How you can learn to communicate in another language
Developed by Howard Culbertson, Southern Nazarene University

The Language Learning Alphabet
God’s gift

“And God said ...” (Genesis 1:3)
Jesus

- Incarnational ministry model
- He spoke the language.
  - Some Aramaic phrases so powerful that gospel writers quoted Jesus in that language and then gave translations.
The way to their Heart
Filtering

Linguists say that languages condition or channel our thinking.

If people of another mother tongue have to speak to you in English, they are limited in what they can express.
Adults
Children

- How do adults learn a language?
- How do children learn a language?
- Which analogy is best?
  - The preciseness of math?
  - The expressiveness of art?
Another “c” word

Charitable

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity . . .”

(I Corinthians 13:1, KJV)
Dedication
Another “d” word

Discouraged

Progress between plateaus
Do you say “I can’t learn a language” based on attempts in high school or college?

Lots of people in the world are bi-lingual; many of those are illiterate!
One more “e” word

Etymology

Using word origins to get at meanings can be both helpful and disastrous.

For example:

- “molestar”
- “embarasada”
Vocabulary test.
Define "tableau"
A French term for the spray from opening a soda can.
Another “g” word

Gestures

Be prepared to use a lot of them!
Immersion

- Total immersion: being thrown into the swimming pool!
- Don’t try to have the language explained to you in English.
Kindergarten

- You’re going back to being a kindergartner
- Another “h” word: Humility
Label everything

Put written labels on everything . . . even the dog.
Fearful of making mistakes and looking stupid?

You’ve got a million mistakes to make. So, get started.
Another “m” word

Memorize Scripture
Native Speaker

Learn from native speakers, preferably those who do not speak English!
Language learning is not a “necessary evil” to get out of the way. Don’t give it low priority because you’re only going to be there a short time. Build relationships with your language helpers. Maybe the Holy Spirit has brought them to you on purpose!
Proverbs and Prayers

- Learn a couple of proverbs and use them often!

Memorize three short prayers:
- Table grace
- Offering prayer
- A “general” prayer for a church service
Questions

- Ask lots of ‘em!
- Learn to ask “What is this?” in your target language.
- Hit this button a zillion times.
- Keep your mind turned “on.”
Repetition

- Learn a bit; use it a bunch.
- Learn a little; use it a lot.
By the end of the second day off the plane, you should be saying:

- “Good morning”
- “Good evening”
- “How are you?”
- “I am fine, thank you”
“Studying” a language does not equal “learning” it.

“Studying” the language can become an excuse for not using what you do know.
Translation

- No exact word for word equivalence exists
- Use translation as little as possible!
- Listen to church services in the language without an interpreter (interrupter) talking in your ear.
Use it

- Use it all
- Use it all every day
- Use it all with every person
a. Voracious

b. Vulnerable

- Develop a voracious appetite for words and phrases
- Be willing to laugh at yourself . . . a lot
Window

Language is a window into their soul.

Learn to speak a little bit; they may open the door and invite you all the way in.
Xtra patience
You are the key
Zest

Put zest into your language learning or you may wind up with zilch.

Another “e” word: euphoria
“There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every . . . language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb”

-- Revelation 7:9
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