Second Language Acquisition

MY SUCCESS LEARNING KOREAN

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I’m a native of a country that has over 171 spoken dialects, the Philippines. Although Tagalog is Philippines’ major language, my mother tongue is Cebuano. I learned Illonggo and Waray *(my parents’ dialects)* as a child, picked up English in grade school, and have recently became conversant in Korean language as I got married to a Korean. Unlike learning my native languages, the process of learning Korean for me was a bit slower. Maybe because when we learn our native language, we usually learn to listen first, then to speak, then to read, and finally to write. And when we learn another language, there are four skills that we need for complete communication. These are called the four "language skills": READING, LISTENING, WRITING, and SPEAKING. I learned the basics of Korean back in the Philippines, through self-study. So basically, I’m more into READING and LISTENING, than WRITING and SPEAKING.

Living in a country with a language I don’t speak is an absolute challenge for me. So as a learner, I am highly motivated to learn. Not just for my husband, and me but also to be able to communicate with my in-laws, and to give me a better understanding of their culture and way of thinking. If I have more advanced knowledge of the language, and improve my language skills, that way, I can have real conversations with the people I meet, which can be very interesting. That’s my goal!

I studied Korean at a Culture Center. The learning atmosphere was good, and pretty much enjoyable and stress-free. Since my teacher was a kind of an INVOLVER type, she always spends extra time to ensure that we actively participate in her class and that we eventually catch on and understand the lesson. Her patience was outstanding. I believe it was a very challenging task for her since student’s aptitude levels vary. I appreciate her high motivation to teach. She was much focused on helping us achieve satisfaction. We’ve learned about Grammar, Sentence Relation and Function. Although she relied most of her lectures on textbooks and a few written visual aides, and her teaching style was somewhat traditional, these were still having my advantage as a learner since my strong skills are both READING and LISTENING. My not-so-strong skills are WRITING and SPEAKING. Oftentimes, I have trouble with Phonology and Spelling, and my weakness is that my spontaneous free speech might be grammatically incorrect. But both were never a hindrance to my learning Korean.

Reading can absorb knowledge other than the knowledge of language itself. I’m an intense reader. But as a learner, I think my most efficient method of information intake is through AUDIAL. I learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening. I usually prefer listening to Korean audio books and podcasts, rather than reading. I think it’s much easier and may benefit me. I’m a strong AUDITORY learner, and VISUAL modality somehow just boosts this primary strength. Although I’m a bit sensitive to sounds, rhythms, [tones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_(music)), and music, I tend to think in pictures; create vivid imagination to retain information. Therefore, my SPATIAL INTELLIGENCE is high. As a Dentist, and being a person who truly appreciates Art, I have the ability to perceive the visual world internally.

A language learner needs to hear a lot of language from native speakers. A completely new language learned takes time to get fully absorbed into one’s mind, unless you begin thinking in that language. Feelings about a foreign language and its cultural values and living style, and motivation are related to overall learning success and achievement with learning. The importance of READING, LISTENING, WRITING, and SPEAKING the chosen foreign language also facilitates achieving success. A basic knowledge of language acquisition theories is extremely useful and directly influences teacher’s ability to provide appropriate content-area instruction to learners. One can only be said to master a language when it has been acquired. Formal learning may give us the rules of grammar, but it does not mean that we will use them correctly. Learners make mistakes, and that these mistakes are a necessary part of language learning. These mistakes are not random, but are very similar to the errors that children make when learning their first language. Acquired knowledge and experience play an important role in my language learning. And somehow helped me get-by. Mastering a second language depends on a number of biological, social, and educational factors, like aptitude for languages, attitude, personality, cognitive style, neurological factors, learning strategies, proficiency in the native language, sense modality preference, and past experience. All these helped me in my success learning Korean.