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I have a bitter experience with not speaking English. When I was working as a staff member at a basketball game, I was checking to see if hazardous materials were brought in. While I was checking the manual, a foreign woman came up to me. I tried to speak to her in Japanese, but she could not understand me at all. Then she said, "English.

 It was as if she looked down on Japanese who could not speak English. I impatiently tried to speak in English but could not think of a good word. I managed to respond with a bulletin board, but my frustration at the bad attitude of the foreigner and my inability to speak English well built up. It seems that English-speaking people tend to look down on those who do not speak English. This arrogance is no different when it comes to Japan. Frankly speaking, I am dissatisfied with this attitude of foreigners toward those who do not speak English. However, since there are many more speakers of English than Japanese, it is probably inevitable in some respects. I believe that it is wiser to improve one's own ability than to change the attitude of others. For this reason, I, and all Japanese people, need to learn more English.

In many of these discussions, English education in Japanese institutions is often the subject of criticism. However, I do not see it that way. When I advanced my study of vocabulary and grammar in preparation for university entrance exams, I felt more growth than in elementary or junior high school classes where I had to converse with foreigners. In other words, the problem is not up to the enthusiasm and effort of those who study.

My goal for my English studies in college is to get an 860 points on the TOEIC. When I took the test last summer, my score was 700 points. Right now, my weak area is listening. Although I was able to score close to 80% in reading, I only scored about 60% in listening. I believe the reason for my low score is that this is an area that I did not study much in when I took the university entrance exam.

The reason I have set goals in this way is because I believe that goals are what promote effort the most. When I visited Ueno and other areas with many foreign tourists, I was surprised by one thing. That is, all the store clerks could speak English very well. The reason why shopkeepers in tourist areas speak English is so that they can respond to foreigners in English. And to improve their own business. Money is the best, but motivation is very important.

So I'm going to set a goal and keep learning English so that no more unpleasant events will happen.

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