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Fluency made easy ikenna pdf

My biggest challenge in life is to uphold the secret that I'm awesome. Well, that and avoid sugar. I'm obviously so good at my subterfuge that strangers and acquaintances suspect I'm just ordinary. The truth is that I prefer it this way, because I can not be disturbed with the subsequent popularity of such knowledge, if made known, would add to my personal life. Revealing my superpowers, such as my ability to hear in the dark or read without moving my lips, would likely send the media to my door faster than you can say fiber optics. Sure, those unhappy souls who will never be adorned with the precious gift of the elect receive in a silent whisper pronounce as my friendship, who will never know what they are missing out on, truly invoke my compassion. But part of my value rests in my exclusivity. My standard is high. Accessing my good graces is rare, a sought-after commodity. Plus, my discerning, discriminatory taste membership to my private club keeps Me Dubbing High Brow Camaraderie low. As an avid reader and writer (not to mention snob and sophisticated), I naturally require a lot of alone time. Fortunately, loneliness and isolation are my mantras. Which is fitting, because my personal life, autonomy, anonymity and complacency are ideal for my immersion in my various passions. In short, I'm a soloist. I work alone. Despite my infectious personality, my quick wit, rugged looks and amazing talents, not to mention my laudable humility, I have managed to maintain this routine without arouse suspicion or arouse unwelcome interest. Compound this dynamic with yet another peculiarity. As recently as six years ago, I was perhaps lousy at juggling. By juggling I mean multitasking, conducting several projects and leisure activities. You know the kind. The annoying socialites who take cooking classes, attend their weekbook club, do yoga, jet ski, volunteer at their local church, build canoes from scratch, and mix their children to ballet and soccer practice, constantly texting their friends about their weekend plans for vacations in Acapulco or Paris or Rio de Janeiro. First of all, I served in the Navy. I vacation in enough states and foreign countries to last a lifetime – Singapore, Japan, Hawaii (seven times), Alaska, Bahrain, Kuwait, Dubai, Japan, Australia and Bali. Imagine I mention these places just to brag. And while I can look back fondly on these episodes in my life, these port visits and the ensuing binges, I prefer to look ahead. Having said that, or rather written it, for most of my life, I've tended to put blinders on and zero in on one thing at a time in hopes of mastering it. I'd dig, you might say. With abandon. For example, when over thirty years ago I decided to learn guitar, I sold my drum set so that I wouldn't be tempted spend any of my free time playing drums instead. Again, until recently, apart from my job to keep the lights on, I read books and writing and a little bit Which was good until I was stuck in a rut. Aware of this inclination to immerse myself in either one or two things at a time, I eventually decided to broaden my horizons. If you follow my blog, you know that this led me to explore Catholicism, read both the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church at the same time, ask Rosenstlag, participate in mass, diet, exercise, etc. This new lifestyle resulted in lots of positive changes in my life, some of which I have chronicled on this blog. Now, with my fascination with gentleman's fashion (think GQ Magazine sans the youthful socialism), it takes up the fine art of pipe smoking, pushing myself to complete my reading list of thirty books this year (almost there), writing every day, semi-actively searching for a literary agent (don't ask), and my plans to find a group or organization in town with whom to connect – Knights of Columbus? my free time has become all the more precious. Yet, despite my already too busy schedule, I developed a fascination with all things Japanese. This possibly began with my absolute lust for sushi several years ago, culminating in an appreciation for Japan's colorful and exotic culture, its samurai, dynasties, Geishas, calligraphy, and its spoken language with its rounded vowels and sultry sibilants, not to mention its perfection in everything from crafts to food. These functions eventually intimate themselves into my waking consciousness. (Historically, Japanese people have a reputation for elevating what they do into an art form. I can't help but admire and strive to emulate it.) I then became increasingly fascinated as I explored the videos uploaded to YouTube showing Japan's bizarre game shows, commercials and extraordinary music. Finally, although I have no intention of returning to Japan and knowing no one in town with whom To practice, I decided to learn his basic touristic questions and phrases, something I unfortunately had not done when stationed in Sasebo, a city in Nagasaki Prefecture, in Japan, twenty years ago. This effort started back in March of this year and within the first month I was able to speak enough Japanese to say, Hey, my name is Mark. Yes. What's your name? It's nice to meet you. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. No. What's up? Delicious! I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Can I have some water (or juice or coffee)? Thank you very much. Please. Top! Take care of yourself. I'll see you later. See you tomorrow. Bye-bye. Not exactly a conversational repertoire that promotes intellectual engagement about the geopolitical implications of a homogeneous, egalitarian people (126 million of them) living on an island half the size of Texas, anchored in tradition and convention, but a sincere start nonetheless. Also, I knew I had to crawl before I sprinted, in this case speaking like a Japanese child before engaging in an adult conversation. By April, no longer satisfied with basic words and phrases the tourist know to work in Japan, Japan, decided to get serious about learning not only the spoken language but the written language as well. I printed hiragana and katakana syllabaries (two of the three Japanese alphabets). I explored lessons covering nouns, verb agglutinations, particles, and so on. (Thanks to the internet you can learn everything and everything you are inclined to study. I really couldn't have taken on this project twenty years ago so easily, comfortably, or cost-effectively.) To be clear, I'm not pretending to have advanced beyond the bare bones of it all. In fact, I have since learned that Japanese is not only perhaps the hardest language for a Westerner to learn but that it is the fastest spoken language in the world as well. Spanish is the second fastest language spoken. Study is never. We have 26 letters in the English alphabet, 52 if you consider both the upper and lower cases of each letter. 104 if you add italics. In addition to the two kana syllabaries, a total of 142 characters (or digrafs), there are also over 50,000 kanji, each representing both a concept and what are called readings (the sounds each kanji has depending on its context). To be fair, Japanese people use no more than about 2,200 kanji in their daily lives reading newspapers, books, road signs, ads, warning labels, directions, menus and the like. Still, I have no doubt that Japanese toddlers are more skilled than I am. But I've made a lot of progress. This progress is largely due to my efforts to learn from a variety of sources. The trick to learning any language is to immerse yourself in it – reading, writing, listening, and speaking. I originally explored instructional videos uploaded to YouTube by native speakers. Japanesepod101.com, language learning apps, and even printed out the Japanese names I'd learned for things on my shopping list. I also watched j-dramas on Netflix, all with the Japanese subtitles turned on so I could follow along. This immersion continued. I listened to Japanese music at work. My favorite hard rock band of all time is now Band Maid, although Babymetal is a close second. Give their song a listen. I watched videos that broke kanji in their individual radicals, listened to Japanese audiobooks with earbuds while I slept. Yes, I was on a mission. And, as I say, I drew from multiple sources, because most educational websites, apps and YouTube videos isolate and highlight certain aspects of language while not addressing others. This immersion improved my understanding, strengthened my pronunciation, and would eventually give me confidence to use the basics of a second language with potential Japanese speakers. So far, however, I only annoy my English-speaking clients, injecting random Japanese declarations and interrogation topics into the conversation when they least guess it. Although at this point they probably expect it at any given moment. Everything's coming, I'm going to have to practice on someone. I explored further how the language language Works. According to these lecturers, absorption versus memorization is the most effective process. This makes sense. After all, think back to elementary school. First we learned the English alphabet, how to speak and print the English letters. We then advanced to words and their meanings. Later meaning construction. And yet, in addition to all this study in the classroom, we enjoyed the extra bonuses that hope to provide, namely to be flooded with the same language outside the classroom, even before beginning kindergarten. Family, friends, media - all this helped shape our understanding, application and understanding growing up. Here's the thing, Most Learn-a-second-language methods rely on your primary language to get the secondary language over. In English you will hear, both audibly and often with English text, how to speak and or write language X. Despite my initial gratitude for this learning tool, this lacks immediacy. I eventually decided, briefly to have a friend in town who speaks Japanese. I needed something more effective. I'm not suggesting that I would advanced to a point where these free resources were made redundant or anything. But I had discovered both problems and errors. Therefore, I wanted to see what all the fuss was about with a company hailed as allegedly offering the most effective method of learning new languages: Rosetta Stone. Three months later, my impressions were mixed. The approach is relatively simple and probably appeals more to the visual students. The app presents photos of either individuals or groups engaged in an activity (jogging, swimming, eating, driving) while employing lifeless items – food, pools, cars, etc. Throughout, Japanese speakers indicate these images and activities by speaking exclusively in Japanese. Your task is to pair the audible and written Japanese (kanji, hiragana and katakana) with these visuals. On the plus side, Rosetta Stone addresses issues I had had with other methods leading up to that point in my studies, that is, you learn some nouns and other entities before these nouns are inserted into sentences you are required to learn. Which I am convinced is better than introducing the student to all these elements at the same time. A welcome feature is rosetta stone's pronunciation recognition program. Periodically an audible clock prompts you to speak Japanese in your microphone, initially single words, later entire sentences. You are judged on your pronunciation and click selections. Perhaps most importantly, Rosetta Stone's teaching technique simulates one's experience of learning one's mother tongue. As such, you are bound to absorb rather than memorize. This is certainly not the worst method of language learning, but it should not be the only method either. I am reminded of another method of immersion. Suppose you are a beginner guitarist and you use the services of a guitar to teach teach how to play, only the instructor does not teach you chords or scales or intervals of even songs. Instead, he introduces you to a group of seasoned musicians already in a jam session and tells you to jump right in. While you might learn a few things about improvisation and tempo and if you have an ear, even after several sessions, even after a tour, if someone would put a chord chart or sheet music in front of you or ask you to play a simple shuffle or ask yourself how many sharp there are in the key to G major, your brows would knit a shawl. After all, caring for the best of them only provides a certain practical know-how. It will not provide academic knowledge or music theory, for example. In Rosetta Stone's defense, this is a decent facsimile for interacting with living Japanese people in a real environment. Unfortunately, since everything is written, read and spoken in Japanese, you learn a little about what qualities as a verb or noun or what words make your speech more or less polite or formal or, perhaps most importantly, how to actually break down the grammar in a sentence so that you can ultimately craft your own sentences to suit your particular circumstances. As a result, you won't say things beyond what Rosetta Stone teaches you to say. Sure, if you travel abroad and come across a bike and remember the word in Japanese, or jitensha in romaji), you can point and impress your travel companion. But it earns little practical value in a country that commutes almost exclusively by train. In May, I discovered Memrise.com, an app that acts as the closest thing to flashing cards. You choose the difficulty level. Then you're provided with either a word or phrase, both written and spoken in Japanese (or which language you choose to study). This is beneficial for learning new kanji, new vocabulary, and some select phrases. It's not very good if you want to learn how to formulate your own sentences, which you eventually want to do. In addition, there is no real structure in the app. I went the paid route, which was only thirty-five dollars for a whole year. But lesson plans and exercises are created by the Memrise community. Some of these contributors are professional instructors. Others are not. Regardless, language difficulties do not increase as you advance. Instead, depending on the submissions submitted, the material varies, varies, varies, and perhaps worst of all, fails to build on what came before. Late September, seven months in, I discovered my favorite language learning app of all so far: Duolingo. Duolingo has structure. It's game-like. The smoothest and most convenient language app on my phone. In fact, it makes learning more fun than necessary. Lessons are based on what was taught in a previous lesson until, multiple devices in, you realize that you learn the applicable material that is relevant to everyday conversations. Which reminds me. I watched an unrelated video YouTube YouTube when an ad for better internet interrupted my viewing. The person in the ad asked in English, Is your wifi too slow? I gasped practically as I immediately remembered the translation for the Internet here is too slow a month before and instinctively said loudly, Koko no walfuai wa ossogumasi. Just like that. And I thought, it clicks. I'll get it. Which, by the way, is true. The Internet here is too slow. Or the WiFi. Duolingo excels at teaching sentence construction and grammar through repetition, variation, and the word substitution. These elements are the building blocks of true communication. I remember the elation I felt when I had finished all three parts of the Japanese unit Time. Now I can read, write, and speak that time in Japanese (hiragana and kanji), no matter what time, day or night, it happens to be. Learn to tell someone that you love salmon or that you don't like hip hop, and you'll also intuit, through compensation and arrangements, how to craft your own sentences to satisfy your own circumstances and interests, likes and dislikes. To get full circle, this is equivalent to learning scales backwards and forwards, chord exercises and positions, rather than learning a couple of three chord songs and some riffs. In other words, you learn the building blocks of communication rather than memorizing a few individual expressions. So why the fuss about structure anyway? For two reasons. One, communicating in Japanese is about context. Imagine, for example, that I said that answer like me! and guilty! and I did pack more harmonics than the isolated words that might initially suggest. This would make sense only in the context of, say, someone walking into a room of people sitting around an empty bowl previously filled with candy and asking: Who ate all the M&M's? Ms? The Japanese language will refrain from this termination to such an extent as to omit the pronoun or other words denoting the topic after its first introduction into the conversation. For example, if Miku wants to tell you that she likes sushi, she can say, Sushi ga suki desu, which in English we are told means I like sushi, but literally translated means Sushi that. (By the way, the letter u in both romaji suki and desu is silent and therefore these words are pronounced ski and des, respectively.) The particle ga is used to identify the object. Desu is the copula, the verb form of being, as is, is, or was. On the other hand, Miku might want to know if you like sushi, in which case all she will do is add particleka, which changes her declarative to an interrogation. Sushi ga suki desu ka? Which, again, we're told translates into English like Do you like sushi? but literally translated means, Sushi like? Or Miku may have already discussed favorite food with you before and forgotten what you had said. In any case, can she ask, not rhetorically but more to confirm, Sushi ga suki desu ne? as in English, You like sushi, don't you? Or didn't you say you like sushi? but literally translated means, Sushi that, right? Again, pronouns are implied based on context. When the topic for you or Reginald or Scrimshaw is introduced, you are not likely to be directly identified again within the conversation. The second reason I argue about structure is that unlike English and other Western languages like Spanish that follow SVO patterns (subject, verband object) as in the sentences I bought Twinkies, or Archibald drove home, Japanese sentences are structured with SOV, meaning verbs go last. As you've probably already noticed, giving a literal translation of Japanese sentences into English sounds awkward. In fact, it sounds, roughly speaking, how Yoda speaks. Twinkies, bought, and Archibald, home, drove, with commas replaced by particles like wa, ga, tea, to, no, you, and wo to enter the subject, the item, possession, and so on. But back to my review, I came across Ikenna's YouTube channel back in September and decided to get his book based on his sales pitch. The Fluency Made Easy, otherwise known as the FME method, is essentially a pdf booklet. The plan, admittedly, was, promising to learn secrets to language learning. It wasn't until after buying the book that I discovered the secrets weren't so secret. I don't want to condemn Ikenna's writing. When it all comes from, he speaks (and probably reads and writes) half a dozen languages. Who cares if the average high school student can compose better prose? I think polyglot means well. Sharing their method with others for a only fifteen dollars doesn't strike me as a scam. However, it seems particularly frivolous. Still, I would prefer to praise his choice of three rather than lament the fact that he cannot snap his suit to hide the stain on his shirt. But this reminds me of yet another music metaphor. When I first started learning to play guitar, I didn't do what I would later discover many beginner guitarists do. I didn't hire an instructor, show up for a lesson, go over some chords with my teacher, and then go home with a page or two of homework to practice for an hour. Instead, I instinctively taught myself by playing along to music CDs and TV CDs. I bought and poured over music books covering chords, scales, modes, arpeggios, theory, and so on. I didn't do this for half an hour a day. I did it for at least four hours a day, sometimes fourteen hours a day, almost every day, for years. I've always taken my self-propelled approach for granted. Some people demand a sensei, someone to shake them in the shoulders, point to one thing and say, Lock yourself away and master this! While if I'm passionate about something, I don't require any prodding. Instead, I'm going to put on the blinders and the dash, find a plateau and dive into the deep end at the expense of everything else. This somewhat exaggerated advantages and disadvantages. As as the result, Ikenna had little to teach me. His tricks of the trade, his so-called secrets, were a list of things I had already instinctively done since I started learning a new language seven months before I had discovered his YouTube channel or his book. For example, he insists you learn from multiple sources. He warns with the help of not one but several language learning apps. Recommends watching Netflix shows and listening to music in that target language. Recommend savory learning sessions a day instead of studying for a few hours on weekends. As you may have assumed from the chronicling of my journey above, none of this was new to me. Sure, he suggested a couple of programs I hadn't heard of, but it was only a matter of time before I would. I got more out of a 2017 polyglot conference a month later that someone uploaded to YouTube for free than what Ikenna set for fifteen dollars. Yet, if nothing else, Ikenna's pdf booklet confirmed I'm on the right track, that I'm using my study time effectively, that I optimize my ability to absorb. Usually I would say that you can't put a price on either confirmation or validation, but in my case I can. That's exactly \$15. I recognize this new endeavor (learning to speak, write and read Japanese) cuts into my other projects. But I'm really enjoying the process. In addition, none of my leisure activities are very practical. I mean, I read for my own pleasure and to learn, not to participate in a book club. I write because I can't help myself. I also have outlandish hopes of one-day publication, but let's face it, Publishers, should I win the literary jackpot, hardly guarantee financial success. Going to the gym, studying to become a Catholic, reading and writing, cycling to work, learning a new language - these are things I like, things that, to me, make life worthwhile. Life is short. The older I get, the more aware I'll be. I see no reason to curb my drive to learn as much as I can about the things that inspire and fascinate me. In some sense, I'm like a guy who studies carpentry if only to one day build a dinner table for his kitchen or a chest of drawers for his bedroom. Dismiss his endeavors if you must, but it's still a meaningful, albeit limited, contribution to improving himself, his quality of life, and his sense of purpose. Not to mention continuing to grow and change while being amazing. 真久 真久

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