**Learning Japanese**

Since I was working at the Hotel as reservation agent, I needed to speak Japanese in order to handle the booking for Japanese guests. So I started learning Japanese at Pagoda Institute. I was beginner to learn Japanese and I could speak few isolated words.

I needed to start from HIRAGANA (Japanese Alphabet). When teacher taught the HIRAGANA, She played audio player, and let us repeat after the audio again and again. The more I speak out, it was easier for me to memorize them. Also she held the Flash Card written with each HIRAGANA character, and asked what the answer for correct character is. It was very simple exercise, but I could focus on the class and it was easier to memorize the each character. She asked to do Hiragana writing practice as a homework, and I should write 10 pages to write full of 42 character of HIRAGANA. Since I remember better when I write it down, I could memorize whole character of HIRAGANA after I did the homework.

After I finish learning HIRAGANA, I got to learn simple sentence. Teacher asked us to practice in pairs, and I had chance to exchange question and answer in Japanese with the simple sentence that I learned with my partner. It took about 10 minutes, but teacher just sit in front, and didn’t monitor how we were doing. While we were practicing the conversation in Japanese, we couldn’t find what we did wrong because we were beginner for Japanese. It would be better if she could walk around the class, and just check that we were doing correctly. She could ask feedback from us and share what we felt difficult, what was not sure to make sentence.

After completing beginner class, I moved to elementary level, and learned basic vocabulary and grammar. It was different teacher for elementary level. Her voice was loud and clear, so I could feel that she is very enthusiastic. The class tables and chairs were in column and row, but she reorganized the chair and table to square shape. This changed arrangement enabled us to practice as pair and group interactively. When she explained the verb “give” and “take”, she used the large gesture and spoke the word with rhythm. Also she asked us repeat after her with the gesture. From this activity, I could focus attention for the class. Also the technique she used was very effective to remember vocabulary faster. Most of time, she involved us and tried to find interests of learning Japanese with various methods. She gave us handout materials, and it was very well organized, and easy to follow. Also, she used vocabulary flash card game, it helped me to learn new word easier, and avoid being bored in the class.

She gave homework, and I needed to fill in the blanks with correct tense forms of verbs. It was not easy, and I was confused and not sure whether my answer was correct or not. Also, the rule for homework was not strict, and I sometimes didn’t submit the homework. Even I submit the homework, I didn’t have any feedback and correction from the teacher. If she could see how to do the homework and have the class to find the correct answers together, it would be more effective to remember the grammar and vocabulary for long time.

I spent four months studying Japanese. Unfortunately, four months was not long enough to reach advanced level. If I have chance again, I want to try again to learn Japanese and be able to converse it quite well in Japanese.