flight should be smooth from here on out with the exception of potential minor turbulence. Similarly, you've overcome all of the roadblocks in order to become competent in the language, so now your learning process will be easier, freer, and more relaxed. Your objective now is to reach a level where you are happy with your abilities in the language.

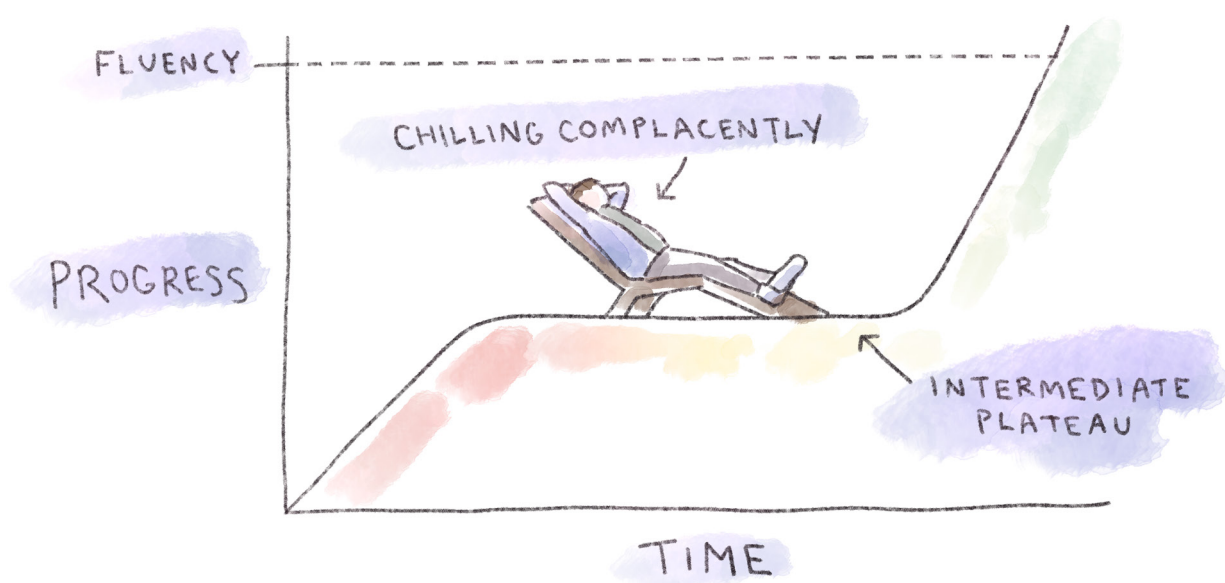
Phase 2 will take you from the point where you feel that you can competently use the language to a moderate degree, all the way up to whatever your end goal is. In the following chapters, I will teach you exactly how to refine your skills and continue making rapid progress through to the end.

CHAPTER 5

The Evolution of the Gigachad Method

You should continue using the Gigachad Method throughout Phase 2 all the way to fluency. However, the method will evolve, and what you need to focus on will change. Trust the efficacy of the method, stay consistent, and you will continue to make rapid progress. This chapter will explain the ways that you can modify my core method in order to one day become fluent in your target language.

The Myth of the “Intermediate Plateau”



One extremely common idea in the language learning community is that everyone eventually hits the so-called “intermediate plateau” where progress halts once a learner reaches a certain level of competence in the middle of their journey. Using our terminology, the plateau usually occurs at the boundary between Phase 1 and Phase 2. This is a real thing, but I think that it is largely just a psychological phenomenon. There is no magical point where the language becomes harder to learn, but there is a point

where your focus needs to shift and new techniques must be introduced if you want to continue making progress.

If you use the Gigachad Method religiously for some time, practice what you've learned out loud to yourself, and then practice with native speakers, you will eventually reach the point where you become comfortable with all of the basics and the most common words in the language. A lot of people claim to then become very frustrated after achieving this milestone, and they feel like they are unable to improve any further.

However, I think that the truth is that they actually ***don't truly want*** to improve. This statement may shock you. But, before you accuse me of using clickbait, allow me to explain. When you begin having meaningful conversations in a new language during Phase 1, you feel amazing. It is the most rewarding feeling ever to be able to exchange meaningful information in a language you previously knew nothing about. Therefore, it is easy to fall into a cycle where you just continue to have these conversations and enjoy being able to use a new language forever. You become complacent, so you stop trying to learn new words and improve. This happened to me in my French learning journey. I had studied French for about 6 months, and I was right at the transition point into Phase 2. I was making a ton of mistakes, but I was nevertheless able to hold meaningful conversations with people using the language. When I say meaningful, I mean the ability to exchange ideas and information, not to talk about anything complex. I stagnated at this level for months, because I was so caught up in USING the language that I forgot to improve at it. I was proud of my ability to "speak" French, so I thought that I had reached a level I was happy with. If new, challenging concepts were introduced to me, I shrugged them off, because I was technically already "speaking" the language. Looking back at it, I should have adjusted my focus and rejected the ego that I had developed from finally being able to speak frog language.

It took me a while to realize that to truly work through Phase 2 and become fluent, I needed to go back and improve things, gain more vocabulary, and refine my speaking and comprehension. I needed to revamp my method and refine my focus. Through many months of introspection, I finally developed the ideal way to break out of the "intermediate plateau" and ultimately reach fluency.

Active Learning in Phase 2

At this stage, you should continue using the Gigachad Method where you watch videos and seek the meanings of words and phrases that you judge as being important. The core idea of what you need to do remains the same in Phase 2, but some details need to be tweaked. You should have already become very comfortable with the most common words/phrases in the language. Remember that something like 80% of what is said comes from roughly 20% of the words in any given language.

I previously advised you to identify the most commonly occurring words and to translate them on Google Translate. However, once you know most, if not all, of the common words in a language, you need to start focusing on the other 20% of what is said. You should begin to allow yourself to focus on more niche words and phrases that you do not encounter as frequently, and you can use the same technique as you did in Phase 1 to do so. A huge problem in this phase is complacency, as it is easy to dismiss a random vocab word like *concrete* or *overalls* with the excuse that you'll never encounter it. However, the times that I recalled and accurately used the words *concrete* and *overalls* in French were some of the most memorable moments in my entire language learning journey. By learning niche vocabulary, you unlock a whole new way to shock natives through your detailed and refined knowledge of their language. It happens all the time for me, because I deliberately put in the work to polish my languages up to a high level of shine. Therefore, I encourage you to envision this step as if you are an explorer looking for rare, buried treasure. You may have to push yourself to find and learn niche vocabulary, but the rewards will be immense and gratifying.

When focusing on niche vocabulary, you **must** continue to learn words and phrases **in context**. It can be tempting in this phase to try to memorize words off a list or just randomly in isolated situations, as it may feel like there are simply too many words and not enough time to encounter them all naturally. You must resist this urge, and continue to only focus on what you find in context.

With the less relevant vocabulary comes a little less exposure to the same words while listening to the language. Due to this, and your improved level in the language, you can now comfortably switch from learning one thing to two things concretely a day. That means that you can identify two words/phrases and commit those to memory

each day, repeating them out loud to yourself throughout the day and writing them down in some place of your choosing, if desired. I always start with one thing a day and eventually move up to two, but I personally find that concretely committing three things to memory in a day is simply too much. I recommend then, that you stick to a commitment to learning two things a day for the entirety of the remainder of your language learning journey. I assume that by this point, you should have already seen how amazing your progress in a language snowballs when you consistently apply this well-paced, minimalistic approach every day.

People who know my method always ask me, “When can I turn off subtitles and begin watching videos without them?” The short answer is that you can whenever you feel that you are capable of it or if you just feel like doing it for fun, but I personally keep subtitles on all the way up to fluency. I find that it is so much easier to improve and pinpoint words/phrases that you don’t know with subtitles on, and that is precisely my goal when watching videos in my target language every day. My daily use of the Gigachad Method through watching videos is almost exclusively reserved for the acquisition of new words and phrases in context, and I do not use it to perfect my listening capabilities (that being said, your listening skills will naturally improve in the process).

I’ve only advised you to study by watching YouTube videos up until this point. Watching YouTube videos will continue to be the best way to expose yourself to a vast array of subjects in a short amount of time. However, once you are comfortably in Phase 2, I think that TV shows become an excellent option for very useful input. In Phase 1, you don’t typically have enough of an understanding of the language to enjoy the show and get much out of it, but even in the beginning of Phase 2 you should be able to understand a lot and at least follow the general plot. You do not need to understand every line of dialogue, but you don’t want to feel completely lost while watching. TV shows typically stick to a central plot or theme that allows you to repetitively be exposed to similar things. This means that new vocabulary that you learn in one episode is likely to be used in the following episodes. I **strongly** recommend watching soap operas in Phase 2. They are one of the core tools that I use in every language to reach a high level. They typically have a ton, sometimes hundreds or thousands, of episodes, so you really get used to hearing the same people speak over a long period of time. These shows usually follow the day to day lives of a set group of people, and they contain many

scenes depicting everyday situations. Because of this, soap operas are an excellent type of content to utilize the Gigachad Method with, all the way to fluency.

It is important to note here that I do not think that it is a good idea to watch movies in order to learn a language. Movies are too spontaneous and short-lived to be useful unless you understand mostly everything. However, I strongly encourage you to watch movies just to have fun with your language. I'm simply saying that movies should never be a replacement for YouTube videos or TV shows while using the Gigachad Method.

Investigate Everything That You Do Not Understand

Will you ever reach a point in your target language where you understand everything? No. Not even native speakers ever reach the point where they understand literally every word in their own language. However, you need to put yourself in the mindset of wanting to understand everything so that you can continue to push yourself and improve. In Phase 1, you had a burning desire to uncover the language and make sense of it. Now in Phase 2, you need to keep that burning desire, but instead align it towards uncovering the remaining things that you haven't discovered yet. To best achieve this, I recommend that you investigate **everything** that you do not understand.

I say to investigate everything, because in Phase 2, there won't always be a clear hierarchy of which words and phrases are most important like in Phase 1. At the start of Phase 2, you don't literally need to sit there and translate *every single unknown word*, as that would take too much time and completely distract from the content you're watching. However, your goal throughout Phase 2 should be to get to the point where translating every single unknown word is not a burden. It is really common for someone to reach a high level in a language where they understand 90% of it, but they filter out the other 10% because they rarely need all of the details to fully follow what is said. If you want to have success throughout Phase 2 and ultimately reach fluency, you need to have this hunger to completely conquer the language. The idea of investigating everything may sound intimidating to some people, but I can just about guarantee that after many months of doing this and committing just two things to memory every single day, you'll be surprised at how few unknown words will remain.

There will still be certain classes of words and phrases that you ignore even as you

get very close to fluency. These are typically extremely niche words and phrases that you don't even care to know in your own language. For example, unless you're a medical professional, I guarantee you never committed a lot of anatomy terms to memory even in your native language. So if you encounter a word and you find yourself saying, "I don't even know this in MY language!", chances are you can ignore it.

Previously in Phase 1, you shouldn't have been worried about perfecting the use of the words and phrases that you've learned. You've been instructed to use Google Translate to determine the meaning of things and then slowly improve your use of them over time. However, once you become competent in a language in Phase 2, you could sometimes benefit from receiving a deeper understanding of a word when you are translating it. I recommend that you try to use the translator *Reverso*, which is also an online tool like Google Translate. Reverso, unlike Google Translate, will give you multiple definitions and even show you many example sentences where the same word/phrase is found. I only recommend this now in Phase 2, because I find that beginners won't be able to properly benefit from the context provided. I still use Google Translate most of the time, but I sometimes fall back on Reverso if I need extra support. If your target language is distant from your native language, I recommend using Reverso earlier on to get extra context for your translations.

Reinvestigate Things That You Already Know

During Phase 2, another one of your objectives should be to refine your knowledge of the language to correct your bad habits and mistakes, as well as to fill in any gaps that you may have. Reinvestigating things that you already know is one of the most useful things that not a lot of language gurus talk about, but it has the potential to dramatically improve and refine your skills during Phase 2. I receive so many messages every day from people telling me that they have learned a language, but they don't really feel competent or fluent in it. They continue to make mistakes and trip over their words even though they've been studying the language for months or years. I understand how frustrating this can be, but I have a simple trick for this that can quickly fix the issue. Well, in reality, it's more of a guiding principle than a trick.

During Phase 2, I encourage you to go back and review the basics of the language.

I've already written a lot about how 80% of what is said comes from only 20% of the words that exist in the language. At this point, you should be *extremely* familiar with the most common words in the language, but I guarantee that you are still making little mistakes with them. You need to go back to the basics and effectively check everything again from zero (Don't worry, this step doesn't take long at all). You don't need to actually check everything, but you should deliberately take another look at things that you've been saying already automatically for a while. This time you already know what the words mean, so you will more so focus on their exact usage in the sentence, small grammatical characteristics about them (e.g., gender), and their pronunciation.

For example, I thought that the word for *group* in French was feminine for years until I went back and deliberately studied it. I was saying *la groupe* instead of *le groupe*. I'm not even sure if I always used it wrong, but deliberately focusing on a basic word again after a lot of experience allowed me to perfectly iron out my issues with it. Another example is the word *maison* in French. For some reason, I thought that it was *maisone* with an extra *e* at the end for years. This simple misconception drastically changed my pronunciation of the word, so I was saying it wrong forever. There I was, an advanced French speaker, butchering one of the simplest nouns in the language. I advise you to go back and double check how you're using even the most basic greetings from "hello" to "how are you". You are highly likely to discover at least a few things that will make you question your entire existence. Don't let this discourage you, though. Most people never do this type of thing, as they feel like they are too good to review the basics. Oftentimes people get so caught up in the new things they are learning that they never master the old things they previously learned. Don't be that person.

Learning Grammar

I have **not once** yet talked about how to learn grammar in this book, and that was very much so on purpose. I haven't mentioned it, because I never truly study grammar. I try to not even think about grammar until I am in Phase 2 (although I automatically will learn some of it in Phase 1). There is never a time in my language learning journey all the way from picking a language to fluency where I sit down and say to myself "I am going to study grammar." It is much better to focus on acquiring words and phrases at

the start of your learning than to focus on learning grammar. Similar to the way that I learn new words/phrases, I learn grammar naturally and in context during my normal study routine.

While you are listening to, reading, or speaking your target language, you will inevitably come across grammatical concepts that are not clear to you or that you do not understand. These could include grammatical gender, word order, tenses, case endings, etc. When you encounter a grammatical concept that you do not understand, I encourage you to ignore it the majority of the time. I promise that through repeated exposure to the same concept over a long enough period of time, you will naturally begin to understand it. Of course, this may not always be sufficient, and you may be very curious about what is happening with a certain grammatical structure and want to investigate it.

You should treat grammar just as you do new words/phrases. If you encounter a grammatical structure or concept that interests you, or seems extra useful, you should seek out an explanation online. For almost every language, there are tons of grammar explanations just a Google search away. For more obscure languages, you may need a textbook or even a grammar professor to explain it. When you find an explanation, feel free to read it or watch the video explaining it. However, I tend to only lightly skim an article or skip around a video when I do this. This will give you a nice surface-level understanding of the grammatical rule that will satisfy your curiosity. It is unrealistic or even impossible for you to read an article or watch a video explaining a grammar rule and immediately understand it and be able to apply it to your own speech. You desperately need to see the rule repeated in context, which no way of grammar study will sufficiently supply you with.

Once you have gotten a light taste for the grammatical concept, you'll know what to be on the lookout for, which will enable you to master it over time. Allow me to give you an example.

While studying Saudi Arabian Arabic, I translated a phrase that contained the future tense conjugation of a verb. This made me curious as to how to form the future tense of verbs in general. Therefore, I searched up an article explaining how to form the future tense in Saudi Arabian Arabic. From a light skimming of the article, I discovered that adding the consonant ب at the beginning of a verb is one way to change it into the

future tense. I looked back at the verb that I had translated, and I realized it begins with a ب. Then I continued my studies as normal, but I continued to notice verbs that began with the same letter.

I did not memorize all of the ways to make verbs into the future tense, nor did I do exercises on conjugating verbs that I already know into the future tense. I simply noticed a word, became curious about its grammar, and quickly gained a little bit of a better understanding of it. I may forget it very quickly, but I am sure to encounter more future tense verbs as I progress. By the 10th time I reference the rule, I am sure to understand it. It is always best to first only lightly research a rule followed by learning it concretely over time.

Another good and common example has to do with cases in Russian. You do not need to be able to read Cyrillic in order to understand this example. Let's say I'm learning Russian, and I have already become familiar with the word *язык*, which means *language*. However, while I am watching a video, I notice that someone says *на языке*, which means "in the language". I am confused, because I see that the letter *e* has been added to the end of *язык*. So I search for an explanation on Google, and I'm met with many sources explaining Russian cases. From a quick skim, I gather that the *e* has been added to *язык*, because the word is in the prepositional case. Then I move on and continue studying as usual.

I could have sat there for 400 hours trying to memorize all 6 of the Russian cases. I could have even sat for 100 hours just trying to understand the prepositional case and all the various endings that words could take in it. Instead, I focused on the bigger picture and identified something to look out for. Then, while studying Russian further, I noticed many more words followed by *на* which were also in the prepositional case. If you slowly add onto this over time, you'll eventually understand Russian cases (or whatever the grammar point is in whatever language you are studying). If you try to dive head first and memorize explanations, you'll lack real-world context and you won't be able to functionally apply the proper grammar to your speech. At the end of the day, learning grammar is just pattern recognition, with the caveat that sometimes you need to look up some explanations so that you know what patterns to look out for in the first place.

With all that being said about how you shouldn't deliberately sit down and study

grammar, I must acknowledge that there are some people who genuinely like grammar. Remember that language learning is supposed to be fun, so if you enjoy studying grammar, I encourage you to do it. Any contact with a language, unless it is blatant misinformation, is good contact with the language. Some people are very happy reading long explanations and nerding out about linguistics. However, that is not me, and I have never had to concentrate on grammar. I speak Russian with a pretty accurate command of cases, and I have never deliberately memorized endings or read grammatical explanations in detail.

CHAPTER 6

Diversify Your Input

As you progress through Phase 2, you will unlock some new methods of input that you can use to improve your language skills. These will serve as excellent alternatives to watching YouTube videos or TV shows that will dramatically assist you on your journey.

Diversify your input

“Keep the process fresh and fun by switching things up sometimes”

- Commandment no. 9

Podcasts (I Proper Love Them)

I’ve already discussed how people constantly ask me, “When can I turn off subtitles while watching YouTube videos?” And as I mentioned, I always try to use subtitles when consuming content in video format. However, this begs the question of how I train myself to be able to understand content without subtitles. Well, my ability to understand speech without subtitles comes mostly from listening to podcasts.

Hands down, my favorite way to learn a language is through listening to podcasts. Specifically, my favorite method is listening to podcasts while going for a walk outside. This combination is responsible for at least 50% of my success. Unlike with videos, podcasts deprive you of the visual representation of the words, as there are no subtitles for an audio-only medium (duh). Of course, you could read along with a transcript, but I prefer to walk and listen simultaneously. Since you are not reading subtitles, I recommend starting this in Phase 2 when you have a sufficient comprehension level to understand at least the gist of the podcast. This is something that I then continue to do all the way up to fluency in every language. Not everyone is going to love to go for walks while listening like I do, but there are countless ways to consume a podcast, even if you’re slightly distracted while doing so.

Listening to podcasts largely replaces my method of watching videos on YouTube as I advance through Phase 2. I find podcasts to be much more enjoyable than sitting

in front of a screen, and it really helps my concentration to be outside walking at the same time. However, the core idea of learning remains the same as with video content. When I am early on in Phase 2, I won't understand every single word that the podcaster is saying. Therefore, I will sometimes stop walking, pause the podcast, and search up the meaning of an unknown word or phrase on Google Translate. In the beginning, I don't do this with every unknown word or phrase, as that would be too distracting. I do it only with things that either obstruct my understanding or that sound useful to know. However, I always eventually reach the point where I run into so few unknown words that I end up stopping and translating everything that I don't know. After I translate something, I'll also often rewind the podcast or go back a few seconds to hear the word or phrase again.

Since I am an absolute Chad, I am not afraid to look like an idiot in public. When I encounter a new word or phrase in a podcast, I will repeat it out loud to myself and even try to create new sentences using it. Truthfully, no one will think that you're speaking to yourself, as you'll most likely have headphones on anyway. They will just assume that you are on a phone call with your e-girl (or e-boy) or something. For the vast majority of my learning journey starting at the beginning of Phase 2, the two new things that I learn a day will come directly from podcasts. Most new words and phrases that I encounter will be translated and forgotten about, but I'll pick one or two to write in the notes app on my phone. I'll then concretely and fully learn those that day.

There are two types of podcasts that you could use for this learning method. Firstly, you could use podcasts that are in your target language and are made for learners of the language. These usually feature podcast hosts who speak simply and articulate clearly while staying on a certain set topic in order not to confuse listeners. The host will also oftentimes explain certain aspects of the language like a certain vocabulary word, expression, or grammar detail, which will further assist you. I have used many of these podcasts in my learning journey, and I absolutely love them, so I recommend this type of podcast with all my heart. They are incredibly beneficial from the start of Phase 2 all the way to the end of your learning journey, and I still often listen to podcasts like this in some of my more underdeveloped languages.

The other type of podcasts consists of those created for native speakers of the language. They are typically faster, more colloquial, and more spontaneous than those made for

learners. Chances are that you will not understand everything that is said in these at the start of Phase 2. However, they can still be very beneficial. Just keep in mind that for native level podcasts you do not need to pause to translate every single little thing that you do not understand. Try to comprehend the meaning through context, but do not stress if you miss something important in one of these podcasts. Fully understanding a fast-speaking podcast host with multiple guests in your target language should be your ultimate goal, not something that you master early on in Phase 2. There is one French podcast called *Change ma vie*, which is my favorite podcast and the best I have ever heard and used in my life. I have listened to every single episode of this podcast without fail, and I have thus become intimately familiar with the host's way of speaking and the vocabulary that she employs. Through translating unknown things and copying her way of speaking, I now express myself very similarly to her, at least in formal situations.

I just want to reiterate one more time how monumental podcasts have been in my language-learning career. They are by far my favorite way to learn once I reach Phase 2. I encourage you to try to fit a podcast into your language learning routine in one way or another. If you find the right one that interests you, it will make the learning process all the more fun and memorable. I'm doing backflips writing this right now because the idea of sharing my love of podcasts and the success I have obtained with them genuinely excites me.

Studying With Music

Another great way to learn a language in Phase 2 is through music. If you haven't been listening to music in your target language, you need to start as soon as possible. It is very fun, and it is an excellent doorway into a country's culture. I will usually discover music through random Spotify recommendations, or through searching up the top 50 songs within a certain country. Then, as I listen to the songs more and more, I will discover a few favorites that I have a genuine gravitation towards, and I will use those to study. You can find the music in any way you wish, but you are likely to also have a few favorites after a short while.

Once you have listened to a song a lot and you know the general rhythm and lyrical pattern, you can start analyzing the lyrics to learn some new things. I do not recommend

doing this with songs that you are not quite familiar with. Only do this with songs that you've heard a lot and you love. Find the lyrics in their original language online, and pull up the song on whatever streaming service you use. I typically use YouTube since I would already be on my computer while doing this. Then, I will play the song while following along with the lyrics. I will usually notice some things that I already understand but that I wasn't previously able to hear properly in the song. That is because when singing, artists will often shorten, elongate, or completely change the pronunciation of certain things. Sometimes, realizing that a word I knew was in the song will be enough for me to clearly hear it the next time I listen.

I do not recommend that you sit and translate every lyric right away. You should focus on the parts that are particularly interesting to you, and then search up their meaning on Google Translate. I have, on countless occasions, used some song lyrics as my two things I learn in a day. They are often words or phrases that are very niche that I would not have easily come in contact with otherwise. However, you must be *very careful* when using song lyrics to learn new things.

Yes, words and phrases are *technically* in context inside of a song. However, songs are truthfully just poems that are sung out loud. They are written in a very artistic way which means that lyrics may be really awkward or nonsensical when said outside of the song. Therefore, it bears repeating that you should be careful with what you learn from a song. Despite this, I strongly encourage you to have fun with it. If you choose to memorize something from a song, I recommend simply double-checking with a native whether it is something that makes sense in regular speech. That way you can be sure that you are not speaking like a caveman or Shakespeare. I have, however, purposefully memorized awkward or cringey song lyrics on numerous occasions (see if you can recall my earlier example) in order to use them with natives for a comedic effect.

CHAPTER 7

The Evolution of Speaking Practice

Continue to speak to yourself out loud and in your head frequently in your target language all the way up to fluency. One fun thing that I like to do is to freestyle TED Talks out loud in my different languages in order to practice, and it works very well for catching my own mistakes and improving my general speaking skills. However, the goal of this hobby is of course to speak to real, live humans.

Speaking Practice in Phase 2

Speaking with humans in Phase 2 is arguably the most rewarding thing that a language learner can do. In Phase 1, your conversations are often extremely limited. However in Phase 2, by acquiring more niche vocabulary and practicing a lot, you will slowly gain the ability to be more dynamic and spontaneous in your conversations. You will start to have a ton of genuine fun and be able to connect more deeply with your speaking partners. But similarly to when actively studying alone, you must continue to push yourself and your limits while speaking in Phase 2.

Improving your speaking in Phase 2 is all about getting outside of your comfort zone. It is too easy to become complacent and continue having the same conversations over and over again. While this repetition is a great technique in Phase 1 to get used to the language, now you must purposefully push yourself into the realm of the unknown. You must take risks and not be afraid of making a fool of yourself. Every successful polyglot that I know has mastered the ability to not care what people think about them at every level of speaking competency.

Throughout Phase 2, you should continue using Discord or whatever platform you prefer to find speaking partners. If that is in real life, good for you. But keep in mind that you *absolutely do not* need to speak a language in real life *at all* to become fluent in it. Online speaking partners are just as good as, if not better than, living, breathing speakers standing in front of you. I say this, because real life conversations are often

short and spontaneous, while online discussions can have more flexibility. It's also more convenient to arrange online discussions and have interactions with multiple people at the same time.

Being Corrected: Drop the Ego

I believe that a huge issue in Phase 2 is the following: since you have a decent and usable level in the language at this stage, you can often develop an inflated ego and a greater fear of messing up or making a fool of yourself. If someone says a word/phrase that you do not understand, you must continue to ask them to explain it or translate it. You cannot develop an ego in Phase 2 like I personally did back in the day. I've seen many friends slow down dramatically in their language journey when they stop allowing people to correct them. I too have been guilty of this blunder. Back when I was in Phase 2 for certain languages, I was afraid to ask someone to repeat themselves or to tell me what something meant, because I thought that it would make me look stupid. I was already speaking the language, so it felt extra embarrassing to miss something or to make an oopsie! Now, if my comprehension is inhibited, I always ask for clarification. This allows me to confront unknown words head on, which means that there is a strong chance that I'll understand them the next time I hear them said.

It is very important to continue to ask your speaking partners to correct you in Phase 2. In this phase, the temptation to speak without asking for corrections is very high. Your speaking ability is no longer a hindrance to normal conversation, so native speakers will typically feel little obligation to correct your tiny mistakes. Of course, there is a time and place for this, and having fun in the language should come first. Remember, however, that the best way to remember something is to be corrected for saying it incorrectly. You will probably feel embarrassed sometimes, and you'll often feel full of shame. However, these are emotions that hyperpolyglot gigachads embrace and run towards. Accepting these feelings and running towards them helped me grow, both as a person and as a language learner.

Leave Your Comfort Zone

In addition to asking for corrections, you should explore different ways of saying the

same thing that you have been saying forever. Typically there are multiple ways of saying the same thing in a language. Of course, this does not apply to every word/phrase, but it is common enough to be important. In Phase 2, you will often understand the different ways to say the same thing, but you have probably stuck to only using one of the forms yourself. Up until this point, you have not had a good reason to concretely commit an alternative to your repertoire for active usage. However, consciously moving it to your active vocabulary in Phase 2 will make your speech more dynamic and impressive.

For example, the phrase for “at the same time” in French is “en même temps”. This is the way that I said it for years. However, another way to say it is “à la fois”. I passively knew what “à la fois” meant, but I never used it myself. One day, I identified this, and I even discovered a small nuance differentiating the two of them. Therefore, I learned “à la fois” as my one new thing that day. Now I can use both forms whenever I like in a dynamic way. Less advanced speakers or speakers with confidence issues often cling onto one way to say something in order to facilitate speech. This is especially relevant to languages with cases, as you have probably become extremely comfortable using the same sentences in order to ensure that your grammar is correct. Keep pushing yourself and allow yourself to make mistakes while experimenting with cases. I can still remember the times that people corrected me over 2 years ago while studying Russian, and I can assure you that I haven’t repeated those mistakes.

To really become fluent and capable of speaking about a wide variety of subjects, you must begin consuming content and speaking about topics that do not interest you very much. This may be slightly less fun than when you deal with topics that you love, but since you’re competently using your foreign language, it should still be enjoyable. Some topics are going to be very boring for you, but it is still a good idea to have an idea of at least the general vocabulary associated with it. For example, I do not give a flying fadoodle about woodworking, but it is still a good idea to know the words “wood”, “saw”, and “sanding” in my target language. These aren’t necessarily things that I would commit to memory, but I will be much better equipped the 0.0001% of the time that these words appear if I have at least watched one video where they were mentioned before. It can be quite comical when someone speaks a language well but doesn’t know the word for something really basic. There was a time where I was very elegantly and intelligently discussing global warming in French, but I could not for the life of me

remember the word for "blanket" one minute later. I genuinely do not think that I ever learned it before that moment. Not knowing the word "blanket" did not mean that I was not fluent, but it would still be ideal to avoid situations where you don't know simple words like that.

The Hard Truth About Speaking

I have laid out truthfully everything you need to know in order to eventually become a very competent speaker of any language. The biggest hurdle between you and fluency in your target language is time. If you want to speak a language fluently, you need to spend *a lot* of time speaking it. I have absolutely no idea how many hours I have spoken French for, but I can confidently say that I have been speaking it multiple times a week for four years straight. You ultimately get good at what you practice. If you consistently combine speaking out loud to yourself and speaking with people on Discord while ensuring that your ego is in check, I can promise you that you'll reach fluency. Just please keep in mind that, while daunting, this process is extremely enjoyable. Throughout my years of learning each of my languages, I've made countless friends who I've even met up with abroad. I have tons of vivid memories and funny stories from all of my interactions with strangers on the internet, and I wouldn't trade this experience for anything.

CHAPTER 8

Language Learning Supplements

The ideas outlined in this chapter can be implemented in both Phase 1 or Phase 2. However, I felt it was appropriate to include these in Phase 2 of the book, as I really want you to concentrate on the core learning method in Phase 1 while ignoring any potential distractions at the beginning. That being said, I would strongly encourage you to apply this chapter to your learning in Phase 1 as long as you feel ready for it.

Spice Up Your Language Life With Some Fun on the Side

Use Duolingo

“If the green owl is calling, you’d better answer the phone”

- Commandment no. 10

A bodybuilding gym bro does two major things in life. They lift heavy objects (1), and they eat food (2). A language learner also should do two major things. They should study using the Gigachad Method interacting with content in the language (1), and they should speak with people using the language (2). Bodybuilders often take supplements to even further assist them in their journey, but this is not strictly required. Similarly, language learners can also supplement their studies with a variety of activities that are not required, but that can further help. These typically include things such as language learning apps, tutors, classes, or flashcards/spaced repetition systems. Bodybuilders sometimes take steroids, which jack up their testosterone through the roof and speed up their progress exponentially. Language learners have their own steroid, and it is called Commandment #10.

I assume that you were shocked when you first read that commandment. “Language Simp is advocating the use of Duolingo? What universe am I in?” The truth is that the commandment means a lot more than what it may appear to at first glance. It is not specifically telling you that you *have* to use Duolingo. My true fatherly advice to you

is that you should use whatever supplement (app, website, service, etc.) works for you and you enjoy using. As long as you complete your daily studying using the Gigachad Method, I encourage you to explore whatever supplemental services your little heart desires. You just have to make sure that whatever you supplement your learning with, be it Duolingo or a classroom, that you do not let it overtake the main process outlined in this book. At the end of the day, we all have monkey brains so feel free to sit in a class staring at the blackboard or drool over how epic your green owl streak is if that's what gets your dopamine pumping. We all have different things that make us tick, and supplementing your learning with something you really enjoy will be great for your progress. Just don't stress over achieving maximum efficiency with whatever you choose.

Language Learning Apps

Monolingual betas *love* to talk about language learning apps. I frequently notice them desperately searching for that one special app that will allow them to learn a language with no effort in little time. The truth is that there is no magic app like that out there, although there are many great apps that can supplement your main learning method. I am a firm believer that any contact with a language is good contact with it, as long as you are not being exposed to things that are blatantly false. Therefore, you should pick an app to use that you genuinely enjoy. If you enjoy it, and you're learning useful things here and there, then you have made a great choice. I recommend shopping around and taking advantage of the numerous free trials/free versions of apps on the market.

The elephant in the room is obviously Duolingo, which I will hereinafter refer to as Luodingo in order to stay on brand (my editor has threatened me, sternly warning me against forgetting to do so). So many learners, including myself, enjoy Luodingo from time to time. I personally haven't used it in years, but I have nothing but fond memories of it. I remember it being enjoyable, and I still remember some specific words that I learned from it. I particularly vividly remember learning the word for "skirt" in French on it. I genuinely am not sure if I would know that word today if it were not for Luodingo. I am a large, hairy man who does not wear skirts, so it was not terribly relevant to me. However, it technically did fill a gap in vocabulary that I did not naturally obtain from my studies. Therefore, if you decide to use it, treat Luodingo as a way to learn niche

vocabulary as well as to reinforce vocabulary that you have already learned.

The greatest feature of Luodingo and other similar apps is that they gamify the process of learning, which keeps some people coming back to maintain or increase their streak, levels, progress, or whatever metric the app uses. If that keeps you personally motivated, then that is excellent! However, this sometimes results in new learners **only** using an app to learn, which I must continue to advise against. I have never seen someone reach Phase 2 when they have only used an app like Luodingo, but I've seen very accomplished polyglots preach about the effectiveness of many different apps and games as a supplement. Just use an app when you feel like it, and keep it fun. If you want to maintain a streak or reach a high level in something, your language skills are only going to benefit.

In summary, you could learn a language from zero to fluency without **ever** using a language learning app, but I encourage you to give some a chance if they look interesting to you. As long as you don't use them to replace your main method, you will surely benefit from doing so. I personally am a huge fan of RPGs, so I usually give the new RPG language learning games a try when they come out. I am also interested in seeing how VR changes language learning games, and I am planning on trying a few new games when I get a chance. In general, I use what looks interesting when I feel like it, and it contributes to my overall stress-free, yet effective, language learning approach.

Tutors

Hiring a tutor is a common alternative to speaking with random people or language exchange partners on the internet. There are many services online connecting students with tutors that are reputable and arguably affordable. There is no doubt that having someone dedicated to assisting you with your learning can be useful, but you can absolutely learn a language without ever spending any time with a tutor. The big issue is that repeated sessions with a tutor can quickly become expensive, unless you are learning a language of a country with a weaker economy than your country. On the other hand, speaking to people on Discord or finding a language exchange partner is completely free. On a platform like Discord, you also have the opportunity to speak with new people every single day which really helps to diversify your input in many different

ways. Also, Discord is bound to foster a much less formal environment than a tutoring session. It's more relaxed, which helps me feel more comfortable and be more outgoing.

If you do decide to hire a tutor, I would specifically pick someone who is a non-native speaker of the language. This may sound counterintuitive, but allow me to explain. A non-native speaker who spent years studying the language to reach a high level will be much better equipped to explain the language than a native speaker, in my opinion. They are able to relate to you and see the language as you see it. A native speaker most likely spawned in a country where it's spoken, so they just subconsciously know its rules. With that being said, native speakers can certainly still be great teachers. If someone had a gun to my head and forced me to get a tutor, I would only meet with them about once every two weeks. I would use the time as enhanced speaking practice where they correct every little mistake I make. Normal people on Discord most likely won't want to sit and meticulously correct every little mistake, but a tutor is being paid to do it.

I would **not** have the tutor teach me things directly. I wouldn't pick a tutor who wanted a structured session where we go over certain, predefined things. I would just use them to have my questions answered and my mistakes corrected. If you go down this route, which is a perfectly valid supplement to normal learning, ensure that you do not replace all of your speaking practice with a tutor. You still want to have regular, spontaneous conversations with people on the internet as your main form of speaking practice. The takeaway here is that if you think that hiring a tutor may help your learning or help you stay motivated, and you have the money for it, I encourage you to give it a try.

Language Learning Classes

Some people simply cannot shake the association that they have between language learning and the classroom. You've probably realized by now that you never need to step foot in a classroom to learn a language to fluency, but can classes help you along the way? The answer is, of course, yes. Similarly to apps or tutors, classes are another option for supplementing your learning process. I would never rely on them alone to teach me a language, but I could see how someone could desire the structure offered through classroom learning. If you struggle to keep a routine, maybe enrolling in a class could

be the extra push needed to stay consistent.

I personally took language classes in high school, but since I was not interested at all, I didn't learn a thing. In college I took one Arabic course, and it taught me how to read and write well in the language. Could I have learned that on my own? Absolutely, although it certainly ensured that I knew every little thing about Arabic writing after a few short months. I personally prefer to focus on speaking a language, and the classroom environment is typically not the best for this. This is because classroom learning is usually very unnatural. You are not exposed to long free flowing conversations in their proper context. You are instead bombarded with facts about the language. If you're already decent at the language though, these facts could reinforce things that you may have noticed in passing during normal studying.

Classes can also be expensive and time consuming, but that may not be an issue for you. In general, feel free to experiment with classes if you believe that it is something you would enjoy. Just ensure that you treat it as a supplement to your learning, not as the main way you study. I see this mistake with high school students who seriously want to learn a language. They often tell me that they are learning a language in high school, so they study a bit outside of school to reinforce things. It should be the opposite. They should study just a bit in school in order to consolidate and build upon the vast majority of learning that they do outside of school. If you're going to enroll in a language class, I recommend joining something with a small class size that is designed for serious learners.

Textbooks

If you've ever seen a video of me, you know that one of my eyes likes to drift off to Narnia every couple of seconds. Partly due to that, it is impossible for me to read text off of a page like a normal human being. It causes great pain that stays with me for days after just one minute of trying to read a book. Because of that, textbooks or reading in general are not things that I even consider when learning a language.

However, I'm sure you can guess what I will say about textbooks in general. Yes, they can help. They can absolutely teach you new vocab, and they can be rich sources of grammar explanations. Of course, as with all the other earlier examples, just don't let

it replace your normal routine. I know many people who love textbooks and use them every day. Yes, they are technically nerds, but nerds are way better than monolingual betas. When I was learning French, I had a French textbook. I would reference it and learn little vocabulary words here and there from it. I never read through it from cover to cover, but it certainly gave me a slight boost. Even back then I understood that it was only a tool to reference, not an entire guide to becoming fluent.

If you decide to buy a textbook, be sure to do your research on which is the best bang for your buck. Just be realistic! I've seen friends purchase five textbooks and never open most of them. Start with one, and get some value out of it. I think that the greatest potential help that a textbook can offer you is through priming your brain to notice things, specifically grammar. If you read a lot about a certain rule that you haven't even noticed yet, you may have an easier time identifying it out in the wild after reading a lot about it. Due to my eye issues, I sometimes listen to grammar explanations (instead of reading them) just for fun. As with everything else I've discussed in this chapter, you can give a cheap textbook a shot as a supplement if you're curious.

Clarification in case you are curious: Owing to my eye issue I have dimmed my computer and phone screens, increased text fonts to the size of Jupiter, and I wear sunglasses while studying. Despite this, I still cannot read large quantities of text on the internet. If I read Russian for more than 5 minutes in any context, it causes me immense pain. I've learned to work around it though.

Flashcards/Spaced Repetition

This part of the book will contain my most controversial take. I absolutely hate flashcards and spaced repetition systems for language learning. I think that they are the most useless and annoying thing in the hobby. The hobby is fun, but staring at little white rectangles with words on them until your eyes fall out is not fun. Flashcards teach you new words completely devoid of context, which is the antithesis of what I believe as a language learner. I've seen some flashcard systems that provide sample sentences, but

even those sample sentences don't give you enough context to really learn those words. Some people might choose to use flashcards to review words that they have previously learned in context. However, I promise that if you use my method of learning one to two things a day, you will not need this type of review.

Additionally, flashcard users attempt to learn way too many words in one day. You've seen me advocate repeatedly for learning one to two things a day, but flashcard users bite off way more than they can chew. They eat the entire table trying to learn 30+ words in one sitting without any context. I strongly advise that you do not use any sort of flashcards to learn a language. From my point of view, it only makes sense when learning an alphabet and *maybe* kanji or Chinese characters. With all that being said, if you are an absolute maniac who enjoys flashcards, feel free to use them. Some people are freaks, and there is nothing I can do to change your underlying biochemistry. If you have fun with white rectangles, I am genuinely happy for you.



Gigachad Chad

- Supplements his language learning with things that he enjoys
- He doesn't care what people think about his favorite app
- Tried a class, but didn't like it. So he stopped going
- Uses Luodingo sometimes, because he finds it fun
- Has a ton of fun with, and gains great knowledge from his supplemental learning

Beta Bob

- Spends countless hours researching the best app/class/book to reach fluency with
- Thinks that the world will end if he uses an app that isn't 100% backed by science to teach you a language in 5 minutes
- Uses an app he hates, because a guru told him he has to
- Unironically talks about how he hates Luodingo. Calls it a complete waste of time
- Has no fun and doesn't end up with any beneficial, supplemental learning



CHAPTER 9

The End of Phase 2

After grinding out Phase 2 for many months to a few years, you will eventually approach the end of your journey with your target language. The big issue, however, is that it is extremely difficult to know when you've reached fluency or when it's a good idea to quit and move on.

It Never Truly Ends

If you thought the border between Phase 1 and Phase 2 was fuzzy, just wait until you hear about the end of Phase 2. The truth is that there is no real end to Phase 2. It sort of just continues forever, in perpetuity, until you choose to end it. Everyone has different goals and ambitions, and I encourage you to use your best judgment with regard to when your journey with a language has come to an end. Your decision could be related to burnout, boredom, another language that interests you, or the achievement of so much success that you're simply happy with your level. Later in this book, I will discuss quitting a language in-depth, but for now I just want you to understand that the choice is up to you.

Personally, I quit Phase 2 and officially retire a language simply when I feel super-duper competent in it. However, there are just no words in any language I could use to accurately describe this feeling. I do not know everything in French. I sometimes still make mistakes, I could learn new words, and I could still improve my accent. But I just don't care anymore. I am so good at French, and I continue to prove it to myself every time I interact with the language. In a world where I only cared about French, I could see myself grinding Phase 2 for another two years. However, I love other languages, and I want to cheat on French. Therefore, I consider my journey with French to be complete. There are also certified tests for language levels and the constantly debated "definition of fluency" to consider, but remember that I more so advocate for you trusting your gut for assessing when you've reached your desired level.

Test Preparation (Even if You Don't Plan on Taking the Test)

I am not a huge fan of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) system with its levels ranging from A1-C2. I know that there are other systems for judging language levels from non-European languages, but I am generally unfamiliar with those. I think that worrying about your level is a surefire way to encounter a lot of frustration and disappointment. It is a way to compare yourself to others, which will not be beneficial to your mental health. It may also force you into concentrating on things that are not essential to learning and having fun using a language. I certainly do not advise you to take tests from the A1-C1 level, as I believe those are wastes of time. You could instead concentrate on improving your level in the language, since you are not yet at the highest level.

With that being said, however, there is something magical to the idea of having a C2 certificate hanging up on your wall in a nice frame. C2 is the highest level according to CEFR, and passing the C2 test lands you a diploma stating that you are certified fluent for life in that language. I have not personally taken any of these tests, but I have taken and passed numerous practice tests which were previous versions of the real tests from previous years. I have additionally spoken to many friends who have passed the C2 exam, and I have gathered their insights.

First of all, the exams are typically very forgiving. I have numerous friends who have passed the C2 French exam, and the requirement for passing is only a 50/100 (50%)! Imagine taking a test in school and passing with a 51%. So nominally, the tests are not very difficult. There is plenty of room for mistakes, so you should not stress too much about perfection. You shouldn't go into the tests blindly, but remember that you have technically been preparing for the exam since you started the language. There are numerous good ways to prepare for a C2 exam. Keep in mind that these methods may be beneficial to you even if you never plan on taking the C2 exam. Remember that any contact with the language, except for blatant misinformation, is good contact with the language.

The C2 practice exams that I have taken always included a listening section. In this listening section, they normally play a recording by someone with a horrible, dogwater quality microphone. I think that they do this on purpose in order to really challenge

your listening skills. I swear that in some of these practice French exams, you would think that the recording was from the 1700's and the guy was speaking into a tin can. However, listening to these horrible audio samples drastically improved my listening comprehension in French because I had to work extra hard to understand what was being said. After the grueling task, it became super easy to understand normal French coming from a good microphone or a living breathing, person. Therefore, I recommend finding podcasts with horrible audio and listening to them to challenge yourself at the advanced level.

If you plan on taking the test, you should of course take practice tests online. They are very easy to find. The best way to take these, though, is to find a tutor online who specializes in preparation for the test. You can find many teachers online on tutoring sites who have proctored the test in the past. If you get with them, they can give you inside tips and tricks as well as additional practice test material. Even if you aren't going to take the real test, working with practice tests is a fun way to engage with your language. Just don't worry about your results or take them too seriously. Instead, look at them as a way to improve and learn a thing or two. You're bound to come across some words/phrases that you don't know, so use this time to learn them instead of punishing yourself for never having come across them before.

The Definition of Fluency

As with the CEFR language levels, I recommend that you do not stress about your level of fluency. Fluency is an extremely subjective measurement which continually drives language learners insane. However, if you hold a gun to my head and force me to define fluency, I will be able to give you a response. I define fluency as the level where you can speak and understand the language in a way that never causes a burden to yourself or others. That means that you can comfortably understand everything in the language, at least to the point where it is never inconvenient for you to consume content in the language. That also means that others are never inconvenienced having to speak to you in the language. They rarely misunderstand you, and they are comfortable speaking normally around you. They do not treat you as a learner. They treat you as someone who has already learned their language. You can make a rare mistake here or there, but you

catch it yourself before they can. You can sometimes miss a word the other person says, but asking them to repeat it once should be enough for you to get back on track. You can tell that my requirements for fluency are high, but that is the true definition in my eyes.

With that being said, nothing bothers language learners more than someone running around calling themselves fluent in a language or claiming that they have a higher level than what they have in reality. When you get lost in the rabbit hole of fluency and language levels, you tend to want to judge yourself as having a higher level than you actually have, which can come off as arrogant to other speakers. To combat this, I came up with a surefire way to avoid this problem and have people respect my language levels. When someone asks me how good I am at a language, I always undersell my abilities. If you are really advanced, but you tell someone that you are intermediate, when you begin speaking they can only be impressed. I find that if you claim that you have a higher level to someone, you will have a fragile ego when it comes to making mistakes and learning from them. You'll be more cautious in your speech, which will not help you to improve. When I undersell my level, I am more comfortable making mistakes and improving along the way. People also see this as you being humble, which is an admirable personality trait in a community full of people with big egos. I highly recommend that you give this a try yourself.

If you follow the strategies outlined in this book, I firmly believe that you can achieve fluency. If you learn two things concretely a day, you will have accumulated an unbelievable amount of knowledge after your months and years with the language. If you practice these things with other speakers while leaving your ego at home, you will rapidly refine your skills and eventually achieve greatness. It is that easy, and there is no need to overcomplicate it. Trust the process, and you will see spectacular success.

Act 4

Rebirth as a Hyperpolyglot Gigachad

CHAPTER 10

How to Sound Like a Native Speaker

Should You Really Want to Sound Like a Native Speaker?

Maybe not. I have purposely avoided discussing how to improve your accent throughout this entire book. That is because your accent does not necessarily correspond to your level in a language. I have met people who speak very poorly who have native pronunciation in their target language, and I have met people who speak fluently but have accents thicker than a bowl of oatmeal. I'm sure that you know of people with very thick accents in your own country who express themselves very well. They are highly functioning members of society, and you have no problem talking to them. Some language learners focus on their accent far too much in my opinion. You could waste a bunch of time trying to master the phonetic system to pronounce every word like a native, but if you only know 30 words, what's the point? You should focus on the language first, and perfecting the accent should be an afterthought. Furthermore, you should be proud of your foreign accent. It is a badge that shows that you learned someone else's language. It makes you unique, and it is a great conversation starter. This is true especially if you are learning a language that few people study, or if you are an American learning any language. A person who makes fun of you for your accent is not a person you would want to be friends with anyway.

Now, you still do need to work on your accent. You need to ensure that you are at least understood when speaking the language. Your main goal with your accent should be to reach a level where you are **never** a burden to anyone you're speaking to. You want people to clearly understand you and to never have to guess what you're saying. As long as that is the case, you have succeeded as far as I'm concerned. In my opinion, that is the baseline goal that every language learner should have. Everything else beyond that is just for extra fun.

With that being said, there are still a lot of people, myself included, who want to sound indistinguishable from a native in their target language. If you're anything like

me, you fantasize about one day sounding exactly like you were raised with the language, and I must admit that it is an enticing fantasy. There is no better feeling in the world than to be mistaken for a native speaker in your target language. It is the clearest sign that you have succeeded at the highest level. It means that your grammar, vocabulary, intonation, pronunciation, and every other tiny detail of your speech was perfect. I have personally been mistaken for a native speaker in most of my languages. It happens to me often in the languages I have studied the longest, and less often for those that I am newer to. I've found that people are quicker to assume you are a native when you are speaking a language that is less studied. For example, I haven't studied Arabic for that long, but if I say certain sentences to an Arab, they often assume that I am from Egypt. The bar is a bit higher for a language like French which is so globally studied, although I am often mistaken for a native in that as well.

As cool as it may be, sounding like a native is not easy. By my estimation, it is harder to learn to speak like a native than it is to learn the language in the first place. It takes a long time to reach that level, and even when you do, just one minor slip up will expose you as the foreigner you are. I see that as a fun game, however. Often, I join a Discord voice chat or speak to someone in real life, and I stretch the truth about where I am from in one of my languages. If it's one of my stronger ones, I can last a while before being exposed. It truly makes for a fun game that I highly recommend giving a shot.

The 3 Aspects of an Accent

So how can you go about mastering a native-like accent? First, you should understand the three aspects that make up your accent in a foreign language. They are as follows.

Aspect 1: Knowing the pronunciation of individual words

Every language is made up of words that have specific pronunciations. Native speakers have heard these words their entire lives, so they are highly unlikely to forget how one is pronounced. If you, as a foreign learner, don't know how a specific word is supposed to be pronounced, you most likely will not pronounce it correctly. This typically occurs with words that you may not have concretely memorized but that you know passively.

When you go to use it, you aren't sure how it's pronounced. Therefore, you may hesitate when saying it or just outright mispronounce it. This also often happens with words that you learned as a beginner and have been saying wrong for a long time. Over time you may not have realized that you have habitualized saying it wrong, but natives surely will. One great example of this is the word *bonjour* in French that I am sure everyone knows. I often hear very advanced French speakers mispronouncing this incredibly basic word, simply because they never became consciously aware of its true pronunciation. The *r* at the end of French words is often not pronounced, but notably, the *r* at the end of *bonjour* is pronounced very harshly. So many people, including myself, don't realize this for a surprisingly long amount of time, and so we get clocked as a foreigner right from the start of an interaction with a native.

When trying to master the accent, you should go back and review words that are deeply ingrained within you. Go back to the building blocks of the language, and make sure that you are saying them like a native would. Even simple words like "hello" and phrases like "how are you?" should not be ignored here.

Aspect 2: Producing the sounds of the language

Every language has a unique flavor to it. When you think of what Russian, French, or Chinese sound like for example, I'm sure that you can immediately hear the language in your mind. That is what I mean with Aspect 2. This "flavor" is easy to identify but difficult to define and reproduce, because it comes from the complex combination of the general feel of the language as well as every single one of its unique sounds. And yes, I mean every single sound in the language, from the relatively easy ones that also exist in your native language (even these will often differ subtly but noticeably) to the difficult to pronounce ones like the *r* in French, the *ɭ* in Russian, and the *ħ* in Arabic. If you can't make the language's unique sounds, people will not think you are native.

To get your reproduction of the general feel of a language to a native level, you have to really exaggerate the stereotypical qualities of the language like you're a standup comedian putting on an accent. For some reason, people feel uncomfortable or think that it's racist to try to emulate a foreign accent and sound stereotypical. The truth is that you **must** exaggerate in a stereotypical way in order to sound native. When I

speaking French, my voice becomes pretentious and feminine. When I speak Russian, it becomes more masculine and powerful. People love to say that French doesn't sound feminine or that Russian doesn't sound masculine, but those people are living in a fantasy world like *Minecraft* or something. If you can get over that hump, you can master the general feel of the language.

Sounds that exist in your native language should be easy to replicate in your target language. However, you may encounter difficulty if the sound is nested within a certain

consonant cluster, or if it's simply around letters that make it difficult to pronounce.

For these situations, as well as for mastering the unique sounds of your target language, I

Consonant Cluster

A group of consonants squished together that are really hard to pronounce for people without Slavic blood (e.g., *szcz* in Polish).

find that repetition works the best. To pronounce the *r* in French and the *ʁ* in Russian, I sat down and repeated them for hours on end over a few days until I could say them. There was a point where I couldn't do the French *r*, but after trying for hours, I finally got it. One extra thing that I *must* mention, because issues with it are so common, is the rolled *r*. Science has stated that you *can*, in fact, learn it, unless you have a rare disorder. It breaks my little heart to see people falling into language learning depression over their difficulty with the rolled *r*. Just sit there and stare at yourself while you try to roll it for hours on end. I promise that, eventually, you will get it. One last thing I should note is that sometimes, you might initially be unable to hear the differences between some unique sound in your target language, and a similar sound in your own spawn language, or between two similar unique sounds in your target language. However, I promise that as you spend more time with the language, you will slowly begin to clearly hear the unique sounds automatically. It took me many months to be able to differentiate a few of the sounds in Russian and Arabic, for example. After being exposed to them for a while, the differences became clear as day. If they still aren't clear after many months, I encourage you to find a website or video where the sounds are compared or described to help you identify the differences. It's often useful to have a native speaker or skilled learner teach you how to make the different sounds, as having them walk you through it may make the differences clearer.

Aspect 3: Speaking how natives ACTUALLY speak

Native speakers always have ways of saying things that differ from the formal or academic variant of the language. They may shorten words, omit words, or use slang words in ways that differentiate them from non-native learners. Unless you're speaking in a very formal setting, not having these tendencies will make you come off as non-native. A great example of this is how we say "I'm gonna" instead of "I'm going to". If someone repeatedly said "I'm going to" it would sound incredibly unnatural to my delicate little American ears.

When you are speaking with natives, listen for little things that they say that are different from how you learned them. Notice ways that they shorten their speech, and then attempt to use them yourself. If you do it wrong, it will sound weird and they'll probably laugh. But if you do it right, you'll blend in like a native. You also need to listen attentively to how much slang it makes sense to use in a typical conversation. You shouldn't overdo it, but sometimes slang becomes so popular that it's more natural to use a slang word than a normal one.

The Reading-Out-Loud Method

This is my secret weapon. My absolute favorite method, the most effective method to learn how to speak like a native, is reading out loud in the presence of a native. You have a native speaker prepare a short paragraph, maybe a few sentences long, and you read it back out loud to them. Every single time that you sound non-native, every single time that they notice that you made even a slight deviation in pronunciation from a native, they stop you and make you start over. This forces you to correct every single minute detail of your accent. The exercise only finishes when you've read the entire paragraph sounding perfectly like a native. If you're at the level where this is possible, this is an extremely quick way to iron out any little bad habits that you may have been holding onto.

This is also possible when your accent is worse. The native speaker who is listening to you will simply have to adjust their standard for judging you and when they stop you. Maybe only have them stop you when you grossly mispronounce a word or when you

are incomprehensible. The general method remains the same in all cases, though.

Shadowing

Another popular method for improving your accent is the technique of *shadowing*. This is where you listen to a native speaker and you repeat out loud everything that they have said in real time. I don't like this method as much as the last, but it is much easier to do without needing to speak with someone. You can easily just pull up any YouTube video of a native speaker and begin to do this. Depending on your level, it could be very difficult. If you are unfamiliar with a word that they just said, you will hesitate, which may defeat the purpose. To do this more effectively, I encourage you to try this with videos where a native teaches their language in that language. Since their audience consists of learners, they will speak slowly and clearly, but obviously they will still be speaking with their native accent, which is what you want to emulate. Shadowing can be a great way to pick up on the habits of native speakers, but it lacks the direct feedback that comes with the reading-out-loud method.

Record Yourself Speaking

Another great method you should also use is to record yourself speaking in your target language. For example, you can speak a monologue out loud while filming on your phone. Then when you listen to your recording, you will clearly notice pronunciation mistakes that you have made. This works best at a high level of comprehension. Your comprehension will almost always be ahead of your speaking abilities, so you will be used to how the language and specific words should sound when you're at a high level. Therefore, you may be surprised at the little things that you'll notice yourself mispronouncing. I've used this method a lot, and I am always mind-blown at the little things that I thought I was saying like a native, that I was actually saying with a thick foreign accent. Contrary to popular belief, however, I find it easy to change these bad habits with deliberate effort. Don't stress about not sounding exactly like a native during the learning process. You should reach an advanced level before you spend too much time on it.



Gigachad Chad

- Doesn't give a flying fadoodle if he has a foreign accent in his target language
- Improves his accent because he wants to, not because he's embarrassed
- Knows that one day he will be able to pronounce difficult sounds that he struggles with today

Beta Bob

- Cares too much that he has a foreign accent in his target language
- Improves his accent because he's embarrassed, not because he wants to
- Hopelessly thinks he is incapable of ever making the same noises that natives make



CHAPTER 11

Speaking in Real Life and Traveling With the Language

You Get Good at What You Practice

If you're anything like me, one of your principal motivations for learning a language is to travel to a country where it is spoken and shock natives in real life until they explode. My method revolves around practicing on the internet, so naturally, you may be lacking some real life language skills the first time that you speak in real life. This is perfectly normal, and it will honestly occur if you use any online learning method. If you've been watching YouTube videos, listening to podcasts, and speaking through VCs online, you will have become good at understanding these forms of media/conversations.

However, in a real life, spontaneous conversation with someone on the street, there are extra noises and distractions, the distance between you and your conversational partner may vary, and the particular surroundings might make it more difficult to understand your conversational partner or to convey your own thoughts. Imagine someone screaming at you from across the street in your target language while taxis honk their horns and a baby giraffe tackles you. The real world is truly unpredictable. In contrast, when you are watching a video or listening to a podcast, people intentionally speak as clearly as possible. Thus, someone quickly uttering a phrase to you may fly right over your head if you're interacting in-person. This is what happened to me the first time that I went to France. I was having great conversations online, but I hesitated a bit more and struggled to understand some things in-person. With a little bit of practice, however, I was able to conquer speaking in real life. Some things just aren't commonly said on the internet that are said all the time in real life. When you arrive in a country, you may have never been exposed to vocabulary surrounding navigation in a metro, the little things a cashier will say to you, or the names of random items at a grocery store.

You need to keep an open learner's mind when you travel to a place where your language is spoken or when you speak it in your own country in real life. You must not assume that your learning has stopped and some sort of language test has begun the

second you get on a plane. I am telling you this, because I have seen people, including myself, feel disappointed when I didn't understand every sign and everything said in a foreign country. I've poured my soul into studying the language for so long, so why do I not understand everything?! Keep your expectations low, and you'll perform so much better. Now I have been to Baguette Land 5 times, and I am so used to using French in real life that I don't even think about it. You will make so much progress even after just a few days of learning in real life situations and allowing yourself to make mistakes.

How to Prepare for Real Life Conversations

With all that being said, there are still ways that you can better prepare for real life conversations. Of course, the entire time you have been studying, you have also technically been preparing for real life situations. The added difficulty of real life conversations, however, is that there are often things said that only make sense to say in real life. You are surrounded by thousands of objects in real life that you may have never encountered online. Why would you ever need to learn the name for kitchen utensils or barnyard animals while learning on the internet? But if you go eat dinner with a farmer abroad, you may find yourself lost! So in order to fill these gaps in vocabulary, you should deliberately consume content that is likely to contain real life situations.

The problem with many TV shows and movies is that they are often overly cinematic or performative. They usually depict larger-than-life scenarios where daily language is not commonly used. This is **especially** true for that weeaboo anime *crap* that all the Japanese learners won't stop talking about. The characters are always flying around shooting lasers out of their nostrils and eating each other alive, and I'm 98.376% sure that doesn't actually happen in Japan. There is, however, one golden form of content that will prepare you for real life speaking better than anything else. I am talking about soap operas. Soap operas are usually very long in length, sometimes hundreds or thousands of episodes, and they depict the daily lives and routines of multiple people in normal everyday settings. Watching a soap opera consistently over a long period of time will expose you to regular, real life encounters between people. Yes, I know that soap operas can also be overly dramatic, but that doesn't take away from their usefulness. Without ever traveling to a country with a Spanish-speaking majority, I was able to become

comfortable with real life Spanish just from watching a long telenovela. It prepared me for niche real life situations like asking someone to pass me the salt, politely leaving someone's house, brief interactions with people on the street, how to check out items at a store, how to ask someone if you can pet their dog, and even how to discuss a traffic accident that you just got into, to name a few. Even if you think that soap operas are very boring, give them a chance in your target language. The fact that you're learning and understanding the plot through your new language will make it a lot more fun than if you were to watch something made for elderly women in your own language.

Pretend You Don't Speak American

Another common thing that you may encounter when speaking your target language in real life is that people may switch to American when speaking with you. I see way too many people get incredibly offended and become defensive when someone switches to American with them. However, you must think about it from their perspective. They most likely learned or are learning American, so they may also want to practice their target language. Also, if you are slowing down the conversation, they may switch to Freedom Language in order to facilitate it. They may even believe that doing so is a courtesy to you. In any case, people have busy lives, so you can't expect every random person to have the patience to let you practice with them. They could be on the way to their daughter's dance recital or their son's *Fortnite* tournament for all you know. This language switch-up can happen even if you are super good at the language and have a near-native level, as one minor slip-up might inform whoever you're talking to that you are not a native speaker.

You don't need to be rude to them, but if you are a hyperpolyglot gigachad like me, you will refuse to switch to American. You will linguistically *alpha-mog* your interlocutor. Of course, if someone is **LITERALLY DYING** and you need to tell someone to call an ambulance, you'd better switch to whatever language will work the best. However, for normal regular old conversations, I tell people that I don't speak American if they try to switch to it with me. I will usually tell them that in American, but with a thick random accent from somewhere across the world. Even if you are not good at accents, you can

Alpha-mog
To assert dominance over.

just use a random goofy thing that you invent. Nine times out of ten this works and makes them continue to speak my target language. If they still try to speak American, you have the right to call them rude and Naruto run in the opposite direction. In any case, this method of pretending to not speak American is extra helpful, because I am forced to use the language to explain something if I don't know the name of it. Just *please* do not go and get yourself shot. Be smart, and only do this in safe countries and safe situations. For what it is worth, this same method also works when practicing online with people.

Gigachad Chad

- Tells people he is from a small island country that doesn't exist so people don't try to speak American with him



Beta Bob

- Immediately surrenders and switches to American when someone clocks him as a stuck-up gringo

CHAPTER 12

How to Become a Polyglot

The Philosophy of a Polyglot

I know plenty of people who are only in the language learning community for one specific language (sometimes Japanese or Esperanto, which I absolutely cannot understand). However, if you're anything like I was when I started, your goal is to become a full-blown hyperpolyglot. You probably dream of one day speaking 5, 10, or even 15 languages fluently while shocking locals until they spontaneously combust or explode. Maybe you even have a little shrine set up for Steve Kaufmann... or for me. I am therefore very happy to inform you that learning 15 languages to fluency is truly not that difficult. The secret is that it just takes a lot of time, and it requires strong motivation to learn each individual language that you choose. It's easy to start randomly selecting languages and planning what your 3rd, 4th, or even 10th language will be, but people who spend time doing that tend to ignore the most important thing: learning the language they're currently working on. You'll be much more successful if you focus on one language at a time and avoid fantasizing about future languages that you may or may not end up learning.

I see a lot of aspiring polyglots never make progress in any language because they are too concentrated on the big picture of becoming a polyglot. They stress over what languages they want to learn in the future instead of focusing on what they are learning now. If you want to become a polyglot, take it language by language, day by day. I strongly believed that I would learn Squid Game language (Korean) after French many years ago, but as it turns out, that never came to fruition. I wasted time and energy planning my future dive into Korean that I could have spent just focusing on learning French. It is way too easy to fall into the trap of acting like a kid in a candy store who sees all the attractive languages he could learn and has trouble choosing one. Once you are at the level that you wish to reach or a good stage to take a break, then you can spend time and energy choosing your next language. I have a polyglot friend who is the

most talented and accomplished language learner I have ever met, and she followed this idea religiously. She speaks about 10 languages perfectly, and the secret to her success is that she has tunnel vision for one language at a time. She cheats on her husband almost every day, but she **never** cheats on her language. She remains laser focused even after the honeymoon period has subsided.

The level that you wish to reach in each language will really depend on your own goals. I personally use a quite liberal definition of polyglot, as I have never in my life seen a real, official definition of one. I would say that a polyglot is anyone who speaks multiple languages at a comfortable level in Phase 2, and I would leave it at that. I would define a comfortable level in Phase 2 as the stage where you can understand almost everything and have quick, fluid conversations about most things despite making mistakes semi-frequently. You see how hard that is even for a gigachad like me to define? If I tried any harder to define it, I would risk being assassinated by the polyglot overlords who *truly* run this community.

Some people only reach a low level in all of their languages, while others strive for absolute perfect native level fluency in all of them. I personally strive for an advanced level in each language, but I don't always go for absolute fluency where I am perfectly indistinguishable from a native. My goal is to become an extremely competent speaker in every language I study, but I'm not going to cut my legs off and bark like a goat to try to sound flawless. In general, I choose not to gatekeep the language learning community with arbitrarily high requirements for polyglottism. The definition is way too debatable for a nice clean consensus to be reached. The only thing I would urge against is claiming to be a polyglot when only knowing a few rehearsed lines in your languages. If I used that definition of "speaking a language", I would speak about 30. In general, make sure that you only count languages that you are at least comfortably conversational in, and I recommend that you undersell your abilities when asked about them. It's much better for people to assume that you are *hotdog water* before you shock them than for them to assume you're amazing before they listen to you speak like a clueless beginner. Just please never lose sight of how amazing this hobby is in the pursuit of impressing people.

Hotdog Water

n., adj.: "really bad, terrible". Imagine how horrible it would be to drink the water left over after a bunch of hotdogs were just bathing in it.

Language learning is so much fun, and being a polyglot is even more fun. If you fake it, people will be able to see right through your sham, and you'll be forever labeled a "fake polyglot". I would rather be brutally murdered in a McDonald's drive-thru than be called a fake polyglot.

Taking a Break / Quitting a Language

Every single time that I have studied a language, I temporarily quit after completing Phase 1, because I became bored of learning it. I spend so much time obsessing over one language in particular that it just becomes stale like an old cracker that you find under the sofa. I reached Phase 2 in French about 6 months into studying it, before I gave it up and focused on Russian for the next 6 months. After that I quit Russian and focused on Spanish for another 6 months. However, after Spanish I went back to French and finished Phase 2, getting it to my desired final level. I have followed, and am continuing to follow, this pattern for all the other languages I study. I boot one language up to Phase 2, and then I take a break from it while booting up another language in the meantime. This has greatly assisted my journey to becoming a polyglot, as I have been able to avoid burnout and mental breakdowns. This method does not strictly mandate 6-month intervals, but you should at least spend a few months minimum with each language. However, this time frame is not perfect for everyone or every language. I have effectively guaranteed that my learning process remains as enjoyable as possible by not allowing myself to experience negative emotions while learning, and every time that I have come back to a language after not studying it for a while, and it is already in Phase 2, I am filled with renewed enthusiasm. I encourage you to do the exact same thing. If the fiery passion for the language does not remain high, do not force yourself to do one mad dash to fluency, especially if you are planning on learning multiple languages anyways.

When you "quit" a language or take a break from it, you don't really quit it entirely. Even during those off periods where I am not studying a specific language, I still use it regularly. I don't force myself to use it in a desperate attempt to maintain it, but I often watch shows, speak to people, listen to music, or just talk to myself out loud in the languages I used to study. Yes, my level does go down a little when I do not study it, but

it has a very minor impact overall. I find that all of the solid skills that I obtained in a language while studying it are very easily reactivated when I go to use it again.

Eventually, you will reach a target level that you never care to improve from. If you want to be a polyglot, you need to ultimately learn how to let go in order to focus on other languages. You will need to abandon your baby. Well, once you reach your target level, it's a lot more like sending your child off to college than it is abandoning your newborn on the side of the road. Sometimes, learners can go insane trying to master every minute detail of their target language. But you must keep in mind that even if you start to study a language now and you continue for the rest of your life, you will never fully know everything about it. There will always be another word to memorize, another grammar rule to master, or another mistake to fix. Most importantly, you must realize that this is true even for native speakers. Thus, it is inevitable that even at the highest level of language proficiency, when you really feel like you have mastered everything, you will occasionally make a little mistake. It could be a small grammar error, or you may use a word in a slightly awkward placement, but the conclusion always remains the same. You could spend your entire life chasing perfection, or you could “quit” the language in order to begin learning another.

Maintaining Your Languages

I often see aspiring polyglots wonder about how they will maintain their languages once they have learned a few of them. However, I rarely see my accomplished polyglot friends worry about this. I personally never think about the maintenance of my languages, but I used to stress about it years ago to the point where I began balding. I thought that I could completely forget a language or that my level would decrease dramatically without use. Technically, when you quit studying a language your level in the language will, in a sense, go down over time. However, I would say that your knowledge of the language more so hibernates like a cute little bear. If a language is not actively being used, it will be harder to whip out and use well at a moment's notice. Things that you recently learned right before quitting may be hard to recall when you go back to the language, but those skills that are more deeply ingrained in you will easily come back. I find that it usually takes me about a week to get back to my best level in a language after months of not using it. Speaking a language is similar to riding a bike or shooting an HK M320 grenade

launcher. You'll be able to do it easily after not doing it for a while, but you might not immediately remember all your special tricks.

As you learn 3, 4, or more languages, actively attempting to maintain them would take far too much time out of your day. You would have no time to study a new one. The whole reason you learned a language is to have fun and be able to use it for one thing or another, not to become a circus animal who can flawlessly switch between 10 languages in some sort of performance. So just continue to use your languages when you feel like it. Occasionally speak with someone, watch a YouTube video, or listen to music. Do what makes you happy, and keep it stress free. If you follow that advice, you will have no trouble maintaining your languages, and you'll become a great polyglot. Do this long enough and you will have a great chance of becoming a hyperpolyglot gigachad like me.

How to Keep Languages Separate in Your Mind

Another thing that I see aspiring polyglots worry about is keeping different languages separate in their mind. They are concerned that they will confuse things between languages and accidentally say things in one when they are speaking another. The truth is that this will absolutely happen when you start learning a new language. It is rare that it will happen between your native language and another language, but it will occur between two languages that you learn. However, this only really happens when you are a beginner in one of those two languages. When you are in Phase 2 of a language, they will be such distinct entities in your mind on a deeply subconscious level that you will have no issue with this.

Similar to the issue of maintaining your languages, you should not worry about keeping languages separate in your mind. This is an automatic process that you will slip up with in the beginning, but that you will naturally master over time. It will happen more often between languages that are similar, such as Spanish and Portuguese, which could alternatively be called Spanish and Spicy Spanish, respectively. The best advice that I can give for avoiding confusing similar languages is that you have to stop relying on your stronger language in order to speak your weaker language. If you're great at German, and you're learning Dutch, do not look to alter the pronunciation of German words in order to make them Dutch. You will sound like a goofball who doesn't care

at all about the language, so I advise that you make sure that you know the word in Dutch. Even similar languages can be incredibly unique in subtle ways, so relying on the German word to say the Dutch word will often result in you making a mistake. This wouldn't be a normal mistake – it would be a mistake caused by someone attempting to bend one language into another like a pretzel, which I know from experience can sound awkward to a native speaker.

Learning More Languages Faster

As I have discussed early on in the book, you should learn a language because you are passionate about it. You should not learn a language just because it is easy. However, if you love a certain language *and* it will be really easy for you, that is a nice plus. Because of this, if you want to become a polyglot as fast as possible, you should learn languages in the same language group, at least at the start, to get your numbers up (but only if these languages genuinely interest you).

Languages in the same language family such as the Romance languages, the Germanic languages, and the Slavic languages all share core characteristics that make them similar in their writing systems, grammar, and vocabulary. If you have learned one language in a certain group, it will almost always facilitate your learning of another in the same group. A concrete example in my case is the Romance language group. I have extensively studied French, Spanish, and Portuguese, in that order, chronologically. After studying French, Spanish was incredibly easy for me. When I learned a new word in Spanish, it almost always had a similar form that I was already familiar with in French. I felt like an absolute wizard learning words faster than I could emotionally process. As mentioned before, you shouldn't outright try to guess words in a language based on a similar one that you know. However, the ability to map a new word to a language you already know is extremely valuable. Then, when I studied Portuguese, I knew practically 95% of the words from Spanish, and I was able to pronounce the language's funny yet charming nasal vowels because of my knowledge of French. However, I must stress that I still had to go through and deliberately learn the words in their proper context so that I knew how to properly speak Portuguese.

I find that it is best to leverage a language that you had to learn yourself in order to

facilitate the learning of another one. Yes, the fact that I am a native speaker of American will help me learn German, but I never had to go through the process of learning American. I naturally absorbed it as a child, which I thank the language gods for every day. Therefore, it would be harder for me to apply American concepts to German. On the other hand, since I learned Russian as an adult, I had to go from 0 to 100 in the language. When I study something similar such as Ukrainian, I will already be familiar with the process.

As I said earlier, do not learn a language just because it's similar to something you have already learned. If you don't care enough about the culture, people, or language itself, you won't be able to stick with it. But if you love a ton of languages and you want to learn a multitude of them very quickly, you should use this method of learning similar languages if your interests allow. If you juggle similar languages and switch between learning them every few months when you get sick of one, as long as you return back to the ones you've paused, you'll become a polyglot in no time.

Learning Multiple Languages at the Same Time

In general, I do not advocate learning multiple languages at a time in the same way that I don't advocate for dating multiple people at the same time. What I see way too often is an aspiring language learner full of passion who claims that they are learning 5, 10, or even 20 languages at the same time. This is always heartbreaking for me, because I know that they have no chance of success. Even only studying 2 languages, a new learner will most often be too overwhelmed to make real progress. The biggest problem for the average learner is that there are simply not enough hours in a day to study 2 languages. People have jobs, school, families, and hot yoga lessons to attend to. Since my method revolves around studying until you are bored, having a second language obligation in a day may add unnecessary stress to an otherwise fun hobby. My method also includes thinking about your target language and speaking out loud in passing throughout the day. It involves making the language a small but integral part of your life that you bring to mind frequently. If you learn multiple languages, they will compete for this spot in your mind, which will slow down progress in both of them. If you are a beginner, I strongly urge you to stick to one language for at least a few months until you get bored.

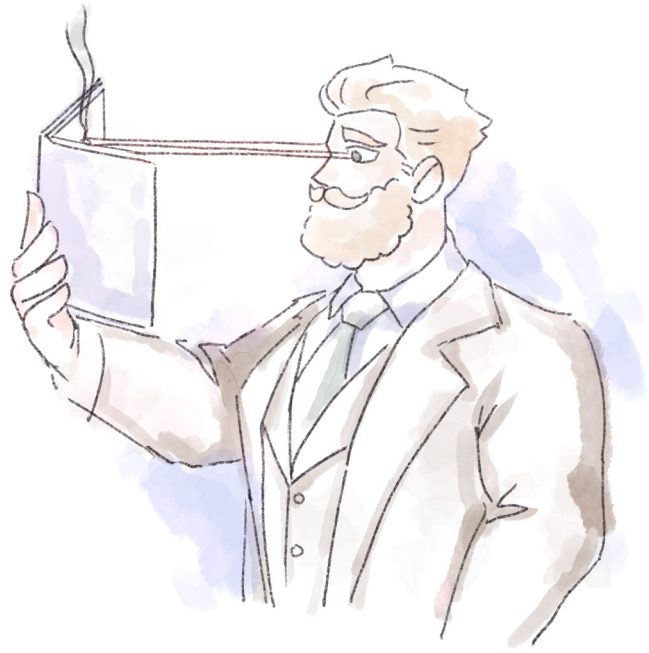
In fact, I am on my metaphorical **KNEES** begging you to stick to one language at the start. If you want to be a polyglot, you need to play the long game. I have never seen someone learn multiple languages to impressive levels without spending at least a few years doing it. I learn languages relatively quickly, but by “quickly” I mean that it took me 5 years to get to where I am today.

With all that being said, it is not always horrible to study multiple languages at the same time. If you want to learn multiple languages at the same time from 0, I will always advocate against that, and I would happily die on that hill. However, if you already have an advanced level in one language, and your only remaining task is to try and push yourself to absolute fluency in the autopilot phase of that language, you could start a new one on the side. I have done this in the past. When I was already a fluent speaker in French, but I was still learning vocab, improving my accent, and trying to speak like a native, I began to learn Mexican on the side. I was so comfortable with French that it did not hurt me to do this. At the start, I did mix some French words into Mexican, but that is normal and was quickly ironed out. However, this was at the start of the 2020 pandemic where I had a ton of time to concentrate on languages. My college classes were online and relatively easy for the semester, so I was able to dedicate many hours to learning both languages.

At the end of the day, you need to do what makes this hobby fun for you. If you simply want to explore multiple languages at the same time and make slow progress like a language learning snail, be my guest. I can't stop you from remaining a monolingual beta. If I could climb through your phone and give you a nice slap whenever you go against my advice, I would for the sake of your success. But ultimately, the LAST thing I want to do is gatekeep the hobby.

Gigachad Chad

- Concentrates on one language long enough to have noticeable results
- Takes healthy breaks from certain languages when they burn him out
- Doesn't go crazy worrying about maintaining his languages



Beta Bob

- Hops around languages like a little frog. Never shows signs of progress.
- When he does stick to a language, he pushes himself way too hard until he burns out and hates it
- Can't sleep worrying about how he will create a flawless schedule to maintain his languages



Act 5

Magical Wisdom

CHAPTER 13

How to Be a Gigachad

I have touched on everything that I will go over in this chapter repeatedly throughout the book. However, these concepts are so important that they need to be reiterated in their own section. Seriously, if you get nothing else from this book, make it the three points discussed in this chapter.

Having Fun

If you don't like a certain learning method, don't use it. There are millions of ways to learn a language, and what works for me may not work for you. What is fun for me may not be fun for you. If you like to learn languages underwater by memorizing soggy dictionaries, who am I to judge you? I've often mentioned throughout the book that certain activities are not as beneficial at certain levels in a language. While I stand by those claims, I still encourage you to do whatever makes you have the most fun. Fun equals success in language learning. As an example, I personally think you should wait a while to watch full length movies, but if that's what you really love to do in order to learn, I encourage you to throw caution to the wind to watch them early on.

The one defining principle that has led me to have quick and continuous success in language learning is my passion for the hobby. I am *in love* with language learning, which has allowed me to remain celibate my entire life. I am not just in love with the results of speaking a language fluently; I am in love with the process of learning a language from zero all the way to fluency. Too many people are only interested in the results, and they often think that the learning process has to be annoying and difficult. Hopefully, I have outlined many fun ways to learn a language throughout this book. There are numerous ways to approach it, but the number one thing to keep in mind is that it is a marathon, not a sprint. Learning little by little every day will result in fluency, guaranteed. Most of the failure I see is from burnout, because people attempt to learn as fast as humanly possible, to no success. Alternatively, I also see people become discouraged and then

quit, because they aren't seeing the results they want right away.

In order to avoid these huge roadblocks that will prevent you from ever reaching fluency, keep language learning lighthearted and fun. I've said it so much before, but I want to reiterate that you should quit learning every day once you feel that the process begins to feel like a chore. I *never* push myself, and I advise you not to as well. I have never seen someone fail to learn a language after a long term effort while using my methods. However, never feel like you're trapped and married to one language. Feel free to switch to another one after a few months if you're bored in general. Going back to that language will feel so refreshing, and it will help ensure that you do not suffer from burnout. Just please do not switch languages every day or every week. If you hate the language after a week, that's fine, but make sure that you stick with one for at least 3 months once you're certain you like it.

In general, remember to enjoy the language you're learning. Not every time that you sit down to study needs to be an epic grind session where you make efficient progress. You are ultimately learning a language to experience life through the language, not to count how many words you know or how many conjugations you can properly recite.

Embarrassment

To truly become fluent in your target language, you are going to need to speak it with people who are better than you at it for an unfathomably high number of hours. You are going to make tens of thousands of mistakes on your journey. Sometimes they will be silly, minor mistakes, and other times they will be severe mistakes leading to gross misunderstandings. Regardless of the severity of the mistake, a horrible feeling of embarrassment will most likely accompany every single one of them. Well, that is absolutely true for monolingual betas, but aspiring hyperpolyglot gigachads learn the cheat code of conquering embarrassment in order to easily master languages.

The secret is simply to not care about what people think about you, which I know is easier said than done. However, maybe conquering your fear of embarrassment by confronting it while learning languages could help you get over your fear in other aspects of life. If you follow my language learning method, your journey will be largely anonymous. You could make a Discord account called "ChickenBoy403", and you

could hop from language learning Discord to language learning Discord practicing your languages without ever sharing a single thing about who you are in real life. For all anyone would know, you are ChickenBoy403, and ChickenBoy403 is you. You can get extremely creative and reinvent yourself in this hobby, and that's truly the beauty of it. Maybe you are a shy and anxious person when you speak American or whatever your native language is, but are you a shy person in Russian, Hindi, or whatever you're learning? If so, realize that you truly do not have to be. In my experience, it doesn't even feel real when I speak a foreign language. It is like I'm in a movie, a dream, or a video game where I am a made-up character. Internalizing this type of mindset has allowed me to not take myself too seriously and to perfectly handle criticism.

Even when you do make flagrant mistakes in your target language, you must keep in mind that it IS funny that you mispronounce words. It *is* funny that you make grammar mistakes. We humans find things to be funny when they go against our expectations. When you say something stupid in your target language, remember why people are laughing. They have gone their entire life hearing something said one way, then you come around and say it differently. You must learn to run towards your mistakes in order to fix them. When you make a mistake and someone corrects you, you should address that mistake. You should not try to avoid it. Crucially, you should not take corrections or criticism the wrong way. Yes, some people *may* maliciously make fun of you from time to time, but if they do, you shouldn't waste your time speaking to them anyway. You must view every correction or criticism as a fantastic opportunity to grow, not as a sign that you are failing. This is truly what sets a hyperpolyglot gigachad apart from the vast sea of monolingual betas.

Comparison

One common tendency that language learners share is a horrible obsession with comparison. You should **never** compare your language learning journey to that of another person. This is one of the main reasons that I do not like the A1-C2 system, as it encourages toxic comparison. Progress is **never** linear, and it is **NEVER** possible to accurately gauge a person's level. Every learner is so different, and everyone spends a different amount of time and brain power on their target language. It is objectively stupid

to compare your progress with that of others, because the end goal is always the same. In a sport like swimming or golf, someone can be the best in the world. Professionals can grind their whole lives, and one person can still be clearly better than other athletes. Records are constantly being beat, and new athletes are always striving to push the sport further. However, language learning is different. Once you speak a language to a level where it is not a chore for natives to speak to you, no one really cares if you improve. If someone started learning earlier than you, has more experience, or takes it more seriously, of course they are a little ahead of you. However, it is not a race, and you will absolutely catch up to them with time. If we continue for long enough, we all end up speaking the language like normal functioning speakers. No one is smarter than you just because they speak a language better.

You should especially not compare yourself to influencers who speak languages on camera. Language and polyglot YouTubers are not smarter than you. There are so many techniques to make it look like someone speaks better than they do through the video format. We can use teleprompters, editing, and multiple takes, just to name a few spicy tricks up our sticky influencer sleeves. A YouTuber could have even prepared the lines they were going to say for months before they recorded the video. How would you know? The vast majority of language influencers that I am friends with are actually very talented in their languages, but they also usually treat languages as a full time job, which obviously transforms the dynamic a little bit. Only compare yourself to the past monolingual version of yourself, or the person you were before you could speak even a word of your new language.

Sometimes people can also fall into the trap of comparing themselves to native speakers, which is the most absurd of all the cases I've listed. You must always remember when speaking to natives that **you** are the alpha individual who is learning **THEIR** language. You chose to do this for whatever reason you have. You do not come from a country where it is spoken, so of course you don't speak it perfectly. Assuming you're speaking to an adult, they had *at least* 18 years of practice leading up to this. You're speaking a language that you had to study from the ground up, while they are speaking the base language that they use to comprehend literally the entire universe. That is their default spawn language, so even if they are an idiot, you cannot compare yourself to them.

Gigachad Chad

- Genuinely loves learning languages and has a ton of fun
- Doesn't give a flying fadoodle about what anyone thinks of him



Beta Bob

- Stresses himself out trying to perfect language learning and has no fun in the process
- Cares way too much about what other people think about him and his language learning



CHAPTER 14

Advice for Specific Languages

French

Baguette language is the first language that I ever studied. It served as my gateway drug into the world of polyglotism and trolling foreigners. To this day, I think it's one of the most beautiful and high-class languages on the planet. That is probably the most controversial sentence I have written in this book. French is spoken in many parts of the world including Western Europe, Haiti, Quebec, and a huge part of Africa (including CHAD). You cannot underestimate the prevalence of Baguette language in Africa. If you want to unlock DLC on the continent, French is by far your best bet. There are so many diverse Baguette-speaking African countries, each with its own enticing reason to visit. You've got countries with great economies and tourism, as well as developing countries with amazing potential. However, most content on the internet is in French from France, which is the general accent I decided to study.

If you decide to learn Baguette, your main choice will be between learning French from Western Europe or French from Quebec, Canada. Even though most French speakers are in Africa, there isn't much content from those countries for learners. It would absolutely be possible to learn an African dialect, but it may require you to be extra meticulous with your study methods. French from Canada and France are mutually intelligible, and their grammar is very similar. However, the accents differ quite a lot, and you'll encounter different slang and, most notably, different curse words depending on which accent you learn. From my point of view, the Quebecois accent sounds absolutely **insane**, though truthfully not in a bad or good way. It sort of sounds like French put through a voice filter that is supposed to sound like a duck. But, hey! I like cute little ducks.

There is a stereotype that French speakers are unfriendly and don't like to help people learn their language, but from my experience, that is far from the truth. Having learned French from France, I have met hundreds of French people who are most of the time

very happy to hear an American speaking their language. The odd 1% of people who were rude about me butchering their language at the beginning were no more prevalent than if I were to be interacting with native speakers of any other language. And you'd better believe that I trolled and continue to troll the living snails out of every pretentious Baguette speaker that I encounter.

From an outside perspective, the French language has one of the most difficult accents to nail down in the world. Specifically, people get hung up on the French *r* as well as the many nasal sounds in the language. With regard to the French *r*, first you must realize that there are several pronunciations of the letter *r*. I have seen many learners, including myself, assume that the *r* always has the stereotypical harsh sound, when in fact it does not. This leads to foreigners who sound like they are choking with every new syllable that comes out of their mouth. The reality is that in French, you're only supposed to choke about 30.4638% of the time.

Identifying those unique sounds at the beginning will help you greatly with your accent. As with any language, it will take time before you will be able to adequately pronounce the *r* in a way approximating that of natives. The people who succeed the most with French are the people who do not let the complex phonology get in the way of them starting to speak. French people were always nice to me when I was a learner. Maybe they would imitate my American accent sometimes, but it was all in good fun. We all had a laugh about it, which made them want to help me more. If I sensed that they were about to be rude, I would remind them who has the biggest economy and gross domestic product in the world. Never forget that one of our 50 states, California, has a bigger GDP than France. If you're offended by this, you're basically proving my point. I guarantee you that if I was sitting next to a French person right now, they would try to debate me, which would turn into excellent speaking practice for me.

As for the nasal sounds, I recommend that you attempt to exaggerate them as much as possible, at least at the start when you don't understand the nuances. The sounds themselves aren't terribly hard to make, but you need to say them strongly in order to sound native. It almost feels wrong to make such nasal sounds, but that is really what the baguette eaters do. It is normal for them, so to speak their language it must also become normal to you. The hardest part of the nasal sounds is identifying which group of letters correspond to which nasal sound, but that should come with time and careful observation.

French grammar is relatively straightforward compared to other romance languages. They have a similar number of conjugations to Spanish, but unlike Spanish, many of the verb forms are pronounced the same even though they are spelled differently. This is because the French language has a lot of “silent letters” which means that although words often change in the written form, many are pronounced the same when said. The trick to mastering French spelling and pronunciation is to focus on groups of letters instead of individual ones. For example “in”, “en”, “au”, “eux”, and “ent” are a few common groups of letters you will see in French. Rather than being confused at how some of the letters in these groups are silent, you should focus on what sounds they make as a unit.

My favorite resources for learning French (in no particular order) are:

- Français avec Pierre (YouTube channel for learners) - Best beginner resource by far
- InnerFrench (Podcast for learners)
- Français Authentique (Podcast for learners)
- Change ma vie (Podcast for natives) - what I used to reach fluency
- Easy French (YouTube channel for learners)

Spanish

Spanish is a very widespread language spoken mainly in Latin America as well as in Spain. However, I would be a fool to not mention the most gigachad Mexican-speaking country, Equatorial Guinea. Anyway, the language is gorgeous, has the objectively best music (Becky G), and is very fun to learn and speak. It has such a wide variety of distinct accents, which makes it hard to choose one to learn when you begin. I personally chose the accent from Spain, but note that it is, by my estimation, one of the harder ones to learn. This is because in Latin America the letters *s*, *c*, and *z* are pronounced the same, while in Spain the *s* has a different sound than the *c* and the *z*. The *c* and *z* in Spain are pronounced with a unique lisp sound which makes them sound feminine and goofy in a good way. You additionally have to learn more conjugations, since Spain uses the word

vosotros for the plural *you* while Latin America does not. If you want to trigger people from Texas to the southern tip of Chile and everyone in between, look them dead in the eyes and say *vosotros*. You should ultimately choose whatever interests you though. The easiest route to take would be to learn the general Mexican accent, as there is so much content available in that accent and it's slower than a lot of the other ones. And before you send me an email explaining how Mexicans speak faster than Usain Bolt runs, keep in mind that I didn't say it was *slow*. I just said it was **slower** than the others. A Chilean could read the entire dictionary before a Mexican could read the lyrics to *Despacito*.

The pronunciation in Spanish is very straightforward, as it's generally written exactly as it is pronounced except for in a few countries like Cuba where they don't pronounce 95% of the words. The sounds are easy to make except for the rolled *r*. *But*, science has told us that the rolled *r* is possible for everyone in the world to pronounce as long as you don't have a rare condition, so with enough practice, you can do it too. *Seriously!* If you are one of those gringos who can't roll your *r*, there is hope! Drop that defeatist mentality, and consult the scientific literature that will reinforce the idea that you can learn it! It actually infuriates me how many gringos are brainwashed into thinking good Mexican pronunciation is impossible!

The real problem with understanding and speaking Spanish is the rapid speed that natives speak at. It is unlike anything I have ever heard in my life. This is primarily due to words having many syllables, meaning that if they spoke slower, it would take too long to express ideas. This "need for speed" will cause problems with both comprehension and speaking, but with practice, you'll get good at the comprehension part. You need to work hard to notice the different ways natives are shortening their syllables. One major mistake that I made and I've seen other learners make is trying to speak as fast as natives when you are not nearly as good as them. I have been so very guilty of this, and it hurt my progress in both Phase 1 and Phase 2. I was trying so hard to speak fast like a motorboat, so I limited myself to only saying things that I was comfortable with. I didn't push myself out of my comfort zone, which is precisely what you need to do to make progress in a language. You must speak slowly until you are advanced (not like a snail but slower than a native). This will help you take your time to practice new things, and it will allow you to stop your ego from getting the best of you.

Another difficult thing about Mexican is the wide variety of conjugations. A language

like French has a similar amount of conjugations, but many of them are pronounced the same due to the language's silent letters. In Spanish, every letter is pronounced (though in some accents you don't pronounce some letters sometimes). Therefore, you really need to learn those verb endings. There really isn't any getting around this, but you certainly can focus on the more common ones to begin. Become comfortable with a few regular verbs at first and you'll be able to translate that knowledge to other verbs of the same group. Learn them in context though, and do not try to directly memorize conjugation tables by gluing your eyes open and staring at them like we did in high school in America. The dreaded subjunctive conjugation is very common in Spanish, but it is not that hard if you focus on it. So many learners see it as the boogeyman of the language. Just treat it like any other thing in the language, and learn it in context. Run towards the difficult things, like conjugations, with a passionate desire to unravel their mystery like you're Scooby-Doo, and you will succeed with Spanish.

My favorite resources for learning Spanish (in no particular order) are:

- Español Automático (Podcast for learners) - Spanish accent
- Entiende Tu Mente (Podcast for natives) - Spanish accent
- Spanish with Vicente (YouTube channel for learners) - Spanish accent
- Español con María (YouTube channel for learners) - Colombian accent
- The Wild Project (YouTube channel for natives) - A very popular Spanish YouTuber
- Easy Spanish (YouTube channel for learners)

Portuguese

Bolsonaro language is not Spanish. I repeat, Porch of Geese is not Spanish. From my experience, Portuguese speakers do not like when a Spanish speaker puts on an exaggerated accent while speaking Spanish and tries to call it Portuguese. It is certainly funny, but it shows a lack of effort on behalf of the person putting on the accent. Despite this, it is also true that the two languages have similar vocabulary to the point where a

Spanish speaker can read most Portuguese texts and vice versa. It is actually insane how much Portuguese you can read after learning Spanish. That being said, even though the words look similar between the languages, the way they are formed and their pronunciations are very different. I absolutely adore the sound of Portuguese. I call it spicy Spanish, because it sounds like a more passionate, and frankly spicy, version of the language. It has sounds that I genuinely cannot believe made their way into a language, but that's precisely why I love it.

Portuguese is spoken mainly in Brazil, Portugal, Mozambique, and Angola. If the Brazilian accent is what you are passionate about, you're in luck, because the majority of content online is in Brazilian Portuguese (the memes are *insane*). This is because comparatively, Brazil has an exponentially larger amount of people than all the other Portuguese-speaking countries combined. The Portuguese language from Portugal has some words that differ from those used by Brazilians, and Portuguese people typically speak faster and with a more closed mouth, from my observation. African Portuguese tends to have a similar accent to that found in Portugal. As for Brazil, though there are a variety of regional accents throughout the country, they generally speak with a much more open and vowel-heavy pronunciation that I find to be easier to understand. Other flavors of Portuguese sound muffled, like the music that is playing at a party that you hear from inside the bathroom. I don't have a lot of experience with Portuguese people or Portuguese-speaking Africans, but I can say that Brazilians are some of the nicest people in the world. They love when someone learns their language, and they are more than willing to help.

Portuguese presents similar difficulties to Spanish. The conjugations are plentiful and must be learned in context. The hardest part of the language, which isn't as prevalent in Spanish, are the many nasal sounds in Portuguese. Similar to French, you must learn these nasal sounds in context and treat each one as if it were one unique unit, regardless of what letters are used to express it. If you practice saying these nasal sounds out loud, I promise you will master them in no time. The spelling is largely phonetic, but you have to memorize which sounds are made by which groups of letters. For example, the sounds made by *al* and *il* are often not even close to what you may think they are at first glance. If you want a good chuckle and a great sneak peak of top tier Portuguese pronunciation, look up the Brazilian pronunciation for the names of social media

websites like Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. I still can't believe they say them like that.

My favorite resources for learning Portuguese (in no particular order) are:

- Speaking Brazilian Language School (YouTube channel for learners)
- Easy Portuguese (YouTube channel for learners)

Russian

Russian is the most widely spoken Slavic language, and it is probably the hardest language I have ever studied. It takes years of careful effort to get to a point where you no longer make mistakes, and a very low number of foreigners ever master or even reach Phase 2 in the language. Russians and other Russian-speaking people groups may seem a little cold at first, but if you speak to them in their language, they will be very happy and want to help you. Russians have to be the funniest group of people I have ever met. They are just always hooligans in one way or another. I mean that in a very positive way. I love speaking with them, and never once has someone been rude to me over any mistakes I've made in the Russian language. I have been laughed at a lot, but I laugh with them.

The Russian alphabet is incredibly easy to learn. A lot of the letters make the same sound as they do in the American alphabet which makes them easy to remember. However, there are a few of them that look the same as a letter from the American alphabet, but make a completely different sound. These are still quite easy to remember though, so don't let that deter you. I personally found that the issue was when I went back to reading American. Sometimes I would see a *P* and pronounce it like an *R*, which was weird when I started pronouncing "poop" like "roop". However, that issue went away very quickly. There are two letters that make a *sh* sound (Ш and Ш) that learners often confuse. I recommend that you wait until you are at least a few months into Phase 1 before you try to master their differences, as native speakers will understand you even if you confuse them. There are a few other letters with some peculiarities such as the *Г* and the *О*, but you should learn those through context over time rather than trying to

memorize them at the start. The funniest Russian letter is the *З*, because it looks like the number 3 which they also use for counting.

The pronunciation in Russian can be tricky, but as with any language, you should not stress over it. To pronounce the *з* sound correctly, you should just attempt to say it repeatedly until you get it right. It may take hours, or months. Just try to nail it every few months or so, and one day you'll magically have it. For some reason, the gurus say to punch yourself as hard as you can in the gut to naturally produce the *з* sound, however, ***please*** do not try that. It won't work, and you ***WILL*** die. Also, make sure that you pay close attention to the soft sign in Russian (*ь*). Almost every consonant has two pronunciations, one with the soft sign and one without it. Learn these separately. For example, you should treat the *Т + Ъ* as a different letter from the *Т* so that you can separate them better in your mind. In general, you should try to sound pissed off when you speak Russian and to use a lot of colorful swears. Russians *really* speak like that, and that is why their language is amazing. They will tell you that they don't talk like that, but that is an outright *lie*. Honestly, if a Russian is reading this, they are probably punching the air right now.

Cases are the hardest part of the Russian language, but it is so rewarding to learn them. There are 6 cases which means that every noun has up to 12 forms that it could take in a sentence depending on its role in the sentence and on whether it is singular or plural. This may seem overwhelming, and it is. It is literally the hardest thing I have ever encountered in my life. However, if you can change your perspective on it like I did, it can actually become fun. There is no feeling in the world that is better than the feeling you get when you speak Russian for a while without using any incorrect cases. The goal should be to one day unlock this state of nirvana where you rarely make mistakes. I've seen people say to ignore the cases, but I wholeheartedly and vehemently disagree with this. At the beginning, you should learn a word in the context of a sentence. This means that it will be declined into a certain case. You should treat that word in a certain case as a unique word unto itself, rather than as one form of a word. For example, if you learn the phrase “с моим другом”, and that is the one thing you're memorizing that day, you should specifically focus on that complete phrase “с моим другом” with its instrumental case of the word друг. Don't try to go off and memorize all of the forms of the word друг. Over time as you learn words in their proper cases in context, I promise

that you will see patterns and be able to decline words automatically. You just need to be patient. **Extremely** patient. Now I can guess cases correctly probably 80% of the time, and the other 20% of the time I am corrected and then never make the same mistake again. While you will always be a foreigner to Russians, if you learn the language and at least try to say the proper cases, you will also be loved and revered. Even if you get the cases wrong, they will always at least find you entertaining like a circus animal.

In Russian, every word has a stress on a specific syllable, and the same word in different cases has the stress in a different location. As with pronunciation, you shouldn't worry about it too much. Let people correct you, and slowly fix your mistakes. Of course, this is easier said than done, as you may feel embarrassed. However, someone who learns Russian is automatically a Chad, considering how hard it is. As long as you pay attention to it in the back of your mind, you will get used to patterns and be able to predict the stress as you move on over time. I found this aspect to be especially frustrating, more so than I did for cases, in fact. There are some words that have different meanings based on the location of the stress, but they are so rare that it's not worth worrying about.

My favorite resources for learning Russian (in no particular order) are:

- Russian Progress (YouTube channel and podcast for learners)
- Easy Russian (YouTube channel for learners)
- Yaroslava Russian (YouTube channel for learners)
- Marina Mogilko (YouTube channel for natives)
- Столица Мира (YouTube channel for natives) - speaks relatively slow, which I love
- Евгения Стрелецкая (YouTube channel for natives)
- <https://www.russianlessons.net/> - amazing website explaining grammar

Arabic

Arabic is one of the most beautiful languages, if not the most beautiful language, that I have ever studied. It has incredibly unique sounds as well as a deep, rich history. Even

though it is an extremely global language, not many people study it to fluency. A lot of Muslims around the world study it for religious purposes, but a disappointingly small number of non-Muslims study it. I can guarantee that Arabic speakers will absolutely love the fact that you are learning their language. They tend to be very kind people who are happy to help you with their language. They're the type of people to give you the deed to their house after you shock them with nothing more than a simple "Assalamu Alaykum" (common greeting in Arabic).

The biggest roadblock to learning Arabic is the wide array of dialects that are not mutually intelligible. Even though Arabic is spoken in many countries, the peoples of these countries do not all speak the same type of Arabic. The dialects across countries differ a lot with respect to pronunciation and vocabulary. Some dialects are harder to understand than others. Most Arabic speakers do not understand Moroccans, as their dialect has drifted far away from the others. However, most Arabic speakers can understand at least a bit of Egyptian, as their media is popular internationally. There is a sort of dialect continuum where neighboring countries typically have an easier time understanding each other. As such, you can almost treat different Arabic dialects as different languages entirely. They are certainly similar, but learning one does not guarantee you will understand the other.

There is another type of Arabic called MSA (Modern Standard Arabic) which is a standard language used a lot in the news and other mediums that are meant to reach a wide audience across many Arabic-speaking countries. Most Arabic speakers will be able to speak MSA or at least understand it. When I started to learn Arabic, I chose to learn the Egyptian dialect. Even though Egyptian likely has the most content online to learn with, I quickly realized that there is not very much specific to the dialect. I learned the word for pyramid at least 5,000 times in the first week. It was also frustrating as a beginner, because I had to make sure that everything I was learning was in the Egyptian dialect, even though I was surrounded online by Arabic speakers from every country.

For this reason, and for the ability to speak with a much wider group of Arabic speakers, I recommend learning MSA first. Switching to MSA will facilitate your learning so much, and you will then be easily able to jump into a dialect. Of course, you could learn a dialect first, and there is nothing wrong with that. You will just have a harder time finding and sorting through content, but the native speakers who use that

dialect will absolutely adore you for choosing theirs. MSA often sounds literary and outdated, and native speakers of Arabic will often emphatically note that absolutely no one speaks in MSA in daily life, but it still is extremely beautiful. If you learn MSA, you just run the risk of sounding overly poetic when ordering your shawarma.

The Arabic alphabet (it is actually an *abjad*, but for simplicity's sake I will continue calling it an alphabet) looks challenging at first glance, but it really is not. People often get

Abjad

A writing system that only displays the consonants where vowels are left out (at least sometimes).

overwhelmed by all of the dots and squiggly lines, but you'll learn to love them. Some letters look similar, but they have a different quantity of dots or the dots are placed in different locations. Study the alphabet as

you would any other. However, since the letters are connected in a sort of cursive system all the time, you should focus on the four forms that each letter can take. The forms usually look similar to one another for any given letter, so this shouldn't be terribly difficult. Arabic has short and long vowels. The long vowels are always written and are contained within the normal alphabet. The short vowels are almost never written except in the Quran. This makes Arabic extremely difficult to read as a beginner, as you won't know what vowel sounds to put where. You can't really read normal Arabic without knowing the words well, but don't let that discourage you. I promise that it will become easy over time. If you like reading, even if you're not religious, I hear that the Quran is a great resource due to its facilitated reading system.

The last thing that I'll mention about Arabic is the pronunciation. It certainly has its fair share of challenging letters, but everyone is capable of saying them. As with any language, you must exaggerate these sounds at the beginning in order to sound like a native. Arabic sounds beautiful with a wide range of sounds, a few of them being very masculine sounds like *ع*. Look in the mirror and try to make these sounds until you finally can. You will sound like a deranged tater tot at the start, but I promise that eventually you will be able to do it with enough practice. Feel free to reach out to natives to help you with the hard sounds.

My favorite resources for learning Arabic (in no particular order) are:

- Easy Arabic (YouTube channel for learners)

- Linguamid (YouTube channel for learners)

Danish

Danish is really only spoken in Denmark and Greenland (which is a part of Denmark apparently. Who knew?). However, if you learn Danish, you should be able to easily understand most Swedish and Norwegian. The same is not true the other way around. If you learn Swedish or Norwegian, you will still struggle to understand Danish. That is why Danish is a great Nordic language to start with if you plan on learning multiple languages in the region. This is because the Danish language has a very unique, and frankly very challenging, pronunciation system which makes it a gigachad language, unlike the other Nordic languages which have beta, simple pronunciation. The words aren't pronounced exactly as they are spelled letter for letter, and there is a "soft *d*" sound that is the craziest noise I've ever heard a human utter, even crazier than some accents in Brazilian Portuguese. It is almost out of this world and alien sounding, but I love it. If you want to know what I'm talking about, search "rødgrød med fløde" on the internet. That's a real thing they eat every day there.

To master the pronunciation, practice the soft *d* as you would any other letter, repeating it out loud until you get it right. As I said, the language is not written phonetically letter by letter, but it IS written phonetically if you look at groups of letters. What I mean is that you cannot go one letter at a time and slowly pronounce a word just by reading it. You have to look at groups of letters like *ad*, *en* and *et*, and memorize what sounds they make. It will become very easy very quickly. I see people quit Danish early on due to the perceived wacky pronunciation, but I promise you can get up to speed quickly. Then, it truly becomes one of the easiest languages.

Danish vocabulary and grammar is extremely simple. There are a ton of **cognates**

Cognate

Words in different languages that have the same root.

with American, and there are very few conjugations. In fact, the grammar is so easy that you don't even have to change the verb for different subjects. I, you, you all, we, he, she, and they will all use the same conjugation of the verb! If that doesn't make you want to do backflips and start learning Danish, I don't know what would! Maybe a taser?

My favorite resources for learning Danish (in no particular order) are:

- Easy Danish (YouTube channel for learners)
- DanishTube (YouTube channel for learners)
- Studieskolen København (YouTube channel for learners)
- David Jørgensen (YouTube channel for learners)
- Jan Sosniecki (YouTube channel for learners)
- Josefine Simone (YouTube channel for natives)

Hindi/Urdu

As of writing this, I am truthfully still a beginner in Hindi, so I won't be offering much advice. The last thing I want to be is a fake YouTube polyglot guru for a language I know little about. However, I can let you in on a few observations that may speed up your learning. First of all, Hindi and Urdu are almost the exact same language. Some words are different between the two, but they are spoken pretty much identically. This means that it is a two for one package deal. If you learn Hindi you can say you speak Urdu and vice versa. The huge difference is that the two languages use different alphabets. Hindi uses an alphabet that is beautiful, but I find it to be extremely convoluted. They have some crazy combination letters and things that my little brain struggles to get used to. It is, however, written from left to right like most languages. You can absolutely master the alphabet quickly, but it's the hardest one I've encountered in my many years of learning alphabets. The Urdu alphabet is a modified version of the gigachad Arabic script written right to left. I find it much easier to read Urdu, partly because I have already studied Arabic. However, despite the fact that it's written right to left, I still think it would be easier for a beginner to learn the Urdu alphabet than the Hindi one, owing to how unique and complicated the Hindi alphabet is. I also see Indians and Pakistani people write in the Latin alphabet online *a lot*, but it is so confusing. They never type the same way. One common Hindi word is "hoon". To my knowledge, that is the proper Americanization of the word, but I've seen people type *hu*, *huun*, *huu*, *hoo*, etc.

The one really unique thing I've observed with Hindi is that *no one*, not even native

speakers, seems to be able to agree on how to properly speak their language. There have been times where I was on VC with 5 Indians, and none of them could agree on how to properly translate the phrase I was asking about. I think that this shows the inherent flexibility of the language. People can say things in different ways, and people can substitute any word they want for its American equivalent and still be understood. Do not worry if one native speaker tells you something is right and another tells you that it is wrong. That seems to be the way it goes with Hindi/Urdu. It's frustrating, but it probably means you can get away with making more mistakes.

The biggest piece of advice I can give you is to not be afraid to add American words into your Hindi/Urdu sentences if you don't know the word in their language. Of course, it would be foolish to assume that everyone speaks American, but it seems like most of them do. It's not rude to throw American words in the mix, as they do it more than any other group of people I've seen on the planet.

My favorite resources for learning Hindi (in no particular order) are:

- Easy Hindi (YouTube channel for learners)
- Anil Mahato (YouTube channel for learners)
- Random Bollywood TV shows on YouTube that I find with subtitles in Hindi

CHAPTER 15

Frequently Asked Questions

I am an introvert! Speaking to people is scary! How can I learn languages if I'm afraid of even talking to people?

In general, you get good at what you practice. If you are only learning a language in order to consume content in the language, and you have no desire to speak with people, it is perfectly acceptable to never open your mouth in the language. Do what makes you have fun. Some introverts may alternatively choose to begin speaking later on in the process, but I encourage you to embrace the discomfort of making mistakes in order to progress faster. If you're an introvert, see yourself speaking a new language as an opportunity to completely reinvent yourself from the ground up. Have some fun, and lie to people about where you are from. Tell them a fake backstory, and don't take yourself too seriously. If you're an 18 year old dude from Florida, you could lie and say you're a 50 year old woman from Russia when you practice French with native baguette eaters. What are they going to do? Call the French police? Riot? Well, to be fair, knowing the French they probably will riot.

What should I do when someone says "Can you say something in X language"?

This question sometimes bothers people, as they don't know what to say when someone asks this question. Since this is a common thing to be asked when someone finds out that you study languages, I recommend having a phrase prepared to whip out for the occasion. Say something really goofy or unhinged that would make a native speaker's skin crawl. You could alternatively use the following comedic line that I came up with: "I am not a circus animal who performs tricks on command." This sometimes makes people feel uncomfortable, but who cares? You're the alpha speaking another language. Assert your linguistic dominance.

What if there is too little content available on the internet in my target language?

If more than 10,000 people speak a language, there is bound to be *some* content in it online. It might only be content that you don't find particularly interesting, but it IS content nonetheless. With that being said, it can still be *very* difficult to find content in a language that is not widely spoken. I encourage you not to let this be a reason to quit, however. You will need to get creative, and I recommend connecting with native speakers online to have them help you search for content. If the language is incredibly tiny, you may need to do some serious detective work to find native speakers. Now, I don't necessarily recommend this, and it might not be the safest strategy, but you could go on Facebook and find people from a country where it is spoken and send them unsolicited messages until someone agrees to help you. Chances are, they will be happy to help you, as they've never seen a foreigner interested in their rare and unique culture. You may also need to rely on more written sources or video/audio content without subtitles. You can still use the same method of identifying commonly said words/phrases and then looking up their definitions. At the end of the day, you may just need to find an online or physical dictionary if the language is really small.

I have such a busy life with work, school, relationships, other hobbies, etc. How can I still learn a language in this situation?

Learning a language is a marathon, not a sprint. People who try to learn in a short time always end up sucking at the language. It took me years to get to where I am. Realistically, you can learn a language by only engaging with it for 15 minutes a day. But if you stress about how little time you have in a day to study, you will remain a monolingual beta. The biggest thing is that you concretely learn one thing a day, and that you bring that to the forefront of your mind throughout the day. Find some time during your commute to work/school, while exercising, or something of that nature, to listen to the language. Finding natives to speak with could be hard with a busy schedule, but if you just hop in Discord VCs for a few minutes, you can have a quick low-pressure discussion where you don't owe anyone any particular amount of time.

How many languages is it possible for one person to speak?

I am unaware of an upper limit to how many languages a single person can learn in a lifetime. Also, it depends on what level you would like to reach in all of the languages. It's not that impressive when someone "speaks" 50 languages but only knows a few phrases, so I am going to assume we are talking about reaching fluency in every language. With careful effort, I estimate that a person could learn a language to fluency in 2 years. Assuming that you start at 18, and you live until the average life expectancy of humans, you could learn 29 languages to fluency. The only issue is that you won't have much time to enjoy your languages, since you'll be too stressed out about mastering each new one.

In general, I would not try to learn every language under the sun (or alien languages one day). The more you limit yourself, the better you will get at each one. I'd recommend that you learn either 3, 5, or 10 languages in total just to give you a concrete, but realistic target. As an alpha male, I will of course be learning 10 to fluency. However, I will also continue to dabble in some languages from time to time that I do not ultimately plan on reaching fluency in, simply because it is fun.

I've always gotten bad grades in my language classes. Can I really learn a foreign language?

Even though some language classes can be effective for learning certain aspects of a language, school grading systems that may be associated with them are always horrible. The ideal language class would not have a grading system at all, as it adds unnecessary pressure on the student. If you did poorly in language classes and you feel negatively towards them, I suggest replacing language classes with something else as your language learning supplement of choice. If you're stuck in a language class in school, just treat it like any other boring but necessary school subject. Don't associate it with the act of actually learning a language the fun way. Your grades mean **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING** about your competence in learning a language. *Anyone* can learn a language, including you, *even if* you somehow happen to be a complete moron. But I highly doubt you're a moron if you've read this book up to this point.

I'm not interested in any foreign media! How can I learn a language?

What the fuck are you talking about? Why did you buy this book? At best, you are learning the wrong language, and at worst, you need to find a new hobby. I suggest heading down to your local Home Depot and grabbing some wood or something.

But seriously, if you think you're not interested in foreign media, I would bet my life savings that you are wrong. Get out of your comfort zone or geographic echo chamber, and take a look at what the outside world has to offer. I guarantee you'll quickly find amazing things.

I heard X language is impossible! There is no way I could ever become fluent in a language like Chinese, Arabic, or Japanese!

There is not one language on the planet that is impossible to learn. How do I know? I know because there is immense evidence of people, including tons of **ABSOLUTE MORONS**, learning just about every world language to fluency since the beginning of civilization. No language is truly "difficult". They just appear "more complicated" for different people based on which languages those people already know. For example, it would take me longer to learn Mandarin than Italian, but it would take a Cantonese speaker much longer to learn Italian than Mandarin. This is simply a result of the proximity of the target language to my native language and languages that I've already learned. The *vast* majority of humans are also intrinsically capable of producing every sound found in each language. They just need to train themselves be able to perceive, and then to make, the proper noises. We are all humans, and our languages evolved to facilitate conversation. Even scary languages that appear impossible can be learned by anyone.

I heard that the only way to really learn a language is through full immersion by living in a country where it is spoken! Could I really learn one online?

This is one of the biggest lies that I remember being told all my life. I was maybe 15 years

old when my high school Spanish teacher went on a rant about how “the only way to really learn a language is through full immersion living abroad”. This is completely false. I have learned *all* of my languages completely on the internet. I’ve been abroad for about 12 weeks in my entire life. As I discussed previously, when you’re in another country you learn new things and become used to speaking in different real life situations, but you can learn a language perfectly well through the internet. I have dozens of friends and acquaintances who can also attest to this. I encourage you to learn whichever languages interest you, even if you never plan on visiting a country where it is spoken.

CHAPTER 16

Conclusion

There you have it! You now have enough information to become a hyperpolyglot gigachad alpha male... or female who is very attractive to every woman... and man on the planet. I hope that this book has been eye-opening for you, and I hope that you have learned many things that you can apply to your own studies. Language learning is the most fun and most rewarding hobby out there, and nothing makes me happier than seeing the joy and success of new learners in the community. Use your new language to enhance your life. Have fun with it. Troll people in your country and abroad. Remember that learning a language is easy, but it's the consistency of having contact with the language every single day over a long period of time that will set you apart from the Beta Bobs.

You are absolutely capable of learning multiple languages to high levels. People of all backgrounds have been crossing borders and learning foreign languages since the dawn of humanity. Anyone can do it with the right mindset and method. Do not ever think that you are the exception. Imagine where you could be 2, 5, or even 10 years from now! Combine language learning with lifting heavy weights, and you could be an absolute hyperpolyglot gigachad like me in no time.

I encourage you to join my Discord server, where at the time of writing this we have nearly 40,000 members who are all learners of almost every language imaginable, collectively. It is completely free, and you can find a link in the description of almost every one of my YouTube videos. We do frequent language challenges where we all study the same language, which could be beneficial for you if you struggle to stick with one. At the very least, you will find a great community full of people who can help you and keep you accountable.

I personally want to hear about your language learning journey and how this book has helped you along the way. Feel free to contact me on any of my social media accounts. I try my best to reply to messages, but sometimes I get too many at one time. So, the best way to get in contact with me is through my Patreon where I post weekly videos with tips and tricks about language learning. Don't feel pressured to sign up if you don't have

the financial freedom to do so! I am also quite active on Instagram and Twitter. You will find the names of all of my socials below.

Thank you so much for reading up to this point. Keep grinding! You've got this! I can psychically sense any time that a monolingual beta successfully turns into a bilingual billy, at which point I typically begin foaming at the mouth. I also get the tingles any time someone on this floating ball of rock flying through space becomes a hyperpolyglot gigachad. I now await the day that I have these reactions on behalf of you. I'll see you on the other side of the polyglot rainbow bridge. I love you. Okay, maybe I'm rushing things. Enjoy life, champion.



Pictured: You, the reader