My personal experience of learning a second language-Chinese



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Every day I read Chinese articles to practice my second language. I spend about 20 minutes on this every day. I have done it for many years, so now it becomes my important daily tasks. If I don’t read or listen to Chinese, I get a very uncomfortable feeling, and even can’t sleep! It's some kind of advisable addiction. Why do I have this passion for Chinese? Through this essay I can have a good time to think about that.

In University

I remember three Chinese professors from my University. The first professor was very strict and stubborn. Students actually didn’t like to enter her class, because we all knew it’s a very tough class. But I didn’t have a choice, during that semester I needed more credits of a basic Chinese class. After entering that class I started to carry a thick black dictionary, I worked hard because I always had extensive homework. I often stayed up all night in the library. While I was doing many assignments, I memorized many nouns, verbs, pronunciations and tones. (In Chinese, each letter has a different tone so we need to memorize every word’s three parts letter+tone+meaning. It's triple works.) We also did much reading homework, which meant reading one or two paragraphs including 15~20 new vocabulary words, and then translate them to Korean. Even though it was a hard time, after this class I noticed that my Chinese skill moved higher than before.

The second professor was a gentleman. He was kind, easy-going, a little bit sensitive; I think that’s why his study area was Chinese literature Films, not letters. We watched old Chinese movies in every class; it was a really enjoyable time, especially for the female students. We had many presentation assignments after watching the old movies and through that I could understand Chinese people’s lives, culture, and I also compared them with Koreans'.

The third professor was a brilliant and humorous gentleman. He got a PhD at an American university and his focus area was Chinese pronunciation. I remembered one midterm assignment he gave to us, it was a research project in Myung-dong Chinatown, which has many Chinese restaurants, malls. We had to meet Chinese people, record the interview, and analyze the interviewer’s pronunciation and then give teacher the recorded tape and report. It took much effort but it was very helpful for my Chinese pronunciation, and gladly the professor selected my report as one of the best. It gave me more confidence and motivation to study Chinese.

 In China, Beijing Normal University

After finishing the third year of university, I went to China Beijing and registered at Beijing Normal University for one year course of Chinese training. It was a really great time for me, because I could experience the language in action, before I had just listened to and studied through textbooks. I met one teacher; she was an old Chinese lady. She was very steady, diligent and neat. Her teaching style was very traditional, and lecture based, but I enjoyed her class, because I learned a lot from her explanations. There were various nationalities’ students, Korean, Japanese, Philippine, Thai, American, French, etc. I observed that some students were good at pronunciation, and others were strong in Chinese characters, depending on how Chinese was related with their mother tongue.

Through many teachers I experienced visual, auditory and tactile-kinesthetic classes that connected to each other and gave good motivations for me. I also could develop my various intelligences (as Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligence) for learning language. I think teachers need to help students realize their full potential with all of the intelligences, so teacher’s challenge is how to activate much intelligence together.

Now I’m a Chinese teacher for young children. I hear my students often say to their parents, “Chinese is very fun!” I think the reason for that is I, teacher, have so much fun with Chinese. Students can feel my enthusiasm for Chinese, so they also feel like me. They don’t have to like me, but I want them to like Chinese like I do, and it’s my destiny to be a teacher.