

Language Goals for 2017 (and beyond)

It's only the second week of 2017 and already a lot is going on. There are the usual day-to-day activities that take up the better portion of my day. There are unique circumstances (moving to a new house, applying for grad school) that have been intense but will be wrapping up in the next few weeks. There are the language-related projects (reaching out the local and global community to see how I can get more involved) that excite me but take up time.

And then there are the 7000 languages I want to study.

But with a new year comes a new plan of attack. Instead of trying to cram 50 languages into my goals, I'm focusing on fewer languages, and I'm planning to spend more time on specific methods. More languages will eventually sneak into my repertoire as needed (travel, involvement with local communities, or just relapsing back into familiar and obsessive habits), but I'll only allow that under special circumstances.

As part of my new plan of attack, I'm making a specific list of goals and tasks. These may be subject to reevaluation and revision as I progress and as the year takes shape, but for now, below is my first round of language goals, my reasons for choosing these languages, and the methods and resources I plan to incorporate into my daily-ish study routine.

So without further ado...

Actually, I have a little more ado. I was supposed to post this yesterday, but during the editing process, I received an email from someone who has given me permission to sit in on a class on Maya K'iche'! Since it's the second class in a sequence (the first one was taught last fall and will be taught again this coming fall), I'll need to do a little self-study as well as keep up with the class assignments. I'll need to learn some basics quickly (which usually means cramming for the short term), but I also want to stick to my plan of maintaining the languages I study, so this language is being added to my "official" study routine. Details on it will be vague until I know I have permission to post any resources from the class.

And now, without further...

OK, one more ado: K'iche' is one of three language classes I might be allowed to crash this semester. I'm waiting to hear if I'll be allowed in either or both of the other two. If so, then I'll revise my goal list.

OK, I'm all out of ado, so...

Language #1-GERMAN

WHY?

German was my major in college, and it's the language I was closest to being fluent in. I want that back.

I'm applying to graduate school and I need foreign language competency under my belt. I can achieve that more quickly in German than in any other language at this point.

I want to be able to communicate with old (and new) German-speaking friends at a level where I can understand what's being said.

I want to reach my Language Learners' FULL CHALLENGE goal [1] which involves reading 100 books in German averaging least 50 pages each and watching 100 movies averaging 90 minutes each (allowing for some flexibility).

HOW?

I plan to:

- use Duolingo's German course [2] as a very basic refresher and complete it fairly quickly,
- review my old-school vocabulary cards (that I started using at my old school) until I have at least 2000 of them under my belt,
- learn new vocabulary and refresh my grammar using *German Made Simple: Learn To Speak and Understand German Quickly and Easily*, [3]
- watch various movies and TV shows, starting with the German versions of *How I Met Your Mother* (season 4) [4] and *Star Wars: Episode VII: The Force Awakens* [5] to improve my listening skills, as well as pick up new vocabulary from the audio and subtitles,
- listen to the German version of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* audiobook [6] to improve my listening skills and attempt to transcribe as much as possible (and then compare it to the book to measure my listening skills),
- start reading a number of German books I've acquired over the years, starting with the easiest and shortest ones and working up from there.

TO ACHIEVE BEFORE RE-EVALUATING/MOVING ON TO OTHER RESOURCES AND LANGUAGES

Measuring my level of success with these immediate goals will include:

- completing Duolingo's German course, [2]
- committing at least 2000 vocab items to long-term memory,

- completing 20 chapters of *German Made Simple: Learn To Speak and Understand German Quickly and Easily*, [3]
- watching every episode of HIMYM (season 4) [4] and *Star Wars: Episode VII: The Force Awakens* [5] twice (once with English audio and German subtitles and once with German audio and no subtitles) and incorporating all new vocabulary into my stack of vocabulary cards,
- transcribing the first two chapters of the *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* audiobook, [6]
- reading one book in German.

Language #2-SPANISH

WHY?

I've studied Spanish more than any other language (except German), so it should be the second easiest language to reach a high level of competency in.

I'm auditing a class that will focus on reading books written in Spanish and discussing various translations of the *Popol Vuh* (the Mayan Book of Creation).

I want to be able to communicate with old (and new) Spanish-speaking friends at a level where I can understand what's being said.

I want to reach my other Language Learners' FULL CHALLENGE goal [1] which involves reading 100 books in German averaging least 50 pages each and watching 100 movies averaging 90 minutes each (allowing for some flexibility).

HOW?

I plan to:

- use Duolingo's Spanish course [7] as a very basic refresher and complete it fairly quickly,

- review my Spanish vocabulary cards until I have at least 1000 of them under my belt,

- learn new vocabulary and refresh my grammar using *Spanish Made Simple*, [8]

- watch various movies and TV shows with Spanish audio and subtitles to improve my listening skills as well as pick up new vocabulary,

- start reading a number of Spanish books I've acquired over the years, starting with the easiest and shortest ones and working up from there.

TO ACHIEVE BEFORE RE-EVALUATING/MOVING ON TO OTHER RESOURCES AND LANGUAGES

Measuring my level of success with these immediate goals will include:

- completing Duolingo's Spanish course, [7]
- committing at least 1000 vocab items to long-term memory,
- watching 5 DVDs (once with English audio and Spanish subtitles and once with Spanish audio) and incorporating all new vocabulary into my stack of vocabulary cards,
- completing 20 chapters of *Spanish Made Simple*, [8]
- reading one book in Spanish.

Language #3-ESPERANTO

WHY?

It's fun and easy, and there seems to be a growing community of Esperanto speakers in the polyglot communities.

HOW?

I plan to:

- use Duolingo's Esperanto course. [9] Yes, they have an Esperanto course. [9]

TO ACHIEVE BEFORE RE-EVALUATING/MOVING ON TO OTHER RESOURCES AND LANGUAGES

Measuring my level of success with this immediate goal will include:

- completing Duolingo's Esperanto course. [9]

Language #4-MANX

WHY?

Since I'm still interested in learning, helping, and promoting endangered and underrepresented languages, I wanted to start with learning one that I had some familiarity with and I find easy to learn.

HOW?

I plan to:

- review the 1000 Words in Manx Challenge, [10]
- listen to Adrian Cain's Manx Learning Podcast. [11]

TO ACHIEVE BEFORE RE-EVALUATING/MOVING ON TO OTHER RESOURCES AND LANGUAGES

Measuring my level of success with these immediate goals will include:

-getting at least 300 vocabulary items under my belt. And when I say "belt," I mean "long-term memory."

Language #5-MAYA K'ICHE'

WHY?

I've been allowed to sit in on (and participate in) a class on Maya K'iche' (after hounding several people who owe me absolutely nothing but have been very gracious to me) as part of a collaboration involving the teaching of less commonly taught languages.

HOW?

I plan to:

- review the materials from the first class (which include PDFs and an accompanying website with additional materials) and work on committing the vocabulary to long-term memory,
- attend the second (current) class starting next week and keep up with the lessons, vocabulary, grammar, and assignments,
- search for other resources on the language, and focus on acquiring *at least one thousand* (ahem) vocabulary items by the end of 2017.

TO ACHIEVE BEFORE RE-EVALUATING/MOVING ON TO OTHER RESOURCES AND LANGUAGES

Measuring my level of success with these immediate goals will include:

- completing both classes this year,
- committing 1000 vocabulary items to long-term memory.

A lofty list, perhaps. But not impossible, say I. This will at least be a place to start.

And so....I start!

Coming soon: a collection of products mentioned along with their affiliate links as well as reviews.

[1] <http://forum.language-learners.org/viewtopic.php?f=15&t=1836&start=70#p33981>

[2] <https://www.duolingo.com/course/de/en/Learn-German-Online>

[3] https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0767918606/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0767918606&linkCode=as2&tag=polyglotsanon-20&linkId=b028063bb183d95f747bc529e47563a9

[4] https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0030FXXM4/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B0030FXXM4&linkCode=as2&tag=polyglotsanon-20&linkId=e6c3e8fc8b6b2832b9f318e8ea35e0ee

[5] https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B019FA3CXW/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B019FA3CXW&linkCode=as2&tag=polyglotsanon-20&linkId=76f4cc0cf5d286f8e46f69809ae1c57f

[6] https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00FNAQ6EG/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00FNAQ6EG&linkCode=as2&tag=polyglotsanon-20&linkId=837bda873dd42083c0784b7cf44961e1

[7] <https://www.duolingo.com/course/es/en/Learn-Spanish-Online>

[8]

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0767915410/ref=as_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0767915410&linkCode=as2&tag=polyglotsano-20&linkId=a0df383cf580754afcf01eeadf9f08d3

[9] <https://www.duolingo.com/course/eo/en/Learn-Esperanto-Online>

[10] <http://www.learnmanx.com/cms/1000words.html>

[11] greinneyder.podomatic.com