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English skills

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I want to talk about the English skills that we need when we live a society. Nowadays there are a lot of foreign people in Japan. Especially, I often see foreign tourists in Japan. So, I sometimes have an opportunity to speak English with them. If you're coming to Japan, I don't think it's wrong to say that you should make at least some effort to study Japanese and be able to speak it a little. However, as globalization progresses, I also believe that Japanese people need the ability to speak English. Now, I would like to introduce how my actual English skills measure up, based on my past experiences.

When I did a part time job at a fast-food restaurant, foreign customers came. I have to take orders from them, but I couldn’t communicate well. For example, I said “take out or eat in?”, but they couldn’t understand me. Then, my heart shattered in pieces. Finally, I managed to serve customers somehow using gestures. Of course, my English pronunciation is not so good. However, I wanted to know why the simple word: take out or eat in? wasn’t understood, so I looked it up on the Internet. As a result, the phrase “take out” tend to be popular among Japanese people, but “take away” is more common in the UK and “to go” is also more common in the US. I was surprised at the fact. I tried studying phrases that can be used in customer service. Because of that, I’ve become able to handle foreign customers just a little bit and my heart has somewhat recovered.

I have studied English for only the entrance exams, so I can’t speak English well. I can understand English, but I can’t express myself by speaking it. Therefore, we have to learn real English that we can communicate with native English speaker. Lessons like tutorial English should be actively incorporated from the elementary and junior high school stages. Now, I take the tutorial English class, and I can get many advice from my tutor. A tutor's advice is something that teaches you the subtle nuances and differences between similar English words and how to use them properly—something only a native speaker can point out because they speak the language as their mother tongue. Thanks to this, my English skills gradually improve little by little. I think that it is a very precious opportunity. By providing such opportunities to children at a young age, such as elementary or junior high school students, I believe they can acquire English more quickly and accurately. Additionally, by accumulating positive experiences of speaking English from an early age, they will likely be able to approach speaking the language without resistance even as adults. I believe that Japan's English education should be reformed in this way. However, its realization will not happen immediately. By gradually changing the process of English education, it is necessary to build a more global Japan in the future.

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