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Pre Essay Assignment 1

Ever since a young age , I always asked myself , Do I really need to learn two languages at the same time? My family’s main language is spanish , at a young age spanish was introduced to me and I learned to read and write in spanish . Spanish has been a part of my life and my household most likely since before I was even born. I used to think speaking two languages as very difficult , but now I know that it is nothing but a blessing to be able to speak both English and Spanish.

As I started to get older I was introduced to english in my early elementary years. Trying to learn a completely different language with no help from your own parents made it a lot more difficult for me. I had to try my best to adapt to two languages at school and at home. Reading Amy Tan’s article made me feel a connection with her. As what Amy Tan , author of the text “Mother Tongue” explains , “ Lately, I've been giving more thought to the kind of English my mother speaks. Like others, I have described it to people as ‘broken’ or ‘fractured’ English” (2). Tan and her mother were humiliated at restaurants and grocery stores just for having what is considered “broken english”. I grew up protecting my mother in exact situations, Her broken english would cause people to not give her good customer service or neglected to understand her or just plainly ignored her. This would cause my blood to boil and I would always respond for her.

A transformative moment in my life that shifted my view on the world was at a chinese grocery store close to home back in 2015. I was grocery shopping with my mother one day and as were shopping for fresh fish I decided to use the restroom before helping my mom ask for her fish. As I went to the restroom, my mother decided to try and ask for her fish on her own. As she was trying to explain to the women what kind of fish she wanted , the woman started raising her voice at my mother. As I got to my mother , I realized the woman screaming at her. I have a really short temper and snapped at the woman without even feeling the need to ask her what was going on. As words were being yelled at each other the manager decided to intervene. She asked what was going on and we explained our part of the situation and so did they. The manager then explained both sides of the story and both my mother and the women were yelling at each other because they both thought they were talking mess about each others ‘broken’ english. They were both feeling the same exact way. This taught me a lesson , This taught me to ask questions before reacting violently and has completely changed my view on the world as it made me realize that my mother is not the only person with this adversity.

Although my bilingual background has given my own unique identity , it has also affected my composition in my writing and has limited my vocabulary. Once I began High School , I realized how much my english was “broken”. I realized I could not understand certain words that english speaking students were all able to understand. The lack of focus on just one language , caused me to not be at the same level of english comprehension as my classmates. It took a little more time with my professors in order to understand material that others had no problem understanding , But I learned and conquered it. I now work as an RDA at Petaluma Health Center and I can not express how much my bilingual status has helped me. It has helped from getting the job to getting higher pay than other coworkers just for being able to speak another language.

Learning two languages while growing up was a struggle. It caused problems for me even when I was a teen in High School. But through all the struggles with my mother , I was able to find motivation to learn two languages for the sake of my family. I now can not thank my parents enough for forcing me to learn the language that has been in my family for generations. Spanish has helped me dramatically with School , work and human interactions and I will always use it for my own good.