

Fourteen years ago, I started as a Korean language instructor.

I was living in North Carolina near the Fort Bragg area,

and then I was looking for a job that I can use my language skills.

Then, you know, within the Korean community,

I was told that, hey, there's a schoolhouse,

they're looking for language instructors.

So I just walked into the school house and dropped my resume

and a couple of days later,

I got a call for an interview following week.

I started as a facilitator teaching students Korean language and culture.

And when I moved to Virginia,

I was hired by Booz Allen Hamilton.

It is a big consulting firm, supporting various different government clients.

I found this specific position because I was involved in the Korean community.

A lot of a Korean, I guess, fellow friends

let me know about the position and that led me to drop my resume off at the schoolhouse.

For my first position, it was teaching adults Korean language and culture.

For that, I spent a lot of time preparing materials, building curriculums.

Then when I was hired by Booz Allen Hamilton,

with the firm's benefit, I was able to get my Master's in Instructional Design.

Then I was also able to get different business certifications,

so that helped me to become, I guess, project manager,
more consultant that could utilize language skills for different clients.

I use my language skillset in my job in two different ways.

Right now, I'm supporting three different clients,

but two clients that I'm supporting with my Korean language skillset.

And one client, I teach high ranking officers Korean language and culture.

And the other project is I conduct a quality assurance.

When all the translators are done with their translation,

I look over their documents and make sure all the translation is good to go.

Managing three different clients,

three different work in different time zones can be quite hectic.

Usually, I start my day around 6:00 AM.

First thing that I do is I check my calendar to make sure that I know the time of
the meetings

because it changes every day.

After that, I send out emails to my teammates

and I get to my really important tasks depending on the priorities of the work.

One of the projects that I support, I play a project manager role,

and I work with different heritage speakers.

What they do is that they bring really unique perspectives when we have to solve
the problems.

So they play a really critical bridge role between American culture and in their
background,

you know, their heritage culture.

We bring different perspectives, different ideas,

so I think working with them actually makes my job more fun and much easier.

And then I think it brings really good value to the client.

My first job working as a language instructor,

I had to work with many different instructors from many different countries

that helped me to develop the cultural intelligence and sensitivity

and I believe that it's really, really critical skill

and also knowledge working in a really professional environment.

And right now, the firm that I'm working for,

I was able to get my master's

and then I was able to get a lot of different businesses certifications

that absolutely helped my personal and professional growth.

I feel very fortunate that I was able to get into supporting the government client.

Working for the government sector is that kind of gives me sense of belonging

to the United States in a way

because I came here as a foreigner.

Now, I'm an American and working for the government absolutely helps me

to develop the belonging to the country.

I believe that I can and also same time I should help the Korean community,

not just the Korean language community,

just as a whole heritage and native speaker community

because I know what they're facing day to day.

I know sometimes they have to face challenges because we look different, because we have accents, and we have this sense of, it's so hard to find a job, it's so hard to settle here in the country.

So, I feel like I as a person

I guess, had it, found a job and found a passion, I feel in a way obligated to help them.

So having an interview, participating in interview like this is one way.

And maybe someday, I will have my own firm, can hire a lot of heritage and native speakers.

My advice to fellow native speakers and heritage speakers:

Well, number one, do not undervalue yourself.

And number two, do not give up.

Just continue to try, continue to, you know, apply, send your resumes.

And then at the same time also, when you're looking for jobs,

you don't have to look for translation job,

you don't have to look for interpretation job.

There are so many other jobs that are requiring language skills.

So when you look for jobs broaden your, I guess, search.

You'll be surprised so many other jobs are available that requires your language skillset.