

How to Learn Spanish

COMMENT APPRENDRE L'ESPAGNOL

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Abstract: This thesis sums up the basic methods of foreign language learning and analyzes the relationship between English learning and Spanish learning. It expounded the difficulties and focal points of Spanish learning, in order to be helpful to the students who are learning a foreign language, especially Spanish.

Key Words: Spanish, learning methods and strategies

Résumé : L'article présent résume les méthodes fondamentales de l'apprentissage des langues étrangères et analyse le rapport entre l'apprentissage de l'anglais et celui de l'espagnol. L'auteur expose les difficultés et les points clés de celui-ci dans l'intention de servir les étudiants qui étudient une langue étrangère, surtout l'espagnol.

Mots-clés : espagnol, méthodes d'apprentissage et stratégies

Spanish, derived from the Latin language family, is a phonetic writing. It is more scientific than English. To our Chinese learners, when learning Spanish, there are many methods to borrow from English learning. For example, people who are learning a foreign language by oneself should do as the follows:

First, to choose a normative textbook and learn it by heart. Make sure to grasp the basic words, sentence structures, grammar points, and to find out the pronunciation rules and skills.

Second, after finished learning the textbook and complete the assignments provided, choose a set of tapes for listening comprehension. It can be tapes of the textbook, or tapes of other materials. However, pay attention to follow in proper sequences. The tapes you choose should be easy for you to comprehend. It won't make you to feel too stressed, on the contrary it should be able to help you to review and consolidate the new words and expressions and grammar points you've just learned in the textbook rapidly and effectively. This is the so called "stored memory" in speed learning.

Third, after realized the aim of "digesting the textbook", bear in mind the old saying, "He that runs fastest gets the ring." You should choose a shortcut of learning a foreign language which fits you most. For example, find as many chances as possible to practice you listening and speaking. A frequent communication with native speakers is especially beneficial. You may learn many idiomatic expressions unconsciously.

Forth, as a learner, you have to take part in various examinations. Force yourself to do more tests, for it can

reveal your strong points and weak points, and therefore, help you to learn and practice with a well-defined objective in mind. A frequent text makes you feel moderate pressure, and enforce you to study harder and raise your learning efficiency.

For a foreign language learner at school, the following requirements should be fulfilled:

First, prepare a lesson before class. You should read the text you are going to learn in order to get familiar with the text and the assignment after class. Grasp the basic sentence patterns and new words, highlight the difficult and focal points.

Second, review a lesson after class. Digest the grammar points in the text by doing a large amount of exercises, and ask the teacher if you still have any question.

Third, be active in class. Always eager to answer the teacher's questions, and read out the text loudly with the teacher to get the language sense and the correct pronunciation and intonation.

Forth, make sure the exact pronunciation, part of speech and meaning of every word. Don't try to memorize each word mechanically. Try to use and memorize the words in their contexts.

Fifth, try your best to recite the text you learn, or at least read it as much as possible.

To sum up, try to absorb every lesson you learn, including the content of the text, the grammar points, the basic vocabulary and the translation exercises and oral and listening exercises.

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An English basis is very helpful to Spanish learning because the grammatical structures of the two languages are basically the same, and the spelling of many words are similar. However, in learning Spanish, you should pay attention to the following points:

First of all, the articulation of the uvular in Spanish. The *r* and *rr* sounds which need you to roll up your tongue and vibrate it constantly are very difficult for Chinese learners to articulate. The recipe is: 1. frequently add 'dra' before the sounds you made; 2. garble for a longer time, say 5 minutes; 3. speak with your mouth rolled up for 2-4 weeks. The above three methods will make your accent full of Spanish flavor. You should also pay attention that the articulations of some of the sounds require the vibration of vocal cord.

Secondly, to understand the verb conjugation in Spanish. You need to learn it by rote, and then you can use it freely. Its conjugation enables the many omissions of subjects in colloquial communication. The convenience in colloquial communication is the difficult point which needs to be overcome by every student who determines to learn Spanish well. Some say that if you can "Read fluently, conjugate freely", then you are half succeed in Spanish learning.

Thirdly, people with some English basis will find most Spanish words similar to those English words in stem. This makes Spanish even easier to learn. We should therefore make good use of our English knowledge in Spanish learning.

Fourthly, Spanish learning will benefit a lot from reading (best reciting) the texts, and doing exercises. One reason for this is that many of the exercises in the test papers are chosen from textbook. Another reason is that you may absorb the correct intonation and language sense through a large amount of reading and reciting. You can also learn to make up your weak points through doing exercises.

Last but not least, any language acquisition begins with oral imitation. After you remember an expression, you should use it in order to make it your own. Don't correct the grammatical mistakes in your mind one after another even before you open your mouth and say a single word. You may find yourself end up with "dumb Spanish".

Just like learning any skill, learning a foreign language needs the driving motion. You can only manage to learn Spanish well with great enthusiasm and devotion.

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