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“744 words”

English VS Japanese

English is at the center over the English educations in South Korea because our society is globalizing and seeking to speak English fluently. Our society is, also, pushing students to understand how important second languages are, because it is becoming one of the definite requirements for achieving success. It probably came from the social environment on these days and the idolized western culture and people. I also struggled to improve my foreign language skill because the language skill is one of the important requirements to start my first career as a fine hotelier. I majored in Hotel Management in University of Nevada Las Vegas from January 2004 to May 2008. I can speak two foreign languages, one is English and the other is Japanese. I have two whole different ways of learning between English and Japanese.

I have been learning English since middle school and my first teacher, Ms Lee, taught me English and she taught me everything from to saying hello. Ms. Lee taught me for 3 years as my private English tutor and was a quite the explainer type. She mostly, focused on test based teaching to let me get the highest score as possible at the school because traditionally better test results would lead me into a better high school and a college. All I am remembering now is that memorizing vocabularies and reading a pattern of grammatical errors in sentences not knowing why it is grammatically incorrect. The consequences over this traditional way of learning was that, I had good test score, and I was also satisfied about the results on English test. After I went to Sungshin Women’ University in Korea, attended college from Mar. 2002 to Dec. 2002, my parents wanted me to travel the United States to improve my English conversational ability. I also wanted to go to the U.S., as my parents actively more recommended me, my mother was more enthusiastic on my English education like the other helicopter parents. Helicopter parents or moms is 21 century term to explain parents who is hovering closely overhead whether their children need them or not, also pays extremely close attention to his or her child's or children's experiences and problems, particularly at educational institutions.. What I want to say is I like to learn English too but mostly my mother and teacher decided that teaching materials and methods of my English education.

On the other hand, I became interested in Japanese when I had started my intern job because I worked in the Hotel Industry where many Japanese guests visit. My coworker, Noriko, was Japanese and my roommate, Kimiko, was Japanese too, and apparently, I found that I could mingle with Japanese culture and language. This interaction led me to study Japanese, so I started watching Japanese TV shows as one of my self-study materials. I, of course, preferred to watch the shows with Korean subtitles, but mostly I had to wait for the TV shows to be translated in Korean which took a week. I became very into the shows and too curious about next story, so I started watching the shows without subtitles. It eventually worked to improve my Japanese listening ability and speaking as well by imitating what I heard from the shows. Furthermore, I wrote down useful sentences or words that I could use with Japanese friends or in the work place. Once I was able to understand the conversations between Japanese friends or Japanese guests, I had more opportunities to speak with Japanese friends, clients and guests. No one pushed me to study Japanese, I just enjoyed learning it. Eventually it took less years until I could speak Japanese compared to what I had spent time studying English.

I came to realize that I had two different ways of learning between English and Japanese. It worked quicker to me by learning interesting materials and active involving in learning methods. I became more focused on learning and speeding up to sponge Japanese because I also had a goal that I wanted to use Japanese in the work place to enhance my career opportunities. However, I was less actively involved to decide study methods or materials for learning English. Mostly decisions were pushed by my mom and teachers, but I don’t want to blame them because not many of teaching materials or methods were adapted or proved when I was a child. However, there are many methodologies of teaching and class materials I could possibly use for better teaching skill. I also think language should be adapted and approached naturally by not losing own interest in students. As my experience, I believe “the Chalk and Talk” as the traditional way of teaching also works in English education. However, first, students should have a chance to decide their own way of learning English to maximize the result. Second, teachers should lead students to find the best learning method and motivation of learning English.