

ACQUISITION OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN GLOBAL WORLD WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FRENCH

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Globalisation, modern developments-both in business and technology, have reduced the world from a vast entity to a palm-sized one. English is fast becoming a universal language but French still occupies the position of being the second most popular and used language all over the world. France had colonies worldwide due to which French speaking or Francophones can be found in nearly every niche of the earth -having any human civilization. In spite of France, being highly renowned as the land of Fashion and Wine, there are lot more aspects about the country as well as the language, which are still unknown for a common man. In earlier days when traditional society existed, the knowledge was limited. The main objective of the education and educators was to preserve the education. Whereas, in modern society, the knowledge is vast and the pace of growth of education and knowledge is endless. The main aim of the students as well as the educators is to keep pace with the advancement in knowledge in rest of the world.

Why learn a foreign language?

Due to progress in technology and globalization of the world, knowledge and education have stopped being perceived passively. The speed with which the social changes take place, the conservation of education will definitely be harmful. Now, the education has to be always evolving. Nowadays, the need for knowledge of another foreign language, apart from English is being emphasized for certain streams. It is termed as second or third language acquisition. In future, it is assumed that only India, itself will require an increased number of individuals, who should be highly proficient in major foreign languages and their culture as well as their literature. Hence, it is necessary to have a few schools or institutes specializing in teaching these languages right from an early age. Learning a foreign language requires both time and effort to gain a working fluency. Since, the world has become a small place, the requirement for information sharing has increased. Learning a second language in these challenging times can significantly enhance the career and job prospects. Many excuses can be quoted for learning a foreign language.

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Communication and cultural understanding:

Globalisation and enhancement in technology as well as easy access to travel modes has increased globetrotting –be it for business or leisure. While traveling to another country, the difficulties seem to disappear if one can communicate in the native language. When you speak others' language, it depicts respect for that culture and increase the natives' friendliness towards oneself. Language and culture are two parallel paradigms. Learning a foreign language acts as an eye opener to new ideas and the outlook towards other cultures and countries. Moreover, watching a film, reading literature, listening to the music in the original language becomes highly enjoyable than the translated version. The translated version can never compete with the original one.

Translation and Interpretation: With increase in interaction amongst natives of different countries, the need for interpretation and translation at work and study, as well, has also increased for all- the students, professionals as well as businessmen.

Travel and Tourism: While moving around a foreign country, the tourists require the services of a guide who is a good interpreter as well.

Academics: Increasing income of a normal class has also shown the young generation the way to foreign lands for education. This foreign fever has induced a frenzy for foreign education. This has raised the demand for language experts. Acquisition of a foreign language will be important for general development of higher education as well as international co-operation and understanding

Public speaking: Globalisation has also induced an increased number of international events, conferences, seminars, conventions. This in turn has heightened the demand for multiskilled public speakers. Those who can hold the event and make the audience spellbound. An individual well versed with other languages and cultures can do so very efficiently.

Business and Careers: With recession, the employers are on a look out for an employee who has the maximum skills. Acquisition of a foreign language increases the prospects in this age of competition. Even

though English is vastly spoken worldwide, the fact is that the global economy depends on communication. Speaking more than one languages increases one's marketability. Knowledge of a foreign language acts as a eye catcher and the candidate definitely has an edge over others. Moreover, it depicts versatility of the candidate who explores beyond set boundaries of syllabi. The individual can help his employer in communicating with his foreign clients. He is a boon for his employer.

Personal: A person who does not confine himself to his culture only but is open to new culture and norms can help himself by learning a foreign language. It also increases his confidence and is also a source of pleasure and personal enrichment. He is capable of comparing the negatives and positives of different cultures, thus, adopting the good norms of all.

Learning French as a second or third language

French is the second most commonly taught foreign language, after English. French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Chinese are important and popular world languages for communication and for acquiring knowledge and culture. French is one such language which is learnt worldwide for fun as well as utility purposes. French language has originated from "Latin" or could be said that it is a modern form of "Latin". It is known to be a romance language – because of its romantic sensibility as well as because it was brought by Romans. People visualize French language to be the language of love or romance. Reference to this language makes all dream about the fine and haute delicacies of life.

Some interesting facts about France and French language- There are some facts about France, its culture as well as the language, which one can find very interesting and amazing. Some are rare ones to know.

* In the 17th-19th century French tended to be the main language for international communication, but it has now been overtaken by English. * The letter 'w' appears only in foreign words within the French language. * English and French being the two most important languages of Western world have contributed many words to each other. For eg: some French contributions to English are expressions such as hors d'oeuvre, en route, rendezvous, carte blanche, savoir-faire, faux pas, fait accompli, par excellence, bon vivant, joie de vivre, coup d'état, nouveau riche, laissez faire, pièce de resistance, and RSVP. * Gradually, French has also accommodated many English words so much

that these contributions have come to be known as Franglais-an amalgam of French and English. A few examples being- le hamburger, le drugstore, le week-end, le strip-tease, le tee-shirt, le chewing gum, and les blue-jeans. * Archaeological evidence indicates that human beings have lived in what is now France for at least 100,000 years. * In all artistic matters the French are essentially conservative, despite the fact that they have often been initiators of new movements. * To most foreigners, especially those of English speech, French prose with its clearness, rapidity, and grace seems superior to French poetry * Traditionally, French culture specifies on the importance of haute cuisine. Cheese and wine are vital components of French food. * France produces some of the finest wines in the world. Bordeaux, Champagne and Bourgogne French wines are essential components of French culture. * The national sport of France is soccer, which is colloquially referred to as 'le foot'. * Tour de France is an annual cycling race held in France, while the Grand Slam French Open is nation's tribute to another favourite sport-tennis. * Paris is the 'Fashion Capital of the World'. The presence of dedicated couturier houses, fashion shows and dedicated media like 'Elle' dominate the fashion industry. * France's very own designers like Yves Saint Laurent, Claude Montana, Pierre Cardin, Sonia Rykiel, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Paco Rabanne and Christian Lacroix are world renowned fashion designers. * The Lascaux cave paintings have made the little village, Lascaux, a hot tourist spot, to view the paintings that are more than 10,000 years old. * France is renowned for the quality of its high tech. (The TGV is the fastest train in the world - 515 kph) * Paris had 1,100 congresses in 1993 (including 400 international congresses) - a world record. * France has the world's greatest number of Nobel Prize winners in literature (12). * Many of the most famous stories in this genre were penned by the 17th-century French author Charles Perrault. - Cendrillon (Cinderella), Le Petit Chaperon Rouge (Little Red Riding Hood), La Belle au Bois Dormant (Sleeping Beauty), Le Chat Botte (Puss in Boots) * Undoubtedly, the above mentioned facts could be enough to motivate anybody to go for French language but still some reasons are being cited here for learning this language.

Some important reasons for learning French language- * It is the only language spoken on five continents other than English. It is most commonly

used second language in the world., spoken by over 200 million people worldwide. It is considered to be amongst the 10 most spoken languages in the world. It is used in more than 54 countries including Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Chad, French Guiana, French Polynesia, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire Cameroun, Canada etc. including two G7 countries. Approximately 98 million speakers of the language are living only in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and parts of Africa. (more than 15 African countries). French is an official language in 29 countries. Most of these countries form "La Francophonie". Also, it is the unofficial second language of Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and many others. * French is one of the official working languages in dozens of international organisations- Amnesty International, European Union (EU), Interpol, International Olympic Committee, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Org. for Economic Cooperation + Development (OECD), Red Cross and Red Crescent, United Nations (UN), World Health Organisation (WHO), World Trade Organisation (WTO) * Learning French can help one understand even many aspects of English language. Many languages have contributed to the development of English, especially French, so learning it can teach the origin of words and grammar as well as increase one's vocabulary. * This language is also important for careers like Science, Technology, Medicine, Engineering, Space Aeronautics, Industrial studies, Telecommunications, Music, Fashion, Film, literature, Linguistics, Philosophy and Diplomacy. * Scientists and engineers work and interact globally: they have to rely on sources published in other languages, attend international seminars and conferences. They can not depend on translated versions or interpreters. * Learning French language can broaden the horizons in various careers such as teaching, translation, interpreting, travel and tourism, international tour * Hospitality industry is one such industry where one can not dream a career without knowledge of French because no restaurant is elite without French food and wine. French are known to be true connoisseurs of food and wine. Knowledge of French language improves the knowl-

edge of French cuisine and wines as one learns to say useful terms and phrases in French and sound like an expert!

* In India : * French has de-jure official status in the Union territory of Pondicherry. * At school level, in CBSE affiliated schools in metros specially, French is commonly taught as a third language. * There are all the possibilities for personal growth, cultural exchange and even economic integration for the individual, society and the economy. Hence, not only writing and reading skills but speaking skills are also very important * Learning French is one step to joining the ranks of the cultural elite. French is, as it is all over the western world, part of a world-class education.

How to invoke interest and enhance comprehension level- For better understanding of a foreign language the student should know also have the knowledge of culture and lifestyle of the said country. For the purpose, some programs should be residential and be taught by the natives only. To invoke interest in students or individuals for a foreign language it is essential to provide adequate reinforcement in the form of scholarships, exchange programs, etc.

Results of learning a Foreign language- Enhanced Performance: With increased duration of any foreign language, it has been found to increase the scores of competitive exams and children who study any foreign language usually have higher scores in Maths, reading, and language skills, competitive exams as well as interacting abilities.

Conclusion- When a person decides to learn a new language, it is like he has decided to set on a journey to discover something new. He does not know anything about the end of the journey but still is curious about the adventure. Learning a new language does not mean to limit oneself only to the grammar, syntax, morphology, semantics etc but far more than that. It means diving in deep waters of another socio-cultural background and discovering the treasures of a new culture. To remain monolingual is to stunt your educational development, to restrict your communication and thinking abilities. Personal, professional, social, and economic considerations all point to the advantages of learning foreign languages.

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