



## More than words: Real Life Stories

**1. What is your name and what course are you studying?**

My name is Samantha Riley and I am currently in my third year of studying French and Spanish.

**2. What languages do you speak?**

I am a native English speaker. I study French and Spanish at university and I can understand and speak a little bit of Catalan.

**3. When did you decide to learn another language and why?**

When I was 13, I was plunged into making one of the biggest decisions of my life, choosing my GCSEs. To be completely honest, I wasn't sure about taking a language as I never found learning French easy, but I decided to take on the challenge and I have never looked back.

**4. How has being able to speak more than one language helped you in your personal life?**

I can not only travel, and

communicate with locals, integrating myself into their cultures, but it has also helped with my social skills and making new friends. I currently have more friends who speak Spanish than English!

**5. Has being able to speak another language opened any doors for you?**

I have been able to secure a summer job in France! Being able to speak French has really helped me to find work and broaden my horizons.

**6. What has been the most impactful thing about learning a language on your life to date?**

I would say that learning a language not only creates more opportunities, but it is also a way to self-enrich and learn a lot about yourself. Thus, I would say the most impactful thing about learning a language is the self-growth that I have experienced

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and continue to experience during my language learning journey.

**7. What is your favourite foreign language word or phrase and why?**

“Para gustos colores”, which means each to their own. I love it because it really captures the essence that there are lots of colours -like tastes - in the world. It’s beautiful as it shows how diverse the world is from a different lens.

**8. Is there another language you would like to learn?**

I would love to be able to speak Basque and Turkish, as I have friends from the Basque country and because of their complicated morphology. I think it would be an amazing challenge. I see learning languages as a puzzle.

**9. What has been the most unexpected benefit of learning an additional language?**

I would say the professional advantages are enormous, as now I can work in many countries and find opportunities to do anything at any time.

**10. Can you give an example where knowing another language has helped you progress in a way that would have been harder without having that skill?**

I am currently studying at a university in Barcelona, and I follow all my classes in Spanish and French. However, in Catalunya, they speak Catalan, which at first was slightly hard to adapt to, but afterwards I quickly became accustomed and started to use everyday phrases with the locals. Knowing a little bit of Catalan has now enabled me to take a Catalan course at university.

**11. At what point in your life did you realise how important / the value in knowing another language was?**

I have always thought that learning another language was important, but it wasn't until I arrived in Spain when I really understood its importance. This is because you really have no other choice but to adapt quickly and speak that language. When I arrived in Barcelona, I knew that I wanted to join a football team and I was lucky enough to find one, however, this is only thanks to my Spanish language skills as it enabled me to fill out the forms, follow the training sessions and make friends.

**12. If you could give one piece of advice to students thinking about learning another language, what would it be?**

Do not give up! I know it is a cliché however it really is the best advice. It is not about the end goal, it is about your journey along the way,

the people you meet and the mistakes you make. Also, one more piece of advice would be to not take everything so seriously. What I mean by that is don't be afraid to laugh when you make a mistake in your pronunciation, instead use these mistakes to help you remember and learn.