

# Interview with a multilingual speaker

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**Names: Damianos Alexandridis, Michal Bankiewicz**

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## **Multilingualism types your colleague identifies him/herself with**

Michal was born in Poland in 1998 in a Polish family in which they only spoke the Polish language. His parents weren't monolinguals, since they knew the Russian and the English language. However he grew up as a monolingual. At the age of 6 he started learning English. Until adulthood he tried the German and the French language but unfortunately he didn't find them interesting enough. Also his multilingual profile includes some Swedish since some of his friends were from Sweden. In other words, Michal's dominant languages are Polish, his second language are English and his knowledge of German and French is basic. Taking this into account, he is a non-proficient multilingual. Regarding to Polish and English he considers himself as dominant/unbalanced bilingual and in the case of the age of the L2 acquisition he was a late bilingual. Moreover, the fact that he started the English language in his early life, make him an additive bilingual. Michal also studies English literature and therefore he speaks them, and, at the university, which suggesting a formal manner of English acquisition. Also, the frequency of second language use is unequal since he mostly talk in Polish. As a result, he doesn't switch languages unintentionally but only when he is at the university.

Damianos is a successive multilingual. He grew up in a Greek monolingual family and when he was 8 years old started learning English. He was 12 years old when started to learn German but didn't like it and stopped. He took an English proficiency certificates at 18 years old. He found motivation for studying English before he went to the university. He also started learning Italian a year ago. He finds Italian more interesting than German and wants to continue studying it. He finds it useful to analyze new languages and find similarities between them. He acquired foreign languages in a formal context – at school. He considers himself a late and additive multilingual. His multilingualism is successive. He does not switch languages unintentionally, but he switches them frequently.

## **Multilingual learning strategies**

Michal, in order to learn the above languages and become multilingual did the below actions

- Play videogames with foreign players with whom he communicate basically in English
- Reads literature books, articles and some magazines of his interest
- Watches movies with or without subtitles and sometimes he changes the audio to a non-polish language
- Has conversations with foreign speakers
- Listens to music, emphasizing on lyrics for better understanding
- Converts the default (polish) language of his cell phone to another language

Damianos' multilinguals learning strategies are:

- video games (chatting with other players, new vocabulary)
- Reading books of his interest, especially in biology, and research articles
- switching phone and PC language , especially to English language– surrounding yourself with a foreign language
- watching movies with or without subtitles, Damianos does it on purpose to learn language
- speaking to foreign speakers
- listening to music, but emphasizing on lyrics

## **Typical features of multilinguals/polyglots**

Michal has 3 main multilingual features. First is his mimicry talent. He likes communicating with others and especially with English people since he can mimic their accent and become better speaker. Secondly, he likes speaking and learning English and, as written above, he does a lot of things to get better to it, showing his strong motivation. Finally, the last characteristic is that he always try to socialize and communicate especially when he becomes a part of a multilingual company.

One characteristic of multilinguals and polyglots is that they can easily communicate and socialize. Their knowledge of languages allows them to quickly fit in.

Damianos was a part of an international Erasmus programme and highly suggests attending a similar project. His language skills allowed him to communicate well with speakers from Estonia. According to the video, it is possible to learn a new language later in life. Many polyglots or hyper-polyglots started studying foreign languages in early adulthood or even later in life and they succeeded. What is more, many polyglots translate everything they hear into a foreign language as a part of the training but neither one of us has tried this technique.

## References

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