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## **Learn Language Quickly While Bonding With the People**

Acquire the language you will speak in the field where God is sending you. Learn it in a way that enables you to bond with the people and their culture. Speak it with little or no accent, building relationships in the process. Language learning is best done through much interaction with ordinary folk, while one is residing among them in their culture. Avoid classroom-based language learning programs. A program that has been highly effective for missionaries is called

*LAMP, Language Acquisition Made Practical*  
(<http://instantweb.com/1/linguahouse/Welcome.html>).

### **ABOUT LAMP**

1. The LAMP method, developed by Brewster & Brewster, is a self-teaching method that requires much conversation with local folk, which enables you to control your own learning process. It is structured around a daily learning cycle, which, if followed in a disciplined manner, normally enables one to learn a language very quickly while developing vital relationships with folk in the process.

2. If the LAMP method proves impractical for you, then use another program that allows for maximal conversation with local folk.

However, some learners need the incentives provided by a more traditional, classroom or formal tutors.

3. If you must follow a traditional language-learning program, then supplement it on your own with ample conversation practice with local folk.

Review everything you learn at once with them, speaking in sentences, explaining to them what you are trying to learn. Ask them to correct your pronunciation.

4. Get someone who is not shy to correct your pronunciation.

You may need to send recordings to an experienced phonetics teacher. Although most people will overlook your poor grammar and errors in vocabulary, they simply will not endure (for long) a disagreeable accent. While some people enjoy hearing your accent, but not if it so butchers the sounds that they have to strain constantly to understand you. This is very disagreeable and will limit your ministry.

Remember, pronunciation includes the intonation of entire sentences (the “sing song” pattern that all languages have).

5. Pray for God’s help to get you over your excessive shyness.

Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. Talk a lot! Practice! Some perfectionists never learn a language well, because they refuse to say anything until they are sure they can say it right. This sounds logical, but it results in staying mute.

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### JUST DO IT! IT'S FUN!

Based on *Language Acquisition Made Easy* (LAMP), Brewster & Brewster

Language learners must recognize three facts:

1. Language is cultural. We learn it best by living within the culture, not by merely going to classes and practicing with a helper.
2. Language is communication. It is best learned through two-way exchanges with ordinary people, not by passively listening to a teacher.
3. Language is social. It is best learned by joining in different kinds of group activities (family, neighbors, work place, social events and worship events), not by sitting at home memorizing word lists.

**Goal:** Missionaries learn to converse easily in the people's language, without a bad accent.

Planned (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Practice confirmed (date): \_\_\_\_\_.

#### A. Five Daily Tasks to Learn a Language Well

To speak a language without a heavy accent, one should give all his time to learning it. Those who spend most of their time on another task almost never learn to speak well. To learn a language without going to a formal language school, the writers recommend Brewster's method of Five Daily Tasks.

1. With a helper, choose the phrases to practice today.
2. Listen to them and repeat them many times with your helper.
3. 3. Practice them with many neighbors and friends the same day.
4. 4. Plan what you are going to learn tomorrow.
5. Check your progress and review what was difficult.

Find a Helper. The first two steps use a helper who speaks the language well and is prepared to spend an hour each morning with you. It is best if he can speak a little of your own language. Do not call him a "teacher" but "helper;" because his task is not to teach you the language, but to enable you to learn it on your own. You must control the learning process; he only helps you to hear and to repeat the phrases, and explains their meaning.

#### **Task 1: CHOOSE THE PHRASES YOU ARE GOING TO PRACTICE DURING THE DAY**

Meet your helper every morning and choose what you are going to practice with others during the day. Explain to the helper what you are going to do. For example:

- "Today I want to greet many people and tell them that I am learning their language."

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- “I am going to the market to buy oranges. How do I ask the price?”
- “I am going to walk in the park. How do I ask the way?”

In a notebook, write in both languages the phrases you will practice. For example, write:

Greetings: “Good morning. How are you? How is your family?”

### Task 2: HEAR AND REPEAT THE CHOSEN PHRASES MANY TIMES

Listen to the helper pronounce a phrase. Then repeat it. Use only a few phrases, which you are going to practice during the day. Listen to the helper say the same phrase many times, until you hear it correctly. Then repeat it after him many times until you can say it with as little foreign accent as possible.

No language is pronounced the same as your own. Pay attention to two things:

- the pronunciation of the sounds,
- the music of the whole phrase, the tone and rhythm with which it is spoken.

Suppose your conversation for the day is: “Good morning. Today is my first day to speak Arabic. That is all I can say so far. Thank you. Good-bye.”

Your helper divides the conversation into phrases such as:

- Good morning.
- Today is my first day to speak Arabic.
- That is all I can so far.
- Thank you.
- Good-bye.

The helper says each phrase several times and you repeat it:

**Helper:** Good morning. **You:** Good morning.

**Helper:** Good morning.

**You:** Good morning.

**Helper:** Good morning.

**You:** Good morning.

**Helper:** Today I begin

**You:** Today I begin

**Helper:** Today is my first day

**You:** Today is my first day

**Helper:** to speak Arabic.

**You:** to speak Arabic.

**Helper:** to speak Arabic.

**You:** to speak Arabic.

**Helper:** to speak Arabic.

**You:** to speak Arabic.

And so on, until you can hear and pronounce each phrase correctly.

Then put together the parts of complete sentences, and repeat them with the right intonation (rhythm and tone).

Then the helper says parts of a phrase, and you complete it:

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**Helper:** Today I begin...

**You:** Today I begin to speak Arabic.

Continue in this way until you can say the whole conversation without help.

### **IMPORTANT**

Ask your helper to continue to correct every mistake in your intonation as well as in pronunciation! Rather than asking a helper simply how to say, “May I have some bread?”, ask “How would you ask for some bread?” Otherwise, he might give you a direct translation that is not how the people speak. Asking how he would say it allows the helper to think culturally and give you a more appropriate wording.

When you master new sentences, learn to say them with different word forms.

- When you can say them as a statement, also practice saying them as questions and as commands.
- When you can say them with yourself as the subject (“I am learning Arabic.”), then learn to say them as other persons (you, he, she, they, etc.)
- When you can say them in the present tense (“I am learning...”), then learn to say them in the past tense (“I learned...”) and the future tense (“I shall learn...”).
- When you have learned any new sentence, then practice it by substituting other words (“I saw an elephant”. “I saw a house”. “I entered a house”).

Doing this every day, you can master the basic structure of any spoken language in about three months.

### **Task 3: PRACTICE USING THE SAME PHRASES WITH PEOPLE**

At least five days a week, go out to practice, with local people the same phrases you learn every morning. Each time you learn some-thing, you must use it. Talk to at least 50 people. Spend up to four hours, if necessary, practicing saying them with neighbors, children and young people, workers in the market or people in public places.

Take your notebook with you to write down new words that people teach you.

Most people will be amiable and patient with you. Some will help you, because they are pleased that you are learning their language. A few will laugh, but pay no attention. It would be better to laugh also, at your own mistakes, because there will be very many!

Important: Use what you have learned from your helper with many people, immediately!

### **Task 4: PLAN THE SENTENCE PATTERNS YOU WILL LEARN NEXT DAY**

After talking to people, think about what you have learned:

- What did I want to say today, that I could not say?
- How can I increase my knowledge of this language now?

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- What must I learn tomorrow? This week?

Examples of subjects for conversation with people during the day:

Talk of yourself: Where you are from, your name, your family.

“My name is David White. I’m from Canada. I arrived one week ago. My wife is called Martha. We have three children.” (Take photographs with you.)

- Greetings: Thank people for helping you, apologize. Your aim is to learn the language: “I am not a tourist. Please correct what I say.”
- Objects: “What is that?” “What is that called?” “Did I say that right?”
- Talk about them: “Where do you work? How did you learn that occupation? Are you from this city? Is that sheep yours? What are you doing? Can I help?”
- Ask: “Which bus goes to the center? How much does it cost? Where is the main town square?”
- Ask how to use the telephone, the way to write letters, the words for adding and subtracting, how to say the day and time, parts of the body, etc.
- Ask permission: “Every day I learn a little. To do so I speak to many people to learn well. I would like to come back another day to speak to you. I want to tell you what I am learning. May I?”

### **Task 5: REVIEW EVERY DAY WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED AND THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED**

Note the things that were more difficult, to do them over again.

Ask yourself:

- What did I learn today? Have I learned something new every day this week?
- Did I listen hard enough to pronounce the words properly?
- What part of the grammar did I find most difficult? The tenses of the verbs? The prepositions? (Such as for, in, with, within, above, etc.)? The adverbs (such as easily, amiably, lightly, etc.)?
- The way to ask questions?
- What friends did I make today?
- What did I learn about the culture today?
- Which mistakes am I repeating far too often?
- What subject shall I talk about tomorrow?
- Am I patient with my helper and with myself?
- How many people did I speak to today?
- Can I distinguish between different forms of grammar? Examples:

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- How do the people say, “I want to eat kimchi.” And “I wanted to eat kimchi yesterday.” or “I do not want to eat kimchi.”
- How do the people say, “I walk in the house.” “I walk on top of the house.” “Beyond the house.” and so on.

Learners strongly reinforce progress if they report to someone else.

At least once a week, report to someone who knows your aims well (besides your helper). This could be the group leader, if there is one. This helps one to be disciplined in persevering with enthusiasm.

## **VARIOUS AIDS TO LEARN A LANGUAGE**

Each evening record in a notebook, with the date, what you learned that day, problems, observations and plans for the next day. Make a Note of all the Sounds

Use a section of your notebook for sounds. Note and practice the different sounds in the language. If you do not learn the exact pronunciation during the first weeks, it will become very difficult, if not impossible, to do so later on.

Group the sounds with the similar ones, in order to distinguish them and include:

- Vowels (a e I o u; other languages have more vowels) Groups of vowels (like “ai”, “ei”)
- Consonants (b, d, t, etc., which will be pronounced differently)
- Tones (high or low tones may give different meanings)
- Intonation and accent. Notice the music or rhythm of a phrase, similar to the difference when saying: “He ate it all.” “He ate it all!”, and “He ate it all?”

When you discover a new sound, immediately write down some words that include it. Practice them the next day with your helper.

Include together in your list, two words that have similar sounds, to compare them. Do not stop listening to them and repeating them, until you can pronounce them just as your helper does.

Make up exercises of the different forms of grammar. Practice different ways of forming phrases and using sentences, until you master them. Do not try to form phrases the same way as your own language. Each language is organized in different ways.

For example:

- Spanish: The house green is very big.
- English: The green house is very big.
- Hopi tribe in USA: Green house very big.
- Vietnamese: The house color green is very big.
- Farsi (Iran): The house green very big is.

When you have learned a new grammatical rule, use it often in conversation.

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Also, use exercises of substitution. Use a phrase that you want to learn, then repeat it substituting different words:

- “This is my first day here.”
- “This is my second day here.”
- “Today is not my first day here.”
- “Tomorrow we are going to the beach.”
- “Tomorrow we are going to the river” ...the bank ...the country ...the center.”
- “The girl wore a blue skirt.”
- “Wear a beautiful skirt” ...typical ...green ...long ...silk

Investigate and Practice Different Forms of Sentences and Words When you have learned a new grammatical form, use it immediately, comparing it to other forms. Other languages have rules you are not used to. Seek the differences in the following forms of speech:

Intransitive (the action has no object): “Two men sleep”.

- This phrase might be expressed very differently by your people, for example: “Sleep man man.”
- Transitive (has an object): “The man hit the door.”
- This might be: “Man door hit made.”

Reflexive (the actions affect the one that made it): “The man washes himself.”

Classifying (identifies something): “The man is African.”

- Descriptive (describes things or people): “This blind man is a careful fellow.”
- Adverb (describes the action of a verb): “He walks carefully.”
- Possessive (indicates possession): “The dog belongs to Roger.”
- Location: “The dog went into the kitchen.”
- Negative: “No. The dog is not in the kitchen.”
- Interrogative: “Is the dog in the kitchen?” “Who is there?” “What was it?”
- Exclamation: “The dog is eating the chops!”
- Command: “Get that creature out of the kitchen!”
- Combined: “The dog is Angela’s but she has gone already.”
- Description: “The dog that ate the chops seems to be laughing.”
- Omission (unnecessary words are left out): “He enjoyed eating them.”