People born outside of the United States tend to have difficulty with learning English. Of course, they are very proficient in their own language due to the fact they are born and raised there. However, there are some people who difficulty with their foreign language when they are born in the United States. To clarify, a foreign family moved in the US, and their child is born in the US who have difficulty with their own foreign language. That person is me.

I was born in Queens, New York. My parents are from Bangladesh. They moved to the United States in 1999. When I was 5 years old, my parents tried to teach me Bengali language (Bangla). This will help me communicate with my parents more, since their English is poor. However, I am more interested in English instead of learning my own language.

Now as I get older, I’ve learned both English and Bangla. However, my proficiency in Bangla is not good. Now that’s something that I’m not proud of. My cousins who are also born in New York are proficient in Bangla. Well, not like they are perfect in Bangla, but they are above average in speaking. I’m embarrassed to say that I’m the only one who is poor in speaking Bangla. Here’s why.

One of my family members came to my house. This is the first time I’ve seen him since I don’t know him very well. He started communicating with me. Every time he asked a question, I answered with broken Bangla. He noticed my broken Bangla that he threw a little shade at me for not understanding my own language. This hurt me a lot because of one person making fun of my speaking in Bangla.

Another time I get embarrassed is when I went to a Bengali event my parents forced me to go with them. They forced me to go because I must learn more about Bengali culture. Now at first, I really didn’t want to go, due to my laziness. However, I really enjoyed the event. That is, until this part shows up.

Since I’m a kid, I am supposed to go in the kids’ section, where we were supposed to be sitting in a circle. We were supposed to talk about ourselves in Bangla and why we are proud to be a Bengali. When it’s my turn, guess what I responded in. I responded in poor Bangla. Some of the children start to snicker, others try to make fun of me by whispering.

So yeah, that’s my experience with my foreign language. I get really insecure with speaking my own language with other Bengali speakers. However, my experience in speaking Bangla improved because of a program I went to.

My parents knew I have trouble speaking Bangla. So, they enrolled me for a program at New York City public library.

This program specializes in teaching not only Bangla but learning more about Bangladesh as a whole.

When I first went to the program, I saw some Bengali students and others from different nationalities. I met my teacher, Mrs. Rahman. She seemed nice and a good teacher.

My first lesson is to memorize Bengali alphabet. This is a piece of cake for me since I like to memorize. Now that hard part is, I have to write some words in Bengali. You heard me, I mean “write” not speak. It’s really tricky to write some Bangla words I at least know of. As days go by, I got the gist of writing.

Now why would I write Bangla when my problem is that I can’t speak Bangla very well. Well actually, writing in Bangla helped me memorize the words more. I even memorized some unfamiliar Bengali words that translates to familiar English words.

Now that I finished the program, I am now able to speak confidently to my parents in my foreign language. Thanks to Mrs. Rahman, I am now above average in speaking Bangla.