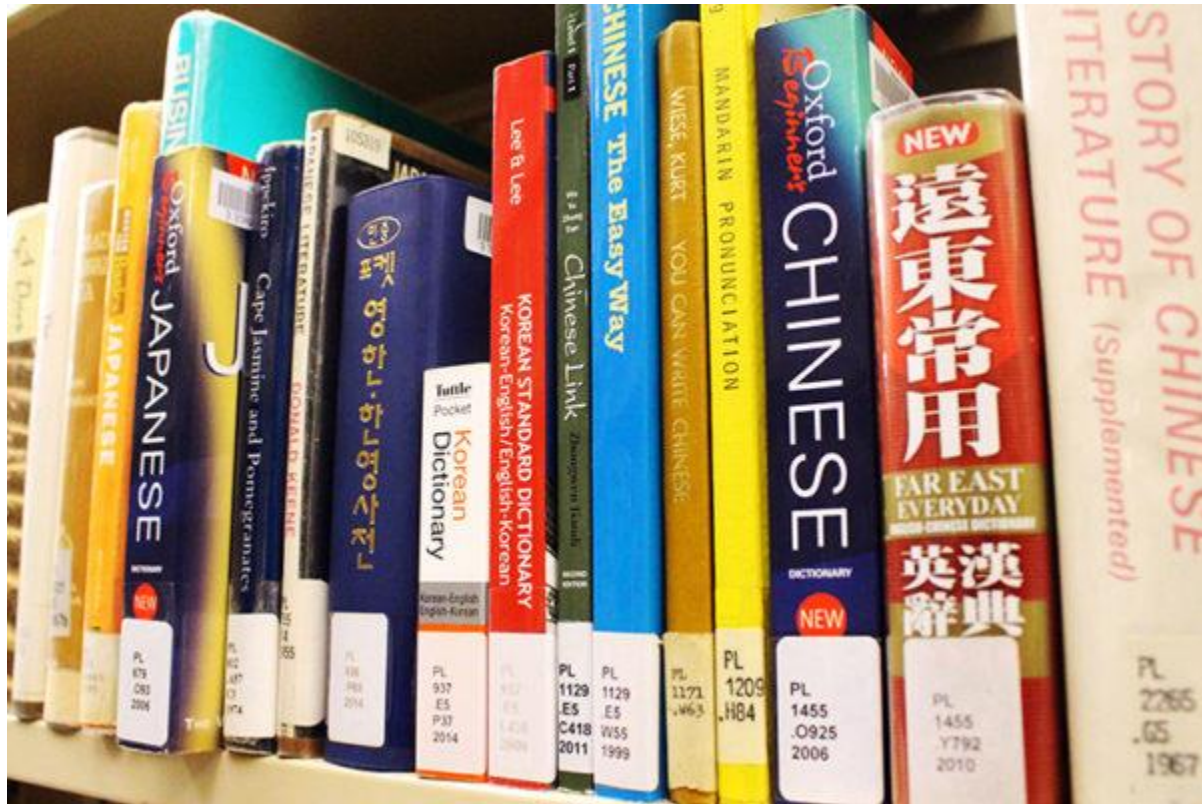


THE POSSIBILITIES OF LANGUAGE

30 JAN 2017



Reading, listening and practicing a new language can open you up to new experiences in life. PHOTO BY HYOJUNG MAY LEE

By **HYOJUNG MAY LEE**
Staff Writer

The first month of 2017 is coming to an end.

How's your new year's resolution going?

If you haven't set any goals or have no idea what you should try, maybe learning a new language is something to consider.

A number of countries have experienced multiculturalism and barriers between countries have broken down because of the Internet and globalization.

If you go to a café or walk in a street, you have probably been next to someone speaking a different language.

Isn't that a good enough reason to motivate yourself to try a new language?

In fact, learning a second language has numerous benefits that can change you in a positive way.

According to a U.K. news source, The Guardian, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) study on second-language learners by Swedish scientists showed that learning a foreign language increases the size of your brain and provides other cognitive benefits.

Tatiana Young, an international services co-ordinator, said, "I think the world we're living in now, learning... another language is a great idea, because you're most likely working with people from another country, no matter where you work and if you're making an effort learning another language it will give you an appreciation for other people who have to learn a language."

She continued: "It really is a good way to develop brain passageways and it's actually said people who learn languages have lower chances of getting Alzheimer's or other diseases significantly affecting brains. And I think it's a great way to meet new friends. Even if you learn to say 'Hi, how are you? My name is Tatiana.'"

Gerardo Ravi Otero Paredes, an Art and Design Foundation student, has been interested in learning many languages. Curiosity, more than anything, is his motivation.

"I've tried to learn English because I really like the music and Japanese because I really like Anime (Japanese animation) and, I learned a little bit of Korean because of Korean dramas and my friend who's into Korean culture. And I learned French because it's so romantic. I also try to learn some German phrases and listen to Russian music. If I find some foreign cultures or singers that draws my interest, I start looking (into) it and researching it."

Paredes says he thinks there are many different kinds of learning – reading books, listening to music with lyrics and watching a lot of animation or YouTube videos in other languages. Using multimedia is a more interactive way to learn languages.

"I have a simple goal – Just understanding lyrics and what characters say in Animes or dramas," said Paredes. "I have Spanish culture. You have another culture, but we both speak in English, so we can share our culture... It's really cool."

He encourages those who are looking to learn another language to "keep your mind open, discover what you like and learn about it. You'll learn different points of view. I am happy to learn other languages and satisfy myself."

Young thinks Niagara College students are surrounded by an environment conducive to learning a new language.

"You have to be immersed in those languages," said Young. "When you come to events where (there are) people who speak different languages, you get interested in understanding or trying to communicate with them."

That's how her daughter, Elizabeth, got interested in other languages. Young has taken Elizabeth to all the international events with her and encouraged her to meet new people whose English is a second language.

Elizabeth chose to learn Korean since there were many Korean students around her and she started getting interested in the culture, the language.

Young said she thinks the most effective way to learn languages is "to practice and to be immersed."

“If you want to learn Chinese, it’s easy at the college – you just go to the cafeteria and look at people who speak Chinese. I’ve never met a person who was not happy to share their language. In Niagara College, there is no excuse. You want to learn a language, we have 70 different countries represented. Just learn basic conversation. It’s really easy.”

12 benefits of learning a foreign language:

- 1) Learning a foreign language boosts brain power.
- 2) A person’s ability to multi-task is developed.
- 3) The onset of dementia and Alzheimer’s can be stalled.
- 4) Memory is improved.
- 5) The mind becomes keener.
- 6) Polyglots are seen to display improved decision-making ability.
- 7) The first language is improved.
- 8) Performance in other academic areas is enhanced.
- 9) It makes a person more flexible and open to other cultures.
- 10) Foreign language expands career potential.
- 11) It builds self-confidence.
- 12) It aids in self-discovery and self-actualization.

*Source from website, Examinedexistence.