

## How to learn a language successfully?



We can all agree that languages are an incredible tool to communicate with people. More so, they can even reshape our perspective on life (\*).

However, it is true that learning a new language is not always easy. Many times, it can lead to frustration or even giving up on it. Although all of this is true, I would like to share the other side of the story with you all: it is possible!

So, what does it mean to learn a language successfully? I believe it doesn't mean reaching a native level of the language you are trying to learn. Many times we give up on learning a language because we have the expectation in our minds that we have to become fluent, and if we are not there yet, we believe that we are actually not in the process of learning. This could not be further from the truth. In my opinion, learning a language successfully has to do with our mindset and our attitude. Here are a few things to take into account to have the right mindset:

- **Our brains are wired to learn.**

If we understand that our brains are wired to learn, then we will be able to have a different perspective. Some people learn faster, some slower, and we shouldn't compare ourselves to other people. But we all have the capacity to incorporate new information. In fact, we do so from a very young age until we die. Our brains are able to do that and much more, so if we have this as the foundation of our approach to language learning, it will be a great start!

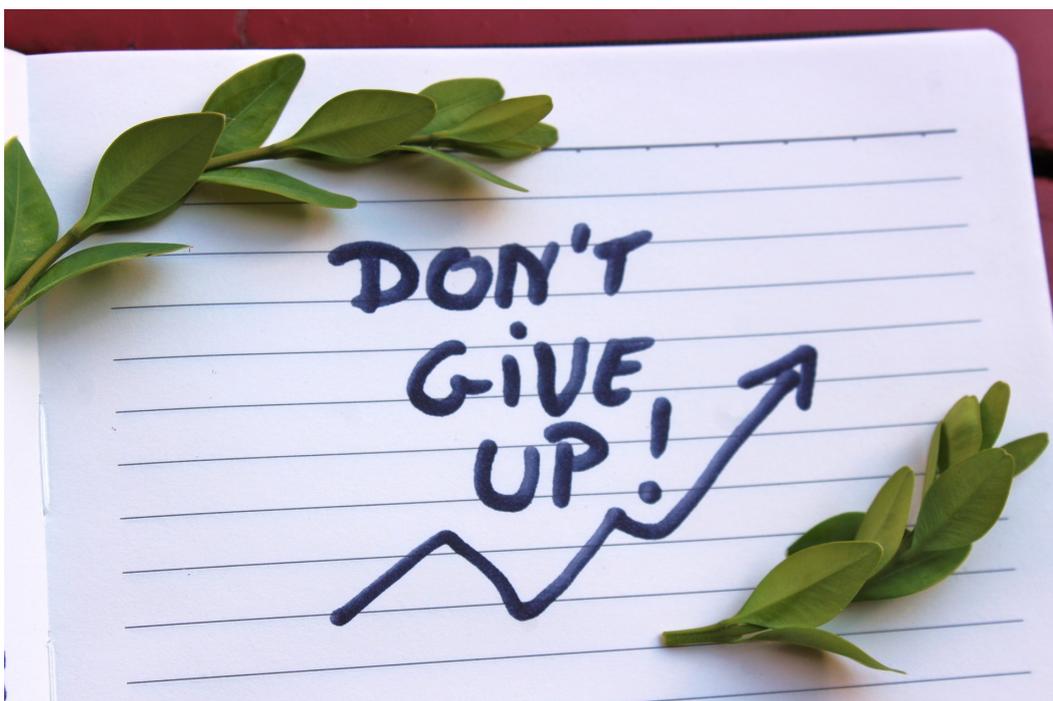
- **Learning: it is a journey**

As I mentioned before, some people learn faster, some slower. In any case, it is a process, and I would even say that you only know when it starts, but you don't know when the process ends. I don't say this to discourage anybody. On the contrary, I say it to help you see that Rome was not built in a day, so you can actually be nice to yourself and accept your strengths and weaknesses when it comes to learning a language. It is a journey, which means that it will take you through different stages, even those which seem stagnant. It is necessary to go through all of the stages, and accept them as part of the learning process. The issue comes when we are not able to identify the stages as part of it. What I mean by that is, even if it seems that we are not learning, or that even though we are working hard, it seems we are getting worse, we don't need to worry: it is only a stage, we are actually on the right path! If you understand this,

you will be able to assimilate what you study successfully; that is, you will be able to see great results and enjoy them!

- **Consistency and perseverance will be your best friends**

In this world where we can have all we want in less than a click, we are becoming more and more surprised that certain things simply require work. Some people can have an amazing gift of languages, but if they don't put that gift to work, it will certainly be very difficult for them to see good results. The truth is, when we make the decision to start learning a new language, we have to take into account that consistency and perseverance are essential. If we are not consistent, our progress will be hindered. If we get stuck in some part of the learning process and we give up, we won't be giving ourselves the opportunity to overcome that obstacle and get to the next level of our language adventure. If we go to class, but we don't put in consistent work, then we can be sure that it will take us more time or we will simply not learn a language successfully.



I believe success in language learning is related to our capacity to understand the above before we get to the point of giving up. I have been a student of English since I was little. I am now a teacher of English and Spanish for foreigners. I know how frustrating it can be to put in a lot of work, and see very few results. When those things would happen, I had to go back to my foundation: "My brain is made to learn" ; "It is okay, learning is a journey" and "Only because I don't understand this specific thing today, it doesn't mean I won't be able to learn it eventually. Therefore, I will keep working at it!" I can say from experience that learning a language is a race, and I continue to navigate its stages every single day. And I can also say that it is so satisfying when you see results! If you feel discouraged because you desire to learn a language but you can't see results at the moment, don't worry: be patient with yourself and don't give up! You will get there eventually. It is important to be able to discern our pace to be able to set realistic goals for ourselves. If we have this mindset, we will be able to assimilate a new language successfully: smoothly and with a great outcome!

(\*) Check this Ted Talk on how language shapes our thinking!

[https://www.ted.com/talks/lera\\_boroditsky\\_how\\_language\\_shapes\\_the\\_way\\_we\\_think](https://www.ted.com/talks/lera_boroditsky_how_language_shapes_the_way_we_think)