

The Reflection and Emergence of Identity

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Abstract: This study delves into a deep personal reflection on the author's journey of acquiring a first and a second language, exploring the profound impact of past experiences on future ambitions. By revisiting and meticulously analyzing formative life events—many of which were shaped by adverse circumstances—the paper reveals how these foundational struggles have been transformed into a powerful driving force for future aspirations. This work positions the act of retrospective reflection not merely as a nostalgic or sentimental exercise but as a crucial, academically valuable skill. It demonstrates that through a critical engagement with one's own memories, an individual can recover and reframe past hardships, turning them into powerful motivations for achieving future goals. Ultimately, this paper argues that the very process of writing this self-reflective assignment is as transformative and insightful as the conclusions it yields, offering a compelling narrative on the resilience of the human spirit and the profound link between memory, identity, and ambition.

I. Autobiography Statement

I grew up in a very poor family in Pursat province, born on January 9, 1995. It was a good day, and my father named me Sey Kassy. My father was a fisherman and my mother was a vendor. He spent his days on his boat in the river, tending to his aquarium, while my mother sold the fish he or other

fishermen caught. A few years later, my father quit his job and became a motorbike taxi driver. He would get up early every morning to find passengers. Similarly, my mother also woke up early to go to the market, buy fish, and sell them to people in the surrounding area. They never had time to spend together. Sometimes, they would get angry with each other because of their lack of time together (Straus & Hotaling, 1980). My father was a jealous husband who often accused my mother of being dishonest. One day, during a meal, they began arguing about this problem. I remember learning some bad words by listening to them, and I would repeat those words because I was too young to understand what they meant (Snow, 1972). I loved singing when I was young and one day I dreamed of becoming a singer. It was a funny ambition. I watched TV and saw Mr. Preap Sovath. He sang so well and looked so handsome that he inspired me to want to be a singer in the future.

II. Language Acquisition

Most people in my village did not want to learn any languages, not even Khmer, their mother tongue. They believed that money was the only important thing (Rumberger, 2001). Nobody inspired me to learn a language at that time; even my parents' thoughts were focused only on money. My mother wanted me to stop studying because all the other children in my village had quit school to work on a Chinese farm, where

they expected to earn a lot of money. My older brother also quit his studies for money, and my younger brother stopped learning because no one motivated him. I also wanted to quit, but I thought that if I stopped learning, I would not have a good life. My father used to tell me that only education would help me survive and that people respected it. Even though others were not interested in learning, I still loved to learn.

I was in grade 5 at the time and had not started to learn English yet. In my village, poor people could not go to school because the teachers required payment, so I decided to learn only the Khmer language. I learned Khmer by listening to people's everyday conversations. I would listen to their conversations and pick up new words, even if I didn't fully understand them. I think I learned many stories from my grandma, who narrated them to me at night before I went to sleep. I also learned about Buddha dharma talks, which taught me about life and inspired me to struggle forward.

I believe I acquired languages both naturally and unnaturally, and that this is closely related to both biological and environmental factors. I think I learned Khmer through a biological factor because my left hemisphere was slightly more developed. As for the environment, I learned many things—both good and bad—from the people around me. For instance, one day I was listening to people talking about Japanese people, and I learned some words like sensei (teacher) and watashi wa (I).

III. Problems in Picking up a Language

Based on old concepts, people in my village—even my mother—did not support me in learning. Those who had dropped out of school sometimes did nothing to survive. One day, after finishing primary school, I continued my education in grade 7. All of my friends knew a lot of English, but I didn't know anything at all. They always mocked

me when my teacher asked me a question. For example, when the teacher asked, "What's your name?" I answered, "Name my Kassy," and everyone laughed. I was so shy at that time. I promised myself that I would learn English and speak it better than the people who were laughing and mocking me. I didn't know how to begin, so I asked a friend who was a fluent English speaker for advice and suggestions on how to learn more effectively. I didn't go to an English class right away because I believed I should first learn the basics, like the alphabet and some vocabulary, on my own (Kells, 1983).

IV. First day of English Class

Learning the English language was a strange experience for me. On the first day of class, I didn't know anything, so I learned by translating the English alphabet into the Khmer alphabet (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). It was hard for me to learn by translating and memorizing words. I believed that if I didn't know enough words, I wouldn't be able to speak well. I pushed myself to learn at least ten new words a day, practicing them with friends and teachers and asking for help with pronunciation. At that time, I wanted to buy an English dictionary, but I didn't have the money. Luckily, while I was walking to school, I picked up a Longman dictionary. I was overjoyed because my dream had come true. The dictionary was old with faded paper and letters, but I still enjoyed learning from it. I learned words from A to Z, memorizing them and translating them into my own language, because I believed that a lack of vocabulary would prevent me from having conversations with my friends and teachers.

V. Learning by doing

After two months of learning, I could speak a little English, though it was difficult to transfer words and meaning from Khmer to English. After that, I started an extra course

with another teacher in the village. He was a person with a disability and couldn't walk well because of a problem he had had since birth. He didn't have complete use of his limbs, but he knew a lot of English. I learned from him, paying 500 riel for every one-hour lesson after lunch. I hoped to learn a lot of English vocabulary from him. Sometimes, we couldn't study because he wanted to do his physical exercises, but he struggled to walk due to his condition. Despite this, I was happy to learn from him. I learned many words and tried to have conversations with him and my friends. As I learned to speak little by little, I felt like I was becoming fluent. In reality, I was just memorizing English phrases and speaking without truly understanding them, and people still laughed and mocked me as before. This time, I promised myself to make a change. After six months, I was able to communicate with foreign teachers who visited my school, and most people would stare at me when I spoke to the foreigners. I remember one day thinking that I was a foolish learner because I would practice speaking alone in the toilet (Harris et al., 2006). Whenever I went to the toilet, I would speak English by asking myself general questions and then trying to answer them. Even when I was cooking rice, I would speak English. My mother would scold me, believing I was crazy to be so obsessed with learning English, and she wanted me to stop because she was afraid I was becoming "stupid." Sometimes, I felt a lack of motivation from her, but my goal was to succeed in learning English—a language that I believed would help me make a difference in the city after graduating high school.

VI. High School Kid A Difficult Start and a New Path

Days turned to years. When I was in ninth grade, I was selected as an outstanding student in Physics and was sent to Pursat High School to take a competitive exam. During that time, I was surprised to see that the students there seemed to know everything before the exam. I thought their teachers must have taught them everything, unlike ours. Even though I felt this disadvantage, I motivated myself to do my best (Zimmerman, 1990). In the end, I came in fourth place. I was sad because they only chose three students to continue to the city competition, but I saw it as a valuable lesson in competition.

Two months after returning from the competition, I got a severe disease called Cerebrome Meningitis (a brain problem). I was in bed alone, and I thought I was going to die. My father took me to a nearby doctor who told me that some parts of my brain were damaged. The doctor said I should stop learning things that required too much thinking. Because of this, I stopped taking advanced math and physics out of fear of getting sick again. I focused only on English and a few other subjects until I finished twelfth grade.

Redefining the Best Years

Growing up, I often heard adults say, "High school was the best years of my life!" Because of this, I expected to have a great time. However, I didn't realize that they made it the best years of their lives. I didn't understand that if I wanted to have the best four years of my life, I needed to do things I actually enjoyed.

Right now, all my classes are extremely rigorous, time-consuming, and stressful. I definitely haven't been having the best time of my life these past four years. Yet, I also know people who are in every extracurricular activity and taking amazing, interactive classes. They seem to be truly enjoying their high school experience. While I don't regret taking the classes I did, I do

wish I could have made more meaningful memories instead of just making more flashcards for my next chemistry test.

The Influence of Others

I've lost count of how many times I've gone into the bathroom and seen students cutting class. I also can't recall how many times I've seen a pickup truck full of football players speeding out of the parking lot the second school ended. In other words, high school students are more inclined to do things if their friends are doing them too. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; after all, that's why study groups are so common when preparing for finals.

High school taught me that our friends and the people we surround ourselves with have a tremendous influence on our beliefs and actions. It is imperative that we are extremely cautious with the people we allow into our lives. I'm proud to say that my friend group throughout high school has taught me great skills, encouraged me to learn from my mistakes, and been perceptive to my flaws.

Unfortunately, I also know many who have fallen victim to the negative side of peer pressure—or herd mentality, whatever you want to call it. I've seen grades drop and relationships tear apart in just a couple of months. It's crazy how quickly you can be assimilated into a group and how your lifestyle changes to reflect that. Having like-minded individuals around you is a major component of a great high school experience, but this, of course, comes with great risk. Ultimately, it's all a matter of staying true to what you believe and following your moral compass, even in the most difficult situations.

A New Perspective on Procrastination

There's no need to feel ashamed for your habits. Everyone procrastinates. It's almost a social norm to wait until the last minute to

do something you've had weeks or even months to complete. So is it possible for a student to succeed despite a poor work ethic? What I've learned is that, yes, it's okay to procrastinate every now and then—or, a lot of the time. It just depends on how you procrastinate.

First and foremost, if you're going to procrastinate, you should be doing something worthwhile. If not, then you probably deserve the consequences! When I was supposed to be studying for the ACT, I put it off and instead worked on my latest story. Even though I regretted my lack of preparation on test day, I found comfort in knowing that I was using my abilities in a different outlet, which provided different benefits. This is in no way meant to discourage you from studying, though!

Secondly, if you're going to procrastinate, you need to remind yourself that you'll have to get to work eventually. You need to gradually ease yourself into a "hustling mode." For example, you could leave your homework on top of your phone. When you reach for your phone in the morning, you'll get a handful of science homework instead of your Snapchat notifications. While this might not motivate you to start right away, you'll be reminded that you need to. Eventually, you have to face the reality that you can't slack forever. The sting is less harsh when you take baby steps.

Procrastination is often looked down upon, but if done correctly, it can actually be more effective than preparing ahead of time. After all, some people work better under pressure—that's the final important lesson high school taught me.

So, if you want to make high school the best years of your life, do the things you enjoy. But if you're like me and also want to have a good academic standing, those enjoyable activities may unfortunately have to be put

aside sometimes. That's why finding a balance is an important skill to master.

The Value of Solitude

No matter how many friends I have, at the end of the day, there's only one person who truly knows the real me. Many people think that being alone or introverted is an abnormal behavior, but it's actually one of the greatest assets you can have. If you can be alone, enjoy some quality time with yourself, and learn to befriend and love yourself for your faults, you are already ahead of most people in life. It's in your best interest to become your own best friend, because only then can you truly improve and become a better person.

Had I known this at the beginning of high school, my experience would have been completely different. I wouldn't have been as intimidated by all the new challenges. I would've been more excited about the variety of opportunities. I wouldn't have been so harsh on myself. I would've been more willing to learn.

With that being said, high school taught me a lot of things—academically, emotionally, socially, and realistically. If you're graduating in the next few months, take some time to reflect on what you've learned. You'd be surprised at what lessons you'll keep coming back to in your future endeavors.

VII. Life after High School

A Difficult Start and a New Path

Days turned into years. When I was in ninth grade, I was selected as an outstanding student in **Physics** and was sent to Pursat High School to take a competitive exam. During that time, I was surprised because the other students seemed to know everything before the test, and I thought their teachers had taught them everything, unlike ours. Despite this disadvantage, I

motivated myself to do my best (Zimmerman, 1990). In the end, I came in fourth place. They only chose three students to continue competing in the city, and while I was sad, I saw it as a valuable experience. Two months later, after returning from the competition, I contracted a **severe** disease: **Cerebrome Meningitis** (a brain infection). I was in bed alone and thought I was going to die, but my father took me to a nearby doctor. The doctor said that some parts of my brain were damaged, so I had to stop studying subjects that required too much intense thinking. Because of this problem, I stopped taking advanced math and physics out of fear of getting sick again. Instead, I focused mainly on English and a few other subjects until I finished twelfth grade.

Finding My Way in the City

I knew a lot of English by the time I finished high school, and I loved speaking it with foreign volunteers who worked there. One of them, a teacher from America named Bryan Peterson, created a writing competition. Ten students, including me, passed the test. We were given the opportunity to go to the state competition and received a certificate of appreciation and some gifts.

When I was in twelfth grade, I didn't think I would have money to pursue a bachelor's degree because my family was poor. After taking my national exam, I immediately went to Phnom Penh to look for a job. My English teacher motivated me to go, saying, "You must go and find a job there and save money for university." At that time, I only had 70,000 riels in my pocket. I spent 10,000 riels on a van ride to the city, leaving me with 60,000 riels. I was so afraid of running out of money that I didn't eat anything.

I walked and walked on the streets of the city, past the Independence Monument, looking for a job. I kept walking until I reached Toul Tompoung Market, where I

saw a poster that said a new book sales staff was needed. I went to the company and applied. They asked for two 4x6 photos, so I rushed to get them and spent about 8,000 riels. I was so concerned about my dwindling money that I decided to eat bread instead of rice for lunch. The company interviewed me in both Khmer and English, and I passed. I became a new bookseller in the city.

A Quick Learner

As a bookseller in the big city, I worked at a school selling many English and Khmer books around the city and in other provinces. On my first day, I didn't sell anything because I didn't know how to speak to people and persuade them to buy from me. I asked my sales supervisor, "How can I sell these books?" He said, "You have to be talkative and talk about the good points of the books." I responded, "How can I know the meaning of the books?" He told me, "You must read them." On the second day of selling, I was the only one who sold books, and my sales supervisor gave me a gift. All the other sellers started to ask me how they could sell products too.

When I found out that I had passed the national exam with a good grade, I was very happy, but I was also deeply concerned about whether I could continue my education at university. I heard about scholarships from a few universities and immediately asked for time off from work to take the entrance exams. I passed three different scholarship tests: one for English and two for Art. Specifically, I passed a singing test at UFA, an English literature exam at the Institute of New Khmer, and a test at the Student Development Institute. I was so happy that I would be able to go to university on a scholarship. I resigned from my bookselling job and decided to study English literature because I wanted to

become an English teacher and teach people in the city.

The Meaning of a Diploma

Life will be very different for you after you leave high school. It will begin with the immediate realization that you have made your first real transition from childhood to adulthood. The diploma you receive is your first award that has true meaning. While a driver's license can be included in a way, it is not the same as a high school diploma. Your diploma means that you have completed a series of courses in a formal educational setting and passed a major exam. It is a major stepping stone in life. Having this can lead to many other things in life and give you more freedom than those who don't have a high school diploma. It shows that you have the basic knowledge required by governments around the world. A diploma provides a solid foundation for you to stand on and move forward into other areas of life. Simply put, it is a good thing to have.

People look at those with a high school diploma as people who can be trusted to a certain point. This is true for many types of employment. It can literally get your foot in the door at a company, especially when compared to those without a diploma. It makes little difference what type of work you do; it helps. Once you have your diploma, a greater sense of freedom will be apparent. This freedom allows you to get a job at a company or to further your education at a college. If you choose this path, the same idea as with high school applies, but with more trust placed in you. Higher education is another form of training that can lead to better employment once you have a college degree. From here, there can be even higher levels of education with the same result.

Life after high school is what you make of it. It can be hard, or it can be a breeze. Life

is like a camera: focus on what's important, capture the good times, and develop from the negatives. The key is to first figure out what's important to you and what you want to achieve, then work hard and smart to get there.

VIII. University Life **A Hard First Year**

During my first year and first term of university, I felt that if I didn't have enough money, I wouldn't be able to study well because I needed a computer and money to buy books. Therefore, I decided to work at a small restaurant called Tamab's, selling soup. I worked from 2:00 PM until 11:30 PM, and sometimes as late as midnight. As a result, I didn't get enough sleep and didn't even have time to read books, which caused my studies to suffer a bit (Cheng, 2001).

One thing I remember is that the restaurant owners treated me poorly, almost like a slave. They were wealthy Chinese people who would curse at me. I never said anything because I was afraid of losing my job. Every morning, I had to get up early to go to the market to buy vegetables for the soup, then rush home to bathe and go to school. It was a difficult life, but I persevered because I had no other way to support my studies.

A Turning Point

I had a bike, but it was stolen, so every morning I had to walk the 8 kilometers from the restaurant (my workplace) to the university. One day, a teacher noticed I was sweating and asked, "Why are you so sweaty, Kassy?" Everyone laughed. I replied, "I walked here, teacher. My rented room is very far from here." She asked, "Why did you walk? Why didn't you...?" I explained, "I don't have a motorbike. I had a bike, but it was stolen." "Oh, dear," she replied. I sat down to study, feeling emotional as I compared myself to the

wealthy students who seemed happy all the time. They ate plenty of food, but I had nothing to eat because I didn't have enough money. When it was time to go home, a kind friend would sometimes give me a ride.

This routine became exhausting. I decided to ask the monks if I could stay in the pagoda and quit my job at the restaurant. The owners treated me like a slave, never used kind words, and sometimes cursed at me. It hurt when they cursed me. I tried my best to work hard, but they were never positive about me.

Life at the Pagoda

I asked the monk if I could stay in the pagoda temporarily. He was initially hesitant, but he saw my hard work and desire to learn and wanted to help me, so he agreed to let me stay. At the pagoda, I always cleaned the Buddha statue, raked the temple grounds, and watered the flowers. When the monks learned that my bike had been stolen and that I was walking to school every day, they pooled their money and bought me a new one. I was so happy because I no longer had to waste time walking. I helped the monks cook in the morning before going to school. I would stay at school during lunchtime, and sometimes I still had nothing to eat because I had no money.

One day, I got an "A" on my English test. The school had a program that promoted students with good grades to become English teachers at the school.

Building a Career

Two months later, I applied for an English teacher position at the Student Development Institute. I passed the initial screening and the interview. I didn't earn much at first because it was my first time being employed as a professional teacher in the city, but it was a bit competitive to get the job.

The people at the pagoda spoke Japanese because Japanese visitors often came to Ounalom Pagoda. While living there, I listened to Japanese conversations almost every day and began to learn the language (Woollett, 1986). I ate Japanese food, but it wasn't as delicious as Khmer food. I picked up some Japanese just by listening, and I even had a small Japanese class there, though I didn't learn a lot from it.

Two years later, after teaching at the Student Development Institute, I moved to a better job where I earned enough to support myself. I remembered that as a freshman, I had needed a computer but didn't have the money for one, so I was trying to save up. My mother had said, "Son, if you want to buy a computer for your university studies, you can buy it and I will pay for you." I had replied, "I don't want to spend your money, Mum." By this time, I was earning a salary from my new job and decided to buy the computer myself. I felt that if I didn't have one, I couldn't learn as well as my peers, who were from wealthy families and had money for everything.

Becoming Independent

I decided to stop living at the pagoda because I wanted to be a role model for other students. The pagoda's rule is that students must leave after finishing their bachelor's degree. Many students continued to live there, but I wanted to set an example for others. The monks didn't want me to leave early, but I felt I had to because I wanted to be an independent man and succeed on my own. I found a small room to rent and lived alone, as I had very little money. Life was very difficult and lonely at this time. I didn't even have enough food because I was spending my money on rent. Despite all this, I tried my best to survive and overcome those difficulties.

Right after finishing my bachelor's degree, I heard about a scholarship opportunity from the University of Cambodia for a Master's program through an international exam track. I went there to ask for more information. It was known to be very difficult to get a full scholarship to study for free, and I didn't think I would be able to get it because there were so many requirements. I kept trying my best. I read at least two books a day to prepare for the exam, which gave me many ideas. Finally, I was awarded a 100% scholarship for the master's program. Truthfully, I wouldn't have been able to afford it if I had to pay, as a master's program is very expensive.

I graduated with a Master's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language in 2016. Then, I was given another opportunity to pursue a Ph.D. in Educational Sciences at the University of Cambodia. It was not easy to be awarded a fully-funded scholarship, and I had to be well-prepared and organized with a lot of things to get done.

My journey—from a struggling student to a master's graduate and now a Ph.D. candidate—has led me to a leadership role that I am truly passionate about. Today, I proudly serve as the **senior English vice-principal** at a private school in Cambodia. I use the lessons I learned from my own life to guide my students. I am a fierce advocate for those who face adversity, believing that every student, regardless of their background, deserves the opportunity to succeed. I make sure our school's English program provides not just strong language skills, but also encourages critical thinking and a love for reading. My experiences have taught me that true education goes beyond books and grades; it's about character, resilience, and the relentless pursuit of your dreams.

XI.What a sad day ever!

My mother was suffering from a serious illness that she never told me about, which made me doubly sad when I found out. She told my relatives and siblings to sell our land to help me finish my university studies. This was a complete change from the past. Before, she had not wanted me to go to university, and she wanted me to earn money by working for Chinese people, like others in our village.

At the time, she was close to death, and I was taking my final exams. She called me and said, "I'm okay, son. Please try to study," and she cried on the phone. I was so afraid. She said, "If you don't have enough money, please sell our land to finish your studies, son." I was so surprised to hear her say that. She told me, "Please don't come back home. I'm okay now. I don't have any problems." In reality, she was lying; she knew she was going to die.

As soon as I finished my exam, my brother called and said, "Mother is dying. She's waiting for you to come home." I rushed to take a taxi home. When I arrived, she couldn't speak, and her body was swollen from a condition called Nephrotic Syndrome (the opposite of diabetes). I cried so hard and decided to take her to the city to ask the doctors at Samdech Ove Hospital to treat her. The doctors told me she had a very serious problem with her kidneys and couldn't pass urine, and that they couldn't cure her.

So, I transferred her to Khmer-Soviet Hospital. There, I didn't have to pay because I had a poor family card from my village. The doctors didn't seem helpful. I suspected they might have been looking for a bribe. One day, I slept in a corner by the hospital gate, waiting for my mother to wake up. She saw me and tried to tell me to study, but she couldn't open her mouth. Two days later, some doctors came in. They looked professional and put a tube in her mouth to

help her get rid of phlegm. Then she started to convulse. The doctors tried to help her, but she had already died.

Everyone cried, and I cried so hard. I had nothing to say; I could only think about the Buddha. She never knew that I had received a free scholarship for my master's degree or that I had gotten a good job as an English teacher. I am so sorry I didn't tell her that I was earning a much better salary. She had been waiting to see if my studies would lead to success. In the end, she died without seeing my success. "I'm so sorry, Mother," I said to myself, feeling so alone. My family started taking her home, all of us in tears. When we got home, I fainted and lost consciousness. My grandmother called a local doctor to treat me. After losing my mother, I felt powerless. The only thing I could do was try to think about the Buddha's Dharma Talks. I couldn't believe that the doctors at Khmer-Soviet Hospital couldn't cure my mother. I had trusted that hospital. In the end, it felt like even God couldn't save her.

X.Being as a teacher educator**A First-Grade Teacher's Reflection**

Here I am. I'm okay. I am a survivor.

I go to work every day with a smile on my face and hope for the children I teach. I am the third teacher for these first-graders, and I'm coming in at the end of the school year. Yes, I often feel stress bearing down on me, but I am surviving. My alarm wakes me up at the crack of dawn each day. I stumble out of bed, make my tea, put on my teacher's suit of armor and extra-warm heart, and go to work ready to face another day.

I'm not asking these children to love me with all their hearts. I know these transitions have been terribly hard on them. I know many of them do not trust me completely. That's okay. I try my best every day to see the best in each of them. And let me tell you,

it is not always easy with this class; there are some tough kids.

I am constantly reflecting on my practice, my behavior management routines, and the tone I am setting in the classroom. I am always open to advice and have actively sought guidance from my teaching assistant, the reading specialist, the special education teacher, and the other teachers on my grade level, just to name a few. Whenever I feel like I'm falling, a large, soft hammock of support floats up to catch me. I am so lucky to be working in such a collaborative, accommodating, and caring environment.

Day in and day out, my goal is to make a child smile, feel good about their work, use kind words with a friend, or feel inspired by a book. I yearn for student engagement, for revelations, for excitement about learning. I try to foster a caring and empathetic classroom community. That is hard to do as the third teacher, as the children already feel jarred and rattled.

I can't imagine if my own first-grade teacher had left and I had been left to face not one, but two different teachers. First grade was a vulnerable year for me, one in which I was consumed by irrational fears. It was my first-grade teacher's keen sensitivity and empathy that led her to recommend a wonderful child psychologist to my parents, which helped me tremendously. She looked and acted like my own real-life fairy godmother. Now I think of the students under my careful watch. I know some of them have rough home lives. I feel for them with all my heart. I hope we can finish this year together feeling like we've all grown. I know I will. This job has been the best preparation for my official first year of teaching that I could ever ask for.

But more importantly, I hope the kids get something out of this as well. Sure, they'll finish the year an inch or two taller and with fewer baby teeth, but they will also have been through the unique process of adapting

to change—something that is difficult at any age, but especially at the tender ages of six and seven. I don't expect these kids to remember my name in 10 years, but I hope they remember that they are special and that they have never been forgotten.

An Experienced Teacher's Reflection

I have had many experiences in my teaching career. I went to different schools, teaching English to young children, teenagers, adults, and even university students. I love to share ideas with people. Sometimes it gets complicated, but I love doing it because education is my life. The first school where I practiced my English was You Can School. A year later, I moved to CIA First International School to be a teaching assistant for the foreign teachers. I realized I needed to upgrade my skills, so I worked at Camfirst and Sovannaphumi schools. I later quit to experience teaching different types of students and applied to teach at AiiLC. I think being an English teacher is very meaningful because I have gained so many valuable experiences. "That's life," I said to myself, feeling lonely.

Working as a teacher has its good and bad sides. If we teach students well, we feel we're doing a good job. If we don't, and the students learn nothing, we have to be responsible. Some parents don't respect teachers and look down on the profession. They always say their children are smart because of their own genes, not because of the school or the teachers. There's nothing to say about this. It's a dark part of a life that is full of flavors, I said. Some students like me and some don't; you can't please everyone. But because I love education and sharing with people, I was always happy with what I did. I never felt truly upset, just a little hurt, and the feeling would pass quickly (Herman & Marlowe, 2005).

I have spent most of my life encouraging children to love education and to learn. I used to train my students for public speaking contests, and they would win first and second place. Moreover, I inspired them to take part in debate competitions, and they succeeded, winning the second-place trophy. I was so surprised at the time that I could contribute to their success. I felt lucky to be a part of their lives. As a teacher, I always promise myself to provide all children with true resources and knowledge. For example, I often spent extra time with them, holding training sessions even on holidays or my days off, because I truly wanted them to succeed in their academic lives.

XI.Discussion

Learning a new language is a complex, time-intensive task that requires dedication, persistence, and hard work. As you've discovered, the effort is well worth it.

Learning another language is always beneficial for personal development and for becoming a part of the international community. When you learn another language, you are actively trying to communicate with people from various parts of the world.

After working hard to learn English, I feel more confident talking to foreigners and have started making more friends from around the world. I believe that engaging with other people's perspectives enables you to gain a greater understanding of your own culture and a broader sense of tolerance.

I took this idea to heart. I had always wanted to learn English since it fascinated me as a child, and I decided to finally pursue it. It took me about 30 weeks, along with a lot of patience and self-belief, to finally express my thoughts in the beautiful words of English. I felt an unadulterated joy, knowing that through perseverance and a strong will, I had realized a childhood dream.

Learning a new language allows us to expand our worldview and gain a fresh perspective on people, cultures, backgrounds, places, and most importantly, life. I feel that it gave me the chance to learn on a deep level.

I don't think my life simply changed; in fact, I have a brand new life. When you learn a new language, you learn an entire culture. You become open to reading books, articles, and watching movies in that language. Additionally, if you have the opportunity to engage with an online community using the new language, you will meet new people who will share their traditions and personal goals with you. English is not my first language, and I suffered while trying to learn it on my own, and I'm still learning. Yet, I no longer feel like an outsider, but rather someone who can function and interact with others as part of the culture. I feel more accepted and have a greater sense of fulfillment. It also gave me a better perspective and a greater sense of understanding for others who are learning a new language, and it provided me a way to teach others by incorporating their native language.

I believe that when a learner studies a foreign language and pays attention to things like register, levels of formality, and expressions, and actively practices them in written form, the benefits will also be seen in their speaking, and vice versa. Ultimately, I would argue that the more you study a foreign language, the more you understand about your own native language—its rules, its linguistic shifts, and so on.

My professional life has been a long and challenging road, but one I am incredibly proud of. I began my working life doing manual labor, first as a junk man and later as a construction worker. I then moved on to jobs as a shop waiter and a bookseller, each one teaching me valuable lessons about hard work and human connection. These

experiences were the foundation for my ultimate calling as a teacher, a role where I discovered my passion for education. Today, I am honored to be the Senior Vice School Principal, a position that allows me to use everything I've learned to guide both students and staff. My journey proves that where you start doesn't determine where you finish; with perseverance, every experience can be a stepping stone to a greater purpose. My path through higher education was not paved with wealth, but with hard work and determination. I didn't have the money to pay for school, so my only option was to rely on my own abilities. I dedicated myself to studying and preparing for every scholarship exam, knowing that each test was a gateway to my future. It was this skill, my talent for earning scholarships, that allowed me to continue my education and eventually become a PhD candidate. My journey proves that financial status does not have to be a barrier; with enough perseverance and a belief in your own abilities, you can open doors that money cannot.

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