

40. Studying English

Few people in the world are disturbed over English. Most of them readily admit that knowing how to communicate in English is one of the most important professional qualifications. And many of them give up their free time and their hard-earned cash to improve their skill. But few of them know how to go about it effectively.

On the one hand, the linguistic structures of each country dialect and English are very different, and so a keen understanding of grammar is thought necessary in acquiring the other language. On the other hand, native speakers don't often speak well in a grammatical sense, but they certainly can communicate their ideas and feelings very adequately. In fact, the grammar oriented study that most people, who is studying English like Japanese, undergo at school doesn't much help them to talk and listen in real life. It is even the sad truth that, despite a large vocabulary and deep grammatical knowledge, most of them does not write in English very well, either.

The lack of English skill is often cited as an impediment to the Korean economic advance, since most of the world does its business in that language. Some people have suggested that there is only one way to solve the problem: make English proficiency the most important part of university entrance exams. After all, students and their parents will do whatever it takes to get a degree from a top-class school. But other people (perhaps in jest) insist that the best way to learn English is to marry an American and move to the States.

Comprehension

1. What is the dilemma of studying English, discusses in this essay?
2. Does the writer regard grammar as being of primary or secondary importance?
3. Name the two solutions to the problem suggested by the essay.



Your opinion

1. Why do you study English?
2. How long have you studied English?
3. What is the most difficult thing in your English studies?
4. What do you think is the best way to study English?
5. Have you ever used an English-English dictionary?
6. What is the difference between using an English-English dictionary and an English-Japanese one?
7. What do you think about current English teaching methods in middle and high school?
8. Have you ever studied any other foreign language? What is the difference between it and English?
9. Do you think its okay to teach English in elementary school?
10. Do you read English newspapers?
11. Have you ever tried to watch programs on English Channel?
12. Which do you think is more difficult, speaking or writing English?
13. Have you ever written a letter or a diary in English?

