



# More than words: Real Life Stories

**1. What is your name and what is your course of study?**

Isabella Colic, Doctorate in Psychology.

**2. What languages do you speak, are interested in, or that you relate to in any way?**

I was born in Italy to a family of Serbo-Croatian immigrants. My parents emphasised the role of Italian more than Serbo-Croatian to avoid me being disadvantaged at school, but I still grew up hearing both languages. I then studied foreign languages in high school, specifically English, French, and German. When I moved to Cardiff for my PhD, I was exposed to the Welsh language and to the multicultural pot of the city.

**3. At what point in your life did you realise how important and how valuable knowing multiple languages was?**

Very early on, but it's been an ebbing and flowing relationship throughout my formative years.

Now, as an adult, I have further re-evaluated how enriching knowing multiple languages is.

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

Knowing more than one language has helped broaden my horizons. I've made friends from all over the UK and the rest of Europe, and it has provided me with a better understanding of other cultures.

**5. How do you think knowing more than one language has helped you, or will help you, in your professional life?**

Knowing multiple languages helped me get into my MSc and PhD programmes, which in turn, provided me with opportunities to develop the skills I need to further my career.

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**6. What career/s do you hope to go into in the future?**

Higher Education Teaching or Research Officer at the Welsh Government.

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

Being able to move abroad and building my life in a different country.

**8. What has been the most unexpected benefit of learning languages during your life?**

Being able to read books from authors that write in a language different from Italian and not having to rely on translations.

**9. What has been the most challenging aspect of learning languages during your life?**

Studying languages in school can feel like a trudge at times, especially when it comes to learning the grammar and the vocabulary but even though I

found this challenging, it was worth it.

**10. What is your favourite word or phrase in a language other than English?**

*'Non c'è trippa per gatti'* - 'there's no meat for cats': an Italian expression to say that there is no easy way out and you need to work hard for what you want.

**11. Are there any other languages you wish you could speak? If so, what are they and why would you want to speak them?**

I would love to improve my Welsh, as I do feel a deep connection to Cardiff and Wales, and I would also like to study Spanish or Portuguese because they are widely spoken across the world.

**12. Do you have any funny stories to share about your language learning experiences?**

I couldn't remember the word for 'dustpan' and I thought 'is it dustpan? That sounds too simple'

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and then I asked my British housemate and she confirmed that the tool I was using was indeed called dustpan, whose literal Italian translation would be *'padella per la polvere'*.

**13. Has anyone or any one particular moment or thing inspired you on your language learning journey?**

My high school French professor - she used to recommend me French books that I would then read voraciously. It's still one of the most cherished memories I have of those years.

**14. How has being an MFL Mentor supported your journey with languages?**

It has rekindled my passion and appreciation for foreign languages.

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

Look for alternative ways to learn that language, for example read books (even children's books), watch movies, read the news in that language or listen to music.

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