* Give your experience of learning English and explain how it might affect how you will teach English in the future.

English is the third most common native language in the world[[1]](#footnote-1), only after Chinese and Spanish. It is a very common second language in many countries. Although I am Korean, I learned English as my first language as I grew up in India. Although India has many languages, there isn’t a specific thing as a national language. The official languages are Hindi and English[[2]](#footnote-2).

I was born in Seoul, Republic of Korea but I followed my parents to India at the age of 2. Before I even knew my own country, I was brought up in a foreign land. I began to learn English as my first language and Korean did become my second language. Although I am a Korean, I find English to be my native language as I’ve never actually learned Korean properly. Learning in an Indian public school was never a big problem for me as I even started Kindergarten in India.

However, I did have my own problems. I had no Korean friends until I was in second grade due to the fact that there were only a few Koreans in India at that time. However, making Indian friends was easy for me as I grew up around them. I soon learned how to speak in Hindi as my friends were eager to teach a foreign kid their native language. I soon acquired the ability to learn English in school and learn Korean by interacting and communicating with my family and with other Korean people. However, what I didn’t learn until later on was the ability to read and write in Korean. This being said, as a young child, I could speak better in English and Hindi than my own mother tongue.

I studied in an International School since I was in 3rd grade until graduation. This meant that I had a diverse environmental impact on my life. My Korean friends helped me learn basic Korean and I soon realized that I had an Indian mentality. I typically found it hard to relate to my Korean friends and I became closer to my Indian friends.

Since I studied in an International school for most of my school life, I had teachers from different parts of the world. I had teachers from India, England, the United States and even Africa. Furthermore, my Indian teachers were also taught in different countries. This means that each teacher had a different accent and even different country’s English. Spelling a word in one way would be correct for some teachers while it wouldn’t be for another. This happened because India doesn’t have its own English. This affected the way I learned English and it would also affect the way I teach English in the future as I might teach my future pupils a mixture of the different types of English.

Moreover, I studied in an International school that adopted two different curriculums; International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) which is registered under Cambridge University[[3]](#footnote-3) and International Baccalaureate (IB) which has its own headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland[[4]](#footnote-4). I learned IGCSE using the British English and I learned IB using the American English. I was often confused with the two and would often write a sentence with a combination of the two types.

I want to teach English to students in Korea. Korea’s native language is Korean and thus English is studied as a second language for the majority of the English learners. This means that my background could actually confuse my future pupils and it would be my responsibility to keep them in the right path. Therefore I would need to correct myself before I have the ability to teach someone else.

Studying for 16 years in a foreign country has a huge impact on the way anyone would learn English. I learned English with a diverse environment surrounded by people all over the world. This has helped me understand the different aspects of English including accents. When it comes to hearing, I don’t have a problem understanding different English accents. But when it comes to speaking, I do have a major problem. I have an Indian accent. Due to this, my pronunciation is not very clear to the majority of the people. At first, I thought it was due to my short tongue and even had a minor surgery for it but it turned out to be my accent. I aspire to teach English in the near future but sadly I’m afraid to teach someone using this accent as they might also adopt the same accent. An Indian accent is not clearly recognized by Koreans; in fact Koreans find it hard to understand anyone with an accent.

Furthermore, learning English in India has caused an impact on my vocabulary. Indians have come up with a way to make up words that don’t belong to the official English language. Indians have made up words such as “prepone” for the opposite of postpone. Some more examples are “airdash” which means to take a quick flight and “freeship” meaning a full payment of scholarship. These words are not known outside of India but it is still used inside of India. When living in India for a long time, it is not easy distinguishing Indian English from the official English.

Moreover, some Korean teachers have mastered the English language but have poor communicative skills. Therefore, their students have knowledge of English but they don’t have the experience and skills to communicate efficiently with the outside world. Koreans also have the tendency to learn and use “Konglish”. “Konglish” is a mixture of Korean and English where Koreans make up English words to suit their style of learning and communicating.

Teaching English to a country that doesn’t recognize English as a native language is what many people aspire to do, including me. I know that it would be a huge honor to teach English to my fellow country people but I want to teach them proper English that is recognized all over the world. India has given me memories that I will never forget and experiences that I would not have encountered elsewhere. After learning English as my first language, I want to pass on my knowledge and teach English in Korea. I believe that I can become a world class teacher by learning more on my behalf and by teaching my future pupils the right way of learning English. I want to teach English to pupils who will carry on my skills and apply to the future generation thus making my knowledge eternal.

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English\_language [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages\_of\_India [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\_General\_Certificate\_of\_Secondary\_Education [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\_Baccalaureate [↑](#footnote-ref-4)