

## FULL EDITING SAMPLE

### The Forgotten Ingredient in Language Learning

**Role:** Copyeditor

**Project type:** Commissioned portfolio sample

**Scope:** Line editing, copyediting, content editing and style/voice consistency.

**Before:** View the [original](#) before editing.

**After:** View edited piece below.

## The Forgotten Ingredient in Language Learning

What makes language learning stick?

For me, one ingredient matters more than most: making it personal.

Learning a new language takes time and consistent effort. But staying motivated isn't always easy—especially when you're learning because you have to rather than because you want to. Many of my students learn a language because they are required to do so. Although that's a perfectly valid reason to learn a language, it can be harder to stay motivated if the goal doesn't feel personally meaningful.

Humans connect with others through experience and emotions. Why not do the same while learning another language?

So, how can you make language learning more personal and stay motivated along the way? The first step is to think about the reasons why you're learning a language.

For example, *Do you want to learn Spanish because you love the culture and want to visit Spanish-speaking countries someday? Do you want to learn English because it opens doors to career possibilities in a global world?*

Identifying your 'why' can help you commit to your goal. But a goal alone may not be enough to keep you motivated day after day. That's where emotional connection comes in.

Consider how the language could help you make friends, have new experiences, discover new books and ideas, and connect more deeply with the cultures in which it is spoken.

If you start every day with a thought such as "Today I'm learning [insert a language here] because it will help me to make friends and have new experiences," you frame language as an adventure or pursue a goal, helping you connect emotionally with the language.

Mine is: "Today, I learn Turkish because it will be my ticket to new experiences and a different life." This emotional connection, along with your 'why,' is what makes things exciting. For example, if you are learning Spanish to travel to Mexico, you can watch videos about Mexican traditions, foods, festivals, or everyday life. The feeling of being in touch

with the locals and hearing their stories can make the language feel more immediate, personal, and engaging.

Without that sense of personal connection, however, language learning can start to feel like just another academic exercise.

Some people find language learning dry because schools and institutes don't always create a sense of curiosity or personal connection. Students may spend most of their time just doing grammar exercises, memorizing a list of words without a context and taking standardized tests to get into school programs they want.

Many of my students have these same complaints about these schools when we first meet. They say things like "I took many English classes, but I can't speak" or "I passed my English tests at school, but I still struggle so much with it. It was so boring taking these classes!"

As a result, some learners may become so focused on getting the grammar right that their speech feels less natural or expressive. It's as if they're mentally reconstructing grammar rules while speaking. You can notice how this practice hinders your fluency when taking conversational lessons with your tutor or language exchange partner or even with your friends.

Learning a language can be a beautiful and transformative journey that brings different cultures and people together. But focusing too heavily on isolated study and externally imposed goals can take the joy and curiosity out of learning.

Adults might benefit from approaching language learning with more curiosity, playfulness, and a willingness to make mistakes. When learning a new language, don't think too hard about the material rewards it may bring or put unnecessary pressure on yourself over a test. Instead, give your mind room to wander, be creative, and form an emotional connection with what you're learning. Avoid being bogged down in worries and overthinking.

Once you do this, you might be surprised by how much easier and more enjoyable the learning process becomes. This approach can also help you build confidence. Confidence is

essential when communicating in a language that is not your mother tongue. It conveys enthusiasm, curiosity, and a willingness to correct yourself without becoming overly concerned with every mistake.

A clear goal, consistent effort, and a personal connection to the language can help you stay motivated over the long term. It's fine if you don't get to immerse yourself in the culture or experience the nuances of the language every day. Once you get down to the basics, you will naturally find opportunities to improve your skills through travel, remote work, or study abroad.

Ultimately, the motivation to learn a language should come from within. Yes, it can stem from a pragmatic goal, but never forget to tie it back to who you really are.

Whatever your reason for learning a language, make it personal. That emotional connection may be what keeps you coming back to it day after day.