



More than words: Real Life Stories

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

Olivia Oboh, BA Chinese.

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

I learnt English in primary and secondary school. I learnt Chinese in my GCSE studies and continued to learn the language from there. I am currently learning Spanish, French and Arabic.

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

I realised at the age of 12 that languages was important since watching anime, kdramas, cdramas and jdramas. I believed it was important to immerse myself in these cultures and gain a lot of transferrable skills in learning a language.

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

Being able to speak multiple languages has helped me to make new friends in different countries, to connect with Chinese language speakers, gain access to their world and travel to Taiwan. In the future I think it will be important in teaching and working, as well as networking.

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

I will be able to do business internationally, trade abroad, invest money, teach, and provide mentoring support.

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

Teaching.

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

Being able to belong, connect with like-minded individuals and reach people all over the world.

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

The opportunity to travel to Taiwan and study at a university.

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

Struggling to speak fluently in Chinese and reverting back to my most dominant language, English.

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

放开我 fangkaiwo - let go of me, from watching dramas it has such an authoritative sound. Also I love *胡说 hushuo* which means nonsense.

11. Are there any other languages you wish you could speak?

Korean because I love their culture, food, arts and fashion. I love writing hangul too. I would also love to speak Japanese and Arabic because of my love for their calligraphy, textiles, fashion, and historical artifacts.

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

It has increased my desire to travel, try new cultures, learn new languages, and be surrounded by students who are also on similar journeys. It has made me see the value in language learning, that caters to the young person on a quest to learn.

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

My Chinese teacher inspired me to continue learning Chinese and instilled in me self-confidence that

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I was capable in learning the language. I also experienced support from Chinese speakers, Taiwanese and Chinese students in my exchange year abroad.

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

I was in a supermarket in China town and I translated eggs 鸡蛋 instead of super market 超市. I realised when I left the store but it was really funny because a lady behind me had a confused look on her face.

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

Always believe in yourself!

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