



More than words: Real Life Stories

1. **What is your name and what is your course of study?**

Isabella Colic, Doctorate in Psychology.

2. **What languages do you speak, are interested in, or that you relate to in any way?**

I was born in Italy to a family of Serbo-Croatian immigrants. My parents emphasised the role of Italian more than Serbo-Croatian to avoid me being disadvantaged at school, but I still grew up hearing both languages. I then studied foreign languages in high school, specifically English, French, and German. When I moved to Cardiff for my PhD, I was exposed to the Welsh language and to the multicultural pot of the city.

3. **At what point in your life did you realise how important and how valuable knowing multiple languages was?**

Very early on, but it's been an ebbing and flowing relationship

throughout my formative years. Now, as an adult, I have further re-evaluated how enriching knowing multiple languages is.

4. **How has being able to speak more than one language helped you in your personal life?**

Knowing more than one language has helped broaden my horizons. I've made friends from all over the UK and the rest of Europe, and it has provided me with a better understanding of other cultures.

5. **How do you think knowing more than one language has helped you, or will help you, in your professional life?**

Knowing multiple languages helped me get into my MSc and PhD programmes, which in turn, provided me with opportunities to develop the skills I need to further my career.

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6. **What career/s do you hope to go into in the future?**

Higher Education Teaching or Research Officer at the Welsh Government.

7. **What has been the most impactful thing about learning a language on your life to date?**

Being able to move abroad and building my life in a different country.

8. **What has been the most unexpected benefit of learning languages during your life?**

Being able to read books from authors that write in a language different from Italian and not having to rely on translations.

9. **What has been the most challenging aspect of learning languages during your life?**

Studying languages in school can feel like a trudge at times, especially when it comes to learning the grammar and the

vocabulary but even though I found this challenging, it was worth it.

10. **What is your favourite word or phrase in a language other than English?**

'Non c'è trippa per gatti' - 'there's no meat for cats': an Italian expression to say that there is no easy way out and you need to work hard for what you want.

11. **Are there any other languages you wish you could speak? If so, what are they and why would you want to speak them?**

I would love to improve my Welsh, as I do feel a deep connection to Cardiff and Wales, and I would also like to study Spanish or Portuguese because they are widely spoken across the world.

12. **Do you have any funny stories to share about your language learning experiences?**

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I couldn't remember the word for 'dustpan' and I thought 'is it dustpan? That sounds too simple' and then I asked my British housemate and she confirmed that the tool I was using was indeed called dustpan, whose literal Italian translation would be '*padella per la polvere*'.

13. Has anyone or any one particular moment or thing, inspired you on your language learning journey?

My high school French professor - she used to recommend me French books that I would then read voraciously. It's still one of the most cherished memories I have of those years.

14. How has being an MFL Mentor supported your journey with languages?

It has rekindled my passion and appreciation for foreign languages.

15. If you could give one piece of advice to students thinking about learning another language, what would it be?

Look for alternative ways to learn that language, for example read books (even children's books), watch movies, read the news in that language or listen to music.



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