

To be in the 13% in the World.

Daisuke Aoki (NIT (KOSEN), Toyama College, Imizu Campus)

What languages can you speak? What language are you learning? Language is very important for all animals including humans. Some animals cry and roar while others use smells, behaviors, and sound to convey their intentions. Humans use several languages to explain their minds. Human-spoken languages have four qualities: discreteness, grammar, productivity, and displacement.

Discreteness refers to the property that “a language has individual sounds and words, and the combination of these have new meaning.” Grammar is a rule that defines how those sounds and words are arranged. Productivity is the ability to express numerous expressions using language. And displacement is the ability to use language to talk about the events that are not happening in front of you. For example, talking about past or future events fall under “displacement”. So far, I talked about the intentions of language. It sounds complicated and it is, but it’s also very interesting.

Some studies indicate that there are over 6000 languages. But most people can only speak a few. It is said that about 43% of people in the world, can speak two languages meaning they are bilingual and 13% are said to be trilingual. I have a question. Why do people try to learn a language? I think there are two answers. One is to communicate to people. And the other is to understand culture more deeply. The former is the essence of language. Humans can understand each other’s intentions by using words. Of course, we can convey our intention by using only gestures and actions. But we may misinterpret them. However, words are the best way to understand people more deeply. So, we learn language for fluid communication. Understanding culture is the purpose of DOING SOMETHING with words. In order to gain a deeper understanding of a country’s culture, we should learn the local language. It’s not only important for culture but also for people. Nelson Mandela, who was the president of South Africa said, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in HIS language, that goes to his heart.” It means to communicate deeply we need to know the local language and culture. I think these are the main reasons why people learn language.

Well then, I believe most Kosen students are learning English. If you can speak English, that ability will be an important ASSET for your future as English is the Lingua Franca of the world. But I think there are few people who are trilingual, Suppose we learn a 3rd language, what language do you want to learn? Perhaps you first imagine the country you like. Then you think what is the official language of that country. Another way of thinking is which official language is most likely to be spoken in the world. The answer is simple. It’s Chinese. About 1.3 billion people speak Chinese. But I think you shouldn’t choose a language just because a large number of people speak it. You should choose it because you are passionate about it and are deeply interested in it. Actually, I’m learning Chinese at Toyama Kosen but I’m having a hard time because studying it is very hard. But it doesn’t mean that I don’t like Chinese, it’s also really

Daisuke Aoki - 2
(NIT (KOSEN), Toyama College, Imizu Campus)

interesting.

So far, I talked about the difficulty of learning a language but, it's also a lot of fun. How you learn the language from now on depends on your interests.

I believe you should choose a 3rd language that you are really interested in because if you can speak English perfectly, you'll be able to communicate easily with others. And learning a 3rd language means you have a strong passion to learn. So, you can learn the language while having fun. Having fun helps to sustain your motivation.