



More than words: Real Life Stories

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

Sian Freya Gibson, Business Law.

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

English is my native language. I've also studied French from a young age and I took a fast track Italian course in college. I am interested in Korean too. I'm fascinated by the Korean culture, the historical links of the language and how it completely differs from English. I have begun to teach myself basic phrases, as well as pursue the study through classes.

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

I believe it was when I was around 11 that my teachers instilled the passion in me for languages but over time I have slowly learnt the importance through interacting with people. Nothing can take

away the beauty of interacting with people in their native language.

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

During my French A level studies, I met some incredibly passionate people. All my closest friends have come out of studying that course, and I would never endeavour to change that, as challenging as the course was.

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

Languages have taken my interactions with customers to another level. I currently work in hospitality, so even just establishing the language that the customer is speaking can mean I can make a good difference to their stay.

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

My dream would be to go into the music industry, either as a producer or artist. Being able to speak multiple languages would mean I can make my music speak to more people.

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

Recognising the joy in others when you can speak their language. I remember speaking a little bit of Korean to the workers in the Korean restaurant I went to for my birthday, and they looked so joyful. Nothing can compare with that.

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

You don't realise your mental capabilities until you start to piece together different types of word order. You discover that your brain is capable of so many different things. Learning multiple

languages made me realise everything is possible.

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

Trying to learn in the way you're tested to learn a language versus how I learn personally. Sometimes it takes longer to figure out how you learn best rather than the actual learning itself.

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

Flâner (verb) - means to wander without a destination. Also *La vache sur la table* - it means the cow on the table. It's the only phrase my father can say in French, so whenever I speak to him in French, it will be the response. It makes me laugh and reminds me that there is always a reason to learn more.

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

Spanish - it's a wildly spoken language, but I do believe it is harder to understand than that of French and other Romanised languages.

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

It has reinforced that there is a purpose to languages, even if I cannot currently use them in everyday life.

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

My old French teacher, Mrs Lea, invested me into the language speaking world. Without her, I do not believe that my language journey would have gone this far.

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