**TESOL ESSAY: Second Language Acquisition Assignment**

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I have studied English since I was 9. That time, studying English was not a sensation unlike these days. The world is getting globalized and bonded, it is essential to speak English for sure. However Korea, the EFL country, has some limits to learn this language naturally. Korean copied many ways from Japan and it did not fit to Koreans. Koreans studied too much grammar rules and just read paragraph. That was all. So if Koreans went abroad and needed to speak English, they became dumb people although they had studied it for several years. This was the reality.

When I was a middle and high school student, I studied English in academies. I learned it in schools but it did not help me much. Although the way I learned English in academies was not perfect but I appreciate some of it. As I wrote, the system of learning English was focused on receptive skills, so I had to study it in this ways. All teachers who I had ever met were explainers and they had traditional teaching ways. They were all centered and put much information into the students. I memorized hundreds of thousands of words without understanding, even I did not know about the Phonics rules. For me, it was really tough to write the correct spellings. I read a lot of books for preparing exams without understanding. I hated studying English and also I could not understand why there was a time limit to answer the English questions in exams. But just one thing that I appreciate in this way was learning grammar rules. As a foreigner, it is not easy to learn foreign language’s rules but I think it was good to fit with the traditional teaching ways and explainers. I understood a lot and the teachers repeated these many times. At first, when I listened it without understanding but time went by, it became mine finally. So until now, when I write something, I did not take some mistakes especially grammar parts at least.

It was the time when I had trip to Guam with my family, I realized that my English, which I spent many years for that, was just nothing. It was shame on me because I could not understand what foreigners said and I also could not express what I thought and wanted. It was not a language but just knowledge which nobody can utilize. My parents were shocked as well. My father was very disappointed at me because he always thought I was the brilliant student in academies. And also the tuition fees of academies were kind of expensive so he expected too much from me. He treated me as a translator but I was not qualified. I felt shame also. I could not believe this situation. How come I could not speak out at all? I had studied for many years and got high scores also. What was wrong with me?

After I experienced foreign life; I lived in the Philippines for 3.5 years, finally I got the message. I had learned a dead language which I had never used. When I learned something during the class in the Philippines, I used it right away. And I would never forget what I used in conversation with my foreign friends. I enjoyed learning English because I could take advantage using it. The Philippines is an ESL country so I was exposed in English world no matter where I went.

When I was in the Philippines, my mind was not an adult learner. I mean I did not have a clear goal to learn English, did not know why I should learn it. All in all, I was not a goal oriented learner. I had no choice but had to follow my father’s decision to go abroad.

The time that I was a freshman in college, everything was completely different; teaching systems, the attitude of each students and professors, even exam forms.

In Korea, if professors ask some questions, only few students answer it. Lots of students usually hesitate to answer it. They also feel shy if the answer which they say is wrong or not. However in the Philippines, almost students want to answer or say something even though they are not sure if the answer is correct or wrong. In college, professors wanted me to talk and say something in front of classmates and at that time, I wanted to go home. I did not enjoy answering questions. It was very tough to me being in the modern style classes. But in this style, students express their own ideas without boundaries so I could know what they thought and how they felt unlike Koreans. Korean students are obsessed to say and learn what is answered in their textbooks so they cannot express liberal ideas.

To comprehend topics, professors showed lots of visual films to students. I remember some video clips until now. As a foreigner like me, it helped me to understand lectures a lot easier. We had many group projects in college as well. Students discussed topics together in groups and cooperated learning. But it was not effective to me because I could not speak English fluently so I just sat down and listened what other group members said. I had nothing to say and other members did not let me talk neither so I felt I was wasting time there. But if I were a Filipino, it would help me a lot and I would not forget the topics which we discussed.

After 3.5years, I finally came back to Korea and now I am an English teacher. Amazingly the Korean education systems have changed a lot since I was in the Philippines. People are focusing more on productive skills such as speaking and writing. Korean students should learn how to express their thinking and ideas and it is not easy for students and teachers both. Koreans were used to speaking Korean, not English and we know the best way to learn foreign languages is going abroad and being exposed them to foreign language world.

As a teacher, I let my students practice and speak out a lot and utilize it. It is ok making kind of nonsense sentences so that what they have learned would remain longer. Most of my students are aged 8 to 17. I usually teach them starting Phonology using flash cards. Students can touch it and say pronunciation of each alphabet and make each words starting with it. They think it is a playing not studying so they participate much with me. I am a teacher but I also join them as an involver and it really works. Of course I had a hard time teaching them at first. When I explained something, I could not understand and get bored. Having classroom activities is great if the students are young. I have a plan to do another activity like charades or miming.

I love my job and feel fulfillment from my students. Although they are young and naive, I should respect them. They are like sponge, absorbing a lot so I have to be behaved and polite because they learn from me. Do not think young students are hard to have their own goals to study. When I start to teach my student, I do not have a lecture at first. I tell them what are my preferences in the class like be on time, do homework, behave etc. and also tell them why you need to study English saying easy examples, encourage them to learn more. And when they have a clear goal, they really enjoy what they learn.

Being an educator has many responsibilities. They really influence students and it could be more than their parents. I want to be a great teacher but I am not just talking about knowledge. To have better life and better society, person has to be centered and I will teach my students how to act and live in right ways.

Learning language is not about knowing, but understanding. I have 2 months to go taking TESOL and I am sure it helps me a lot.