



Real Learners. Real Insights.

How to Actually Learn a Foreign Language

Introduction

This guide is based on a live Zoom session held on September 6, 2025. We explored the victories, struggles, and questions from our community of learners. This document packages the key takeaways and advice shared during the call into a resource to help you navigate your own language-learning journey. Enjoy!

Main Student Struggles

John (Italian learner): After five years of study, his main issue is speaking. He understands Italian well but overthinks when trying to speak, attempting to use the same complexity as his native English, which he finds is not possible. This creates a big problem with producing good output.

George (Greek, Italian, & Mandarin learner): Describes himself as an "addict" with a "problem with promiscuity" in language learning. He struggles with prioritizing and focusing his efforts across multiple languages, especially with recent turmoil at work.

Rachel (Italian learner): Her primary challenge is studying with intention. She also finds it more intimidating to speak with a highly advanced fellow student than with a teacher, which presents a new kind of challenge.

Trishy (Greek learner): She had lost consistency in her studies but got back on track with coaching. After a period of not speaking, she became scared to speak again. She is also finding it difficult to source relevant content for her level.

Noel (Thai learner): He feels he has hit a plateau after studying Thai for about three and a half years. As Thai is a tonal language, he finds it challenging, along with vocabulary retention. Finding comprehensible input online at his level is not easy.

Pablo (English learner): Experiences a significant gap between his high comprehension level and his ability to produce spoken English correctly. He realized his feeling of 100% understanding was an "illusion," as his brain was filling in the gaps for words he actually missed.

Brenda (English learner): Despite learning for two years, she still has a persistent fear of speaking English.



Ismael (German learner): Even though he has moved to Germany, he is still struggling to learn the language. He feels the pressure that comes from the expectation of learning quickly while living in the country, which is not happening automatically.

Giulio (Chinese learner): He learned several European languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese) quickly by living abroad but is finding it very difficult to learn Chinese. He is struggling and wonders how long the process will take.

Levi (Multilingual learner): His main concern is how to avoid losing the languages he has already learned (Italian, French, Portuguese) while he starts learning a new one, Mandarin Chinese

These are **real stories**, representing **common obstacles** that even highly motivated learners face every day.

Luca's Key Advice & Fluency Strategies

Simplify to Express, Not Impress:

A common issue for adult learners is trying to say complicated things before they have the linguistic tools to do so. The solution is to simplify. Use two short, simple sentences (Subject-Verb-Object) rather than one long, complex sentence. The goal is to express yourself, not to impress others.

Go Back to Input When Speaking is Hard:

If you find that speaking is difficult and no longer fun, the best strategy is to return to consuming more input. The work you put into listening and reading will eventually pay off in your speaking ability.

What You Do at Home Counts:

Living in the country where your target language is spoken is not a guarantee of success and can even backfire by creating pressure. The most critical factor for language acquisition is the consistent work you do at home, in your "micro-environment". Luca told Ismael (who lives in Germany) for example to consume interesting, comprehensible and rich content first, speak with himself and/or AI, find a tutor and speak with him once or twice a week, and expose himself to experiences to build his confidence.

Embrace the Struggle:

We learn most effectively when we challenge ourselves and stretch our boundaries, not through simple memorization. If the material is slightly higher than your level, you will struggle a bit, but this is how you improve.



Practice Speaking Deliberately:

Simply speaking is not enough to improve; you need deliberate practice. This means speaking, receiving targeted feedback on your errors, and then practicing again by integrating that feedback. Tools like Langua or a good tutor are essential for this process.

Focus on the Process, Not the Result:

Language learning takes time, and it's easy to become discouraged by asking, "When will I get there?". Instead, focus on the daily process. If you enjoy the process and what you have to do each day, you get rewarded and win every single day.

Use Habit Stacking to Maintain Languages:

To avoid forgetting languages, create habits where you use them in conjunction with other daily activities. For example, listen to a French podcast while having breakfast or walking the dog. Maintenance activities should focus on content you can already understand easily, like listening, which allows you to preserve your connection to the language.

Luca's Key Advice & Fluency Strategies

Here are some of the tools and resources that came up during the session:

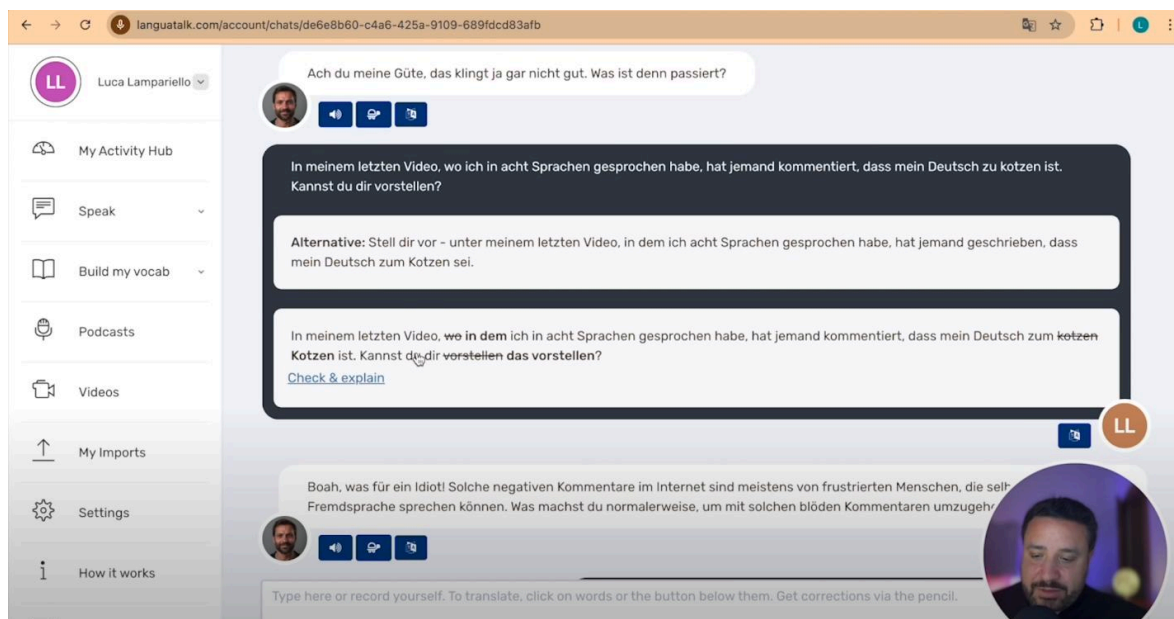
[Notebook LM](#)

AI-powered tool that helps you turn transcripts into personal podcast summaries.

Pro Tip: Copy the URL of your source and create THREE different podcasts that revolve around the same topic. You will get novelty and repetition in one go!

[Langua](#) (Affiliate Link):

An amazing language speaking app that uses realistic AI voices to simulate conversations in your target language. Perfect if you have language speaking anxiety and you have a low intermediate level. Luca made a demo video on YouTube showing all the incredible features of this tool, which is getting better every day!



[LinguaThor \(Affiliate Link\)](#)

A structured system for input-output cycling and deep learning. This is another amazing tool if you want to quickly understand any text and if you have a hard time with the grammar of that language.

Used together, these tools support sustainable fluency development across all skill levels.

- **Peak - The Science of Expertise - Ericsson and Pool** A great book which explains how to really become an expert in any field.
- [Mandarin Blueprint / Hanzi Movie Method](#): Excellent structured method for Chinese learners.
- ****Language Reactor****: A Chrome extension that adds double subtitles and a dictionary overlay to YouTube.
- [How I learn Languages \(Kato Lomb\)](#): A great book about language learning by one of the most icon and accomplished polyglots and interpreters of her time!

[Lengua](#)

Lengua is a language learning platform that uses Comprehensible Input to help you acquire language naturally. It provides personalized stories and podcasts, and allows you to import, translate, and simplify any book or web article to your exact level—so even a beginner can enjoy classics like Harry Potter. Its system features one-click multimedia flashcards, an Interactive Writing Journal, and a 24/7 AI Coach to help independent learners bridge the gap from passive understanding to active speaking confidence.



← Go Back
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Rebelión en la granja - George Orwell

Unknown Author Section 29 / 76 - Page 1 / 2 ▾

< Previous Page
Next Page >

se unió al Comité para la reeducación y participó mucho durante algunos días.

Un día la vieron en el tejado hablando con unos gorriones que estaban lejos de ella. Les decía que todos los animales eran amigos ahora y que cualquier gorrion podía pararse en su pata. Pero los gorriones no quisieron hacerlo.

Sin embargo, las clases de lectura y escritura sí tuvieron mucho éxito. Para el otoño, casi todos los animales sabían leer y escribir un poco. Los cerdos ya sabían leer y escribir muy bien. Los perros aprendieron a leer bastante bien, pero solo querían leer los siete mandamientos.

Muriel, la cabra, leía un poco mejor que los perros. A veces, por la noche, les leía a los demás los trozos de periódicos que encontraba en la basura. Benjamín leía tan bien como los cerdos, pero nunca usaba esa habilidad. Decía que no había nada que valiera la pena leer. Clover aprendió todo el abecedario, pero no podía juntar las letras para formar palabras. Boxer solo pudo aprender hasta la letra D.

< Previous Page
Mark As Read & Next Page >

AI Tutor: Your Language Teacher

Select Example ▾

Hi, I am your language tutor, how can I help you today? You can select one of the templates above or write your own message.

Enter your message here...

Send >

← Go Back
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Tu propósito secreto: cómo revelarlo y vivirlo

¿Alguna vez te has sentido sin una dirección clara? En este episodio, descubre cómo encontrar ese "propósito secreto" que te impulsa cada día, revelarlo y vivirlo plenamente para sentirte más motivado y feliz. Creado por...

🕒 ~11 min 🎧 Intermediate 🎯 Personal Development 👤 Leo, Carmen

✔ Mark as Completed

Leo

¡Hola a todos nuestros queridos oyentes! Bienvenidos a un nuevo episodio de nuestro podcast de español intermedio. Es un placer enorme tenerlos con nosotros hoy.

Carmen

¡Y para mí también, Leo! Prepárense porque el tema de hoy es fascinante y creo que a muchos les va a tocar de cerca y les dará mucho en qué pensar.

AI Tutor: Your Language Teacher

Select Example ▾

Hi, I am your language tutor, how can I help you today? You can select one of the templates above or write your own message.

Enter your message here...

Send >



Our Coaches



Raffaele Terracciano

Check his [services](#)

- 🇮🇹 Italian polyglot and coach with **over 20 years** of language learning experience, **mastering 10+ languages**.
- 🗣️ Offers coaching for a variety of languages, including **Italian, Spanish, French, English, German** and more!
- 🏆 **Certified teacher and coach** who has worked with leading language platforms like **italki** and **Easy Languages**.
- 🌱 Developed a **natural, input-based learning method** tailored to **individual preferences and goals**.
- 📄 Guides students in **creating customized language learning plans** for lasting success.



Richard Simcott

Check his [services](#)

- 🇬🇧 A British polyglot who has studied **over 50 languages**, earning recognition as an **Ambassador for Multilingualism by the Goethe Institute**.
- 📖 Offers coaching services for learners of **any language**, including those he does not speak
- 🌐 **Extensive consulting experience on multilingual and multinational projects** with diverse clients.
- 🎤 Founder of the **Polyglot Conference** and **The Language Event**, connecting global language enthusiasts.
- 💬 Manages the popular **"Speaking Fluently"** Facebook page, sharing language insights and strategies.



A final Note from Luca

Language learning isn't just about finding the "right" method. It's about showing up consistently, even when progress feels invisible. It's about rewiring how you think, feel, and act with your target language. And it's about building a skill that will stay with you for life.

Every learner in this session had moments of doubt. But they kept going. They kept tweaking their routines, finding new tools, reframing setbacks, and trusting the process.

Now it's your turn.

Challenge for the week:

Pick one insight from this guide and put it into action in the next 7 days.

→ Create a **consistent daily habit**.

→ Go deep on a **single piece of content**.

→ Practice **reframing** your "failures" into proof of progress.

→ Experiment with a tool like [Langua \(Affiliate Link\)](#) and [LinguaThor \(Affiliate Link\)](#) and tell us what you learned.

 Then come share your experience in the Circle community.

Start a new post or **join the discussion thread**, because we want to hear your story. Whether it's a win, a struggle, or a question... sharing helps everyone.

And before you go—we're planning a new live session soon (featuring some other polyglot friends?



What kind of **webinar or bootcamp** would help you most right now?

- A breakdown of Luca's personal study routine?
- A workshop on getting past the intermediate plateau?
- A toolkit for building your AI-powered fluency workflow?
- A 30-day vocabulary mastery workshop?

 Post your idea in Circle ([HQ space](#)). Your vote will help shape the next live event!

Let's keep building together, one smart habit at a time.

Happy language learning,

Luca