

Sloane Wang, Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant in Chinese Flagship Program

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“Learning a language empowers you to build a new perspective on the world. When you learn a language, you are also getting to know the culture and people who are shaping the language. The whole experience will make you a global citizen with compassion and cultural awareness, and that opens many doors for you in surprising ways.”

Sloane Wang is a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant from Taipei, Taiwan. She majored in journalism at Fu Jen Catholic University. During university, she began her career working as a contributing editor for international news. She has also worked in PR and communications positions, and she has extensive experience working in journalism.

Wang began studying English at the age of 5 in first grade. In Taiwan, learning English is not an option—it is a requirement. As she got older, Wang became more motivated and ambitious to become a better English speaker. Now, she says, “I continue learning English, because it gives me a front-row opportunity to meet and communicate with people from all sorts of backgrounds and cultures.”

Wang decided to pursue a Fulbright grant and come to the United States because she believes there are hidden details about every country that you cannot truly understand until you experience them first-hand. Through her journalism experience, she considered herself knowledgeable about the culture and politics of the United States, but she had never been here. Additionally, she says, “It gives me an opportunity to bring the unique stories, cultures, and language from Taiwan that go beyond the textbook to the students here.”

In her opinion, the most difficult part of learning any language is knowing and accepting that, no matter how high your proficiency is, you will still make mistakes. She says, “It makes learning English really difficult for me. It can be exhausting, and it can kill your confidence.”

For those who are learning a language, it may be encouraging to know that Wang has been learning English for almost twenty years and still makes mistakes daily. She says, “After learning English for almost two decades, I still stumble to find the right word and correct myself when I speak. I am not able to write with freedom and fluidity in the way I write in Chinese. All of this gives me insane insecurity that I am always not good enough.” To remedy this insecurity, she gives herself a pep talk every day. She tells herself, “In this never-ending learning journey, you will embrace the fact that you are going to make mistakes, and you deserve to feel frustrated, but you will keep your head up the next day.” She highly recommends this strategy.

Her advice to those learning a language is, “Don’t hesitate! It’s never too late. Learning a language is indeed scary but incredibly rewarding. Be curious about the culture of the language you are learning - watch the movies, listen to the songs, make the traditional food. Finding your connections to the culture will keep you excited and support you through the moments you almost want to give up.” She strongly encourages everyone to pursue studying a language and firmly believes they will gain useful skills and qualities through it.

