Experiences in learning English

Sunny/ Class no.70

I had found somewhat called ultimate answer of acquiring language on my short journey of language education; which is; “Any effort I may put to learn, it will come back wether it was effective or ineffective”. It may sound so obvious for an instance; however for me this simple principle of learning had never betrayed me. As now is the time I put myself into a borderline of learner and teacher in a TESOL course, every single experience that I’ve been through as a student was beneficial.

My early year of language learning had begun in Korea. For children as young as 10 years old, just like me at that time, learning was not an option; they had to learn whatever they told to, because we all went to school and all took English as a subject. Throughout the classes, the complexity of study had compounded from alphabets to grammar. The chances of students to involve into practical activities became lower and lower, as more explanation had to be written on the board. The teacher went on chalk-and-talk teaching, and children listening to explanations how the components are put together to make a sense. In the class he was mainly an explainer who explained about reading and writing skills. This traditional classroom affected young students in a negative way, where they lost interest in class and felt pressure of not understanding it and I was one of them. I lacked intention of learning second language, yet the study was boring enough to let me fall in sleep during the class. The teacher failed to create a condition where students could learn. The class which I thought was ineffective continued until I got fourteen.

These circumstances of traditional learning changed when I arrived to Australia alone. The environment surrounding myself became totally second language based. I was forced to use English, since any other person near me did not understand Korean language. I realised that it was crucial to speak English to survive otherwise I wound be lost. This was the first time that I found a reason for studying it. I became more independent learner. I set a goal, and studied what I thought was essential. I refer this moment was a transition of myself from a child to an adult learner who are characterised in their goal oriented and relevancy oriented aspect. In Australia, the first year of language study began in the International House for intermediate English course- which I guess was the most prime time in my learning journey. The teacher had taught us relatively less. Huge explanations on how to manufacture sentences was not there. It was a modern type of classroom where students are centred. The whole class was engaged in activities where students could actually use English; the teacher made some group or pair work on researching things. We had to write our own reports and essays in English, and we had debating classes and presentation. The teacher enabled the use of language, by allowing students to use English actively in the class. It was only natural thing for students to be familiarised with second language.

The experiences of both traditional and modern classes of language suggested me the best suitable method of learning. Al though I personally did not favour the classic style of learning on grammar and vocabs, I would not say it was a complete waste. At the time I was in modern classes I struggled to involve in activities due to my shyness. But there was always the solid knowledge built on early years of studying in Korea which backed me up. The ineffective way of traditional learning had boosted me up when I faced to learn verbal communicative skills which were listening and speaking. I believe those experiences of learning English, whether it suited me or not, will support me in educational career in the future.