

Ayleen J. Villacres

Professor Beverley Crawford-Locke

College Writing 1

20 February 2023

My Literacy Narrative

I used to imagine, since the first time my dad moved to the United States, how people learn another language; how people born in the USA know English. Are they born with language? The first time I came here, the only phrase that I learned from my aunt was “excuse me”, and I only knew this because I pushed a man. Ever since my first day in the United States, my everyday thought was, “Am I going to be able to learn English one day? Will I live there one day and feel good without my language? Am I going to be able to speak, read, write, and understand as “Americans” do?”. I never realized how important it is to learn as many languages as you can until I became the new translator in my family, and I had to protect my dad and mom from people who wanted to treat them differently because they did not know English. I never realized that my entire life was going to depend on a different language that I hated so much.

My first time in New York City was incredible, I visited amazing places, and I loved the city, but not the language. I did not know that my life was going to be here, until 9th grade. My experience with a different language started in Ecuador, during my childhood. I had an English course, in which you learn basic stuff: how do you say hello, family members, numbers, and how to write some sentences in English, for me it was the worst class. I considered that learning another language was not important and that it was a waste of time. I passed the class in 7th grade but in 8th grade, I did not pass so I had to take summer school, but I had to take extra classes in a different place so I could pass 8th grade. After that, although I did pass and I still

hated it so much that I could not find the reason for learning English. I was still taking extra classes after school and somehow I started to like it and it become easy.

My entire life changed when I decided to live with my dad in the USA, of course, my mom motivated me because the big deal for her was “If you go now when you are 13 years you will be able to learn English”. I was scared, about how I was going to speak to my teacher, how I was going to communicate with my school, and of course, the hard question was “How i was going to understand my classes, do my homework and my tests?”. I had to use google Translate so many times. I started reading books to learn vocabulary. I took extra classes after school to improve my speaking. My teachers helped a lot, they gave me chances to do my tests with google Translate. I also got tutoring for all of my courses. The hard part was speaking, I used to confuse with my ideas but after a time I could speak normally and understand better.

I started changing my mind about learning another language. I met people from others countries, and some of them were like me, trying to learn English without knowing anything. I became better and better. I went to a summer camp, and this radically changed my thought about “is worth it to learn a language?”. In my summer camp, nobody spoke Spanish. I went to a house with no Hispanic people, so I had to talk English and I did it. I saw how much I improved and how worth it was to learn English. I feel proud about it. Now I was able to help my parents with the language. Even when I am working, I am able to help other people with the language by translating them and letting them express what they need. This language showed me a new reality, and it changed how I used to think. I am hundred percent that learning a language is worth it.

I learned from saying “excuse me”, and now being able to communicate with people. I see all the opportunities that this language get me. Learning something different, the change of

what you are used to, can be hard, and sometimes seen as impossible, but If I realized how learning English changed. I would do it again. After years of fighting that learning English was a waste of time in my life, I see how this in my life brought me into the person that I am now. You can start from knowing nothing when you learn a language but after time you will speak with it and see that learning is the most incredible thing. I want to learn more languages now to be able to communicate more with the world.