

《TED演讲：如何在六个月内学会一门外语》

Chris在18分钟内，将主题精华浓缩得淋漓尽致，带领着大众的思维-从成年人不敢相信还能学会外语，到充分了解成年人如何能在6个月学会一门外语。他引用了一些大家熟知的案例，获得大家的共鸣，并在此基础上注射了一些新鲜的概念。



Have you ever held a question in mind for so long that it becomes part of how you think? Maybe even part of who you are as a person?

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Well I've had a question in my mind for many, many years and that is: how can you speed up learning? Now, this is an interesting question because if you speed up learning you can spend less time at school. And if you learn really fast, you probably wouldn't have to go to school at all.

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Now, when I was young, school was sort of okay but I found quite often that school got in the way of learning so I had this question in mind: how do you learn faster? And this began when I was very, very young. When I was about eleven years old I wrote a letter to researchers in the Soviet Union, asking about hypnopaedia, this is sleep

learning, where you get a tape recorder, you put it beside your bed and it turns on in the middle of the night when you're sleeping, and you're supposed to be learning from this.

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A good idea, unfortunately it doesn't work. But, hypnopaedia did open the doors to research in other areas and we've had incredible discoveries about learning that began with that first question. I went on from there to become passionate about psychology and I have been involved in psychology in many ways for the rest of my life up until this point.

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In 1981 I took myself to China and I decided that I was going to be native level in Chinese inside two years. Now, you need to understand that in 1981, everybody thought Chinese was really, really difficult and that a westerner could study for ten years or more and never really get very good at it. And I also went in with a different idea which was: taking all of the conclusions from psychological research up to that point and applying them to the learning process.

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What was really cool was that in six months I was fluent in Mandarin Chinese and took a little bit longer to get up to native. But I looked around and I saw all of these people from different countries struggling terribly with Chinese, I saw Chinese people struggling terribly to learn English and other languages, and so my question got refined down to: how can you help a normal adult learn a new language quickly, easily and effectively?

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Now this is a really, really important question in today's world. We have massive challenges with environment. We have massive challenges with social dislocation, with wars, all sorts of things going on and if we can't communicate we're really going to have difficulty solving these problems. So we need to be able to speak each other's languages. This is really, really important.

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The question then is how do you do that? Well, it's actually really easy. You look around for people who can

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Now I know this is true because that was my first drawing and after five days of applying these principles that was what I was able to do. And I looked at this and I went 'wow,' so that's how I look like when I'm concentrating so intensely that my brain is exploding.

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So, anybody can learn to draw in five days and in the same way, with the same logic, anybody can learn a second language in six months.

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How: there are five principles and seven actions. There may be a few more but these are absolutely core. And before I get into those I just want to talk about two myths, dispel two myths.

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The first is that you need talent. Let me tell you about Zoe. Zoe came from Australia, went to Holland, was trying to learn Dutch, struggling a great deal and finally people were saying: 'you're completely useless,' 'you're not talented,' 'give up,' 'you're a waste of time' and she was very, very depressed. And then she came across these five principles, she moved to Brazil and she applied them and within six months she was fluent in Portuguese, so talent doesn't matter.

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People also think that immersion in a new country is the way to learn a language. But look around Hong Kong, look at all the westerners who've been here for ten years, who don't speak a word of Chinese. Look at all the Chinese living in America, Britain, Australia, Canada who have been there ten, twenty years and they don't speak any English.

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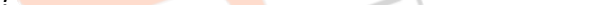
Immersion per se doesn't not work, why? Because a drowning man cannot learn to swim.

And one night we had a crisis. We had forty eight hours to deliver a training manual in Chinese. And she got the job,

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A woman I know from Taiwan did great at English at school, she got A grades all the way through, went through college, A grades, went to the US and found she couldn't understand what people were saying. And people started asking her: 'are you deaf?' And she was. English deaf.

So based on those five principles, what are the seven actions that you need to take

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Number one: listen a lot. I call it brain soaking? You put yourself in a context where you're hearing tons and tons and tons of a language and it doesn't matter if you understand it or not? You're listening to the rhythm ,you're listening to the patterns that repeat, you're listening to things that stand out? So, just soak your brain in this.

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The second action: is that you get the meaning first, even before you get the words. You go "Well how do I do that?" I don't know the words. Well, you understand what these different postures mean. Human communication is body language in many, many ways, so much body language.

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From body language you can understand a lot of communication, therefore, you're understanding, you're acquiring through comprehensible input. And you can also use patterns that you already know. If you're a Chinese speaker of Mandarin and Cantonese and you go Vietnam, you will understand 60% of what they say to you in daily conversation, because Vietnamese is about 30% Mandarin, 30% Cantonese.

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The third action: start mixing. You probably have never thought of this but if you've got ten verbs, ten nouns and ten adjectives you can say one thousand different things. Language is a creative process. What do babies do? Okay: me, bat(h)? now? okay, that's how they communicate. So start mixing, get creative, have fun with it, it doesn't have to be perfect it just has to work.

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And when you're doing this you focus on the core. What does that mean? Well any language has high frequency content. In English 1000 words covers 85% of anything you're ever going to say in daily communication. 3000 words give you 98% of anything you're going to say in daily conversation. You got 3000 words, you're speaking the language. The rest is icing on the cake.

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And when you're just beginning with a new language start with the tool box. Week number one in your new language you say things like: 'how do you say that?' 'I don't understand,' 'repeat that please,' 'what does that

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Secondly, they will never correct your mistakes. Thirdly they will feed back their understanding of what you are saying so you can respond appropriately and get that feedback and then they will use words that you know.

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The sixth thing you have to do, is copy the face. You've got to get the muscles working right, so you can sound in a way that people will understand you. There's a couple of things you do.

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One is that you hear how it feels, and feel how it sounds which means you have a feedback loop operating in your face, but ideally if you can look at a native speaker and just observe how they use their face, let your unconscious mind absorb the rules, then you're going to be able to pick it up. And if you can't get a native speaker to look at, you can use stuff like this: [slides].

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And the final idea here, the final action you need to take is something that I call "direct connect." What does this mean? Well most people learning a second language sort of take the mother tongue words and take the target words and go over them again and again in their mind to try and remember them. Really inefficient.

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What you need to do is realize that everything you know is an image inside your mind, it's feelings, if you talk about fire you can smell the smoke you can hear the crackling, you can see the flames, so what you do, is you go into that imagery and all of that memory and you come out with another pathway. So I call it 'same box, different path.

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You come out of that pathway, you build it over time you become more and more skilled at just connecting the new sounds to those images that you already have, into that internal representation. And over time you even become naturally good at that process, that becomes unconscious.

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So, there are five principles that you need to work with, seven actions, if you do any of them, you're going to improve?And remember these are things under your control as the learner. Do them all and you're going to be fluent in a second language in six months.Thank you.

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