

Understanding Our New Challenges

新しい世界の読み方

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Preface

The world today is changing so rapidly it can feel almost impossible to keep up. In technology, the growing power of robots and computers is forcing us to think of new ways to live and work. In our societies, social media is changing the way we communicate and interact. In our economies, conventional wisdom about business and capitalism is being overturned in the search for new solutions to old problems. In *Understanding Our New Challenges*, we will help you to make sense of this dynamic world, shining a critical light on the issues and challenges facing us all today.

To structure our understanding of the changing world, the book is divided into five sections: culture, society, technology, the environment and the economy. Each section has four essays covering some of the most important issues in each area. We look at culture shock and the challenges of living abroad. We meet super language learners who have learned to speak 10 or 20 foreign languages. We examine new medical technologies that may one day allow human beings to live forever. And we discuss crucial issues such as free speech, free trade and social inequality, topics which are being hotly debated all over the world. We hope that in reading these essays, you will not only expand your knowledge and interests but also feel inspired to discover the world yourself through newspapers, books and travel.

Along with the essays themselves, every unit in the book contains a pre-reading exercise with a list of important vocabulary appearing in the text. There are also comprehension questions to check your understanding and a summary exercise that confirms your awareness of the key issues. After that, there are discussion questions to encourage you to think critically and creatively about what you have read. The units finish with a short Did You Know? passage which gives more information about an interesting person or idea related to the essay.

It has been a great deal of fun researching and writing the essays in this book. We sincerely hope that you enjoy them too.

Dave Rear

はしがき

現在、世界は人々が追いつけないほどの速さで変化している。テクノロジーの分野では、ロボットやコンピューターのさらなる発達により、人々はこれまでとは違う新しい仕事の方法やライフスタイルを強いられるようになった。社会生活では、ソーシャルメディアが私たちのコミュニケーションや交流の方法に変化をもたらしている。経済面では、過去の問題に対する新しい解決策が見いだされ、これまでのビジネスや資本主義における既成概念は覆されつつある。『新しい世界の読み方』は、現在私たちが直面している問題や課題に、さまざまな角度から批判的な光を当て、このような移りゆく世界を理解する手助けとなるだろう。

変動する世界情勢を構造的に理解するため、本書は「文化」「社会」「テクノロジー」「環境」「経済」の5つセクションに分かれている。各セクションでは、その分野における最も重要な問題を網羅する記事4つを取り上げている。海外生活で直面するカルチャーショックや問題、20カ国語を話す多言語話者、人間が永遠に生きることを可能にする新しい医療技術などを考察し、言論の自由や自由貿易、社会的不公平などの世界で熱く議論が交わされているトピックにも目を向けている。このような記事を読むことにより、世界に関する知識や関心を広げるだけでなく、新聞や書籍、旅行などを通じて、学生自身の世界への探求心が深まることを願っている。

本書の各ユニットにはKey Vocabularyセクションがあり、記事を読む前に、文章中に出てくる重要な単語を学習することができる。また、読者の理解力を問うcomprehension questionsと、文章の重要なポイントの理解を確認するsummary exerciseがある。その後、読み終わった記事について批判的で独自の考えを持つよう促すdiscussion questionsへと進む。各ユニットの最後にはDid you know?セクションの一節で、記事に関連した興味深い人物や考えに触れ、さらなる情報を得ることができる。

本書における記事の執筆やリサーチはとても興味深く楽しいものであった。学生のみならず、みなさんにも同様の楽しさを味わっていただきたい。

Dave Rear
杉藤 久志

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■ Super Language Learners

How do people learn many languages?



みなさんはどのような動機で英語を学んでいるのでしょうか。多くの人が外国語を習得するのに苦労しますが、驚くことに世の中には 20 カ国語以上を話すことができる人たちがいます。このユニットでは、hyperpolyglot と呼ばれる語学の天才たちの謎に迫り、彼らに共通する特質や習得法を探っていきます。そこには、みなさんが英語を学ぶ上で参考になるヒントが隠されているかもしれません。また、外国語を習得することの意味や、その効能についても考えていきます。

Key Vocabulary

Match the word to its meaning.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. ____ acquire (verb) | a. plan you use to achieve something |
| 2. ____ define (verb) | b. make something possible |
| 3. ____ strategy (noun) | c. say exactly what something means |
| 4. ____ cognitive (adjective) | d. something that makes a person different from others |
| 5. ____ enable (verb) | e. get or gain something |
| 6. ____ characteristic (noun) | f. related to how people think |

CD 1-2 If you're reading this article, there's a good chance you're sitting in a classroom taking part in an English lesson. You might be in that classroom because you love English and are motivated to learn how to use it; or you might be there just to get a credit for class. Whatever your reason, it's likely that English is not your first language. Most probably it's your second or perhaps your third. But imagine if English was not the second or third but the tenth or twentieth language you could speak fluently. Impossible? Believe it or not, there are people around the world who have acquired the ability to use as many as 30 different languages. There is a name for such super language learners: *hyperpolyglots*.

CD 1-3 A hyperpolyglot is usually defined as someone who can speak at least 10 languages, but there are a number of exceptional people who have learned considerably more than this. Some of them, such as Tim Keeley, did so while living in different countries. Keeley grew up in Florida, where he was exposed to native Spanish speakers at school, but it was only as an adult when he moved to Colombia, Switzerland, Eastern Europe and finally Japan that he acquired his current knowledge of over 20 languages. Other hyperpolyglots have achieved their ability at home. Eighty-three-year-old Derick Herning lives in the remote Shetland Islands in northern Scotland, where he offers tours to the occasional tourist in English, German, Dutch, Russian, Norwegian, Frisian, Gaelic, French, Danish and Swedish. He won the Polyglot of Europe competition in 1990 by speaking 22 languages, but says he has learned nine more since.

CD 1-4 How do these super language learners achieve their success? Are there some learning methods that we all can use? On a general level, linguists have uncovered some of the strategies that good language learners use to acquire their skills. For instance, Rebecca Oxford of the University of Alabama in the United States was able to identify six groups of strategies by interviewing and observing successful language learners. Putting them in simple terms, these groups consist of *memory* strategies (e.g. reviewing vocabulary), *cognitive* strategies (e.g. analyzing grammar and taking notes), *planning* strategies (e.g. making plans to overcome your weak points), *emotional* strategies (e.g. rewarding yourself for reaching goals), *social* strategies (e.g. finding native speakers to talk with) and *compensation* strategies (e.g. using gestures to communicate things you don't know how to say). There is also the important issue of motivation. If you are strongly motivated to learn the language, for example in order to live abroad, you are more likely to work hard to achieve

your goals.

CD 1-5 These are all things that, in theory, can help anybody to become a successful language learner. But what about hyperpolyglots? Do they have any extra tricks that enable them to learn languages on such a large scale? Michael Erard, who has investigated the learning habits of hyperpolyglots in a book called *Babel No More: The Search for the World's Most Extraordinary Language Learners*, has found super language learners often share certain characteristics. 5

CD 1-6 For a start, they tend to be good at mimicry, that is copying the voices and behavior of different people. One polyglot, Michael Harris, is a good example of this. An actor by training, Harris carefully observes the facial expressions and mouth movements of native speakers of the language he is learning, which helps him to copy their pronunciation. When he speaks a foreign language, he adopts a new identity, associating the language in his head with the verbal and physical behavior of native speakers. This helps him not to confuse one language with another. Of course, he makes mistakes as he learns each language, but Harris says it is important not to feel embarrassed. It is unrealistic to expect to become a native speaker with perfect grammar and pronunciation, he says. Sometimes there will be times when you cannot express exactly what you want to say, but in those cases you have to find other ways to communicate your thoughts. Harris also recommends regular and short practice: perhaps just for 15 minutes, four or five times a day. The quality of the practice is more important than the quantity. 15 20

CD 1-7 In the end, a determination not to give up is perhaps the most important characteristic shared by super language learners. Knowing 20 languages doesn't make you rich or famous. The main benefit is the ability to communicate with so many different people around the world. There is, however, one more advantage to language learning that scientists have recently discovered. It appears that knowing more than one language also boosts brain power. People who use two languages regularly have improved ability on various cognitive tasks and, what's more, they are also less likely to suffer from mental diseases like Alzheimer's. So, if you ever feel frustrated or discouraged about learning English, perhaps that can be your motivation to keep studying. 25 30

Notes

hyperpolyglot polyglot (多言語話者)に「超越」を意味する hyper を付けたもの **did so** = learned more than 10 languages **be exposed to** ~「～に触れる」 **occasional**「たまの」 **Frisian**「フリジア語」主にオランダ北部のフリースラント州で使用されている。 **Gaelic**「ゲール語」アイルランドや英スコットランドで使用されている。 **uncover**「発見する」 **compensation strategy**「補償ストラテジー」 **mimicry**「模倣, 物まね」 ~ **by training**「～としての教育を受けた」 **Alzheimer's**「アルツハイマー病」老年認知症の一種

Reading Comprehension

Decide if each sentence is true or false.

1. [T / F] A hyperpolyglot is someone who can speak at least 20 languages.
2. [T / F] Derick Herning learned languages by traveling around the world.
3. [T / F] The strategies described by Rebecca Oxford can be used by anybody learning a language.
4. [T / F] Being an actor probably helps Michael Harris to be a good language learner.
5. [T / F] Using two languages can improve your thinking skills.

Summary

① 8 

Fill in the spaces with the words at the top.

embarrassed fluently motivated copying strategies

Learning a foreign language is hard work, so it is amazing to think that there are people who can speak as many as 20 or 30 languages ¹⁾_____. Known as hyperpolyglots, these super language learners use a variety of ²⁾_____ to achieve their goals. Linguists have studied these methods in order to help people learn languages better. Hyperpolyglots also tend to be good at ³⁾_____ the voices and actions of different people, rather like actors, and they don't get ⁴⁾_____ when they make mistakes. Above all, they are very ⁵⁾_____ to learn and don't give up easily. Being a hyperpolyglot might not make you rich, but it will make your life more interesting.

Think about the Issues

Write down and share your ideas with your classmates.

1. Are you strongly motivated to learn English? What strategies do you use to help you learn?

2. Do you think that anybody can become a super language learner? Why / why not?

Did You Know?

There are a number of well-known historical figures who are believed to have been super language learners. For instance, Cleopatra, the famous pharaoh of Egypt during Roman times, could speak nine languages and the 17th century English writer John Milton could speak 11. In more recent times, J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the *Lord of the Rings* books, learned 35 languages and even created several fictional ones which he used in his stories.