

ICLT#6: Interview with Tyler (Transcription)

The Interview with Tyler

Me: I would start with the more general questions, like you had like ...these different experiences teaching in these three different continents recently in Europe; Poland, Africa and then Korea. So before I start kind of asking some of the questions... I'd like kind of narrow down my ... I'd like to If you can tell me like how was this past experience different. Especially me as from a non-dominant culture ... like when you compare a Mauritanian outsider to an American outsider the adjective "American" has more of a power ... saying ... when you look at a Mauritanian or someone else. I just like you to... How does it feel being an American, a teacher ... or whatever in these different contexts?

Tyler: Ahh ... yeah. Going to South Korea ahh .. it was interesting because a lot of time I felt sort of **handed** by aaam Koreans ... like my Korean boss, some Koreans friends, teachers that worked at the school as well ... as sort of like "Oh this is the American friend" , "this is the American working at our school" and you must do this or this and going out sort of ... I've ... I had several instances of going out with a friend or two and to a restaurant or bar to have something and you know some Korean who want to show off their English or something come over and start talking to us and you know invite us here or there if we went with them it would be like ... you got the impression that like **you are being shown off** sort of or they're like using you as sort of like **status symbol** sort of ... like "oh look at me I have an American friend and I can speak English, look at us we are speaking English" so part of it ... eah I mean there was encounters ... tended to feel kind of superficial and I mean there were fun sometimes but also kind of ahh I dunno "**irritating**"!! Aam getting that sort of **attention** but I did have you know

like amh some of these teachers at the school that I worked with I got to be very good friends with and that dynamic didn't ... like disappeared ... you know it wasn't so **superficial** as actually **friends** with these people ... and it was different than I mean occasionally maybe sometimes I feel like they were sort of showing me off but it was not so extreme like that ... but typically I mean I didn't get a lot of ... like attention on the streets ... I wasn't living in a big city where there were a ton of foreigners ... I mean ... the city I was living in was kind of smaller by South Korean standards but it wasn't the sort of thing where you walked up down the street and see foreigners here and there but I was kind of surprised I **didn't get that much attention or harassment** or anything on the street I think it is maybe because of the culture there **people are a little more reserved**.

Teaching in **Ethiopia** was sort of like the ... was different in a lot of ways ... first town I was living in was a town of 2000 people way in the South of southwest of Ethiopia... tiny tiny town and I was the only white person for like hundreds of miles around. So (LAUGHING) it's like amh I got a lot (emphasized) of attention and particularly because it was a small town you know everybody "Hey" you know shouting at me at first and like initially a **lot of harassment** like particularly when I go back to the capital a lot of harassment and in my town initially a lot of harassment **until** I like I **was actually able to introduce myself to everybody** and work my way around So people would shout my name instead it was kind of interesting like but also a little bit like isolating I didn't feel initially it was something hostile but at the same time you're reminded all the time that you are different amh and definitely amh a weird sense of liked at the same time being handled by people who are responsible for looking out for you like my counterpart, my interactor being sort of like handled at certain points but also feeling very much a part in certain context like being invited over for amh like a holiday dinner or something aaah

and like I got **pretty good with the language** but actually the town I was living in they spoke a **different language** and the language I learned and often times mixed all together in sort of like salad sort of (laughing) so like if you are invited over, let's say, a holiday dinner you wanna go and you wanna be aaah you know ... because it is a really a cool thing to do wanting to be able to do it every second gave me a life but sometimes it would end up with me just sort of sitting there on a bench ---- feeling like I've been shown off and not being able to understand *anything* that is going on around me like I catch words and phrases and that every once in a while I feel like somebody pokes you like "monkey dance, dance monkey!" you sort of "hey! I am not your monkey and don't wanna dance" and that would sort of sour things sometimes eventhough I like ahh and I feel bad about being sour about it because it's like you know this is very unique experience and they are inviting me to their home and you wanna be a nice person but sometimes it cut me a little bit like isolating me and then when I moved to another town it was a bigger town and aaah that was ... it was sort of at that point that were like ... it was big enough that like not everybody knew me at all I was still the stranger and isolated and I ended up getting a lot more harassment and I am just walking around the street getting in restaurants or whatever ... like you are saying .. and people would shout at me amm so that **was really isolating** but amm like within the context of just another person like when I was working with a co-teacher working with another teacher amm ... the director. You know a lot of these things that ... these experiences that ... I had with the society at large but disappear it just not me or the other person so you know it was kind of interesting I mean it was an interesting dynamic moving from a small town to larger town amm you know individual interaction with community at large.