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**LEARNED THE LINGO THROUGH WRITTEN WORDS**

How do you feel when you hear the words ‘English as a second language’? I think most Koreans might feel that it’s difficult to speak in English, except for the new generation, because we’ve been educated in English, just as we’ve been educated in other subjects, such as mathematics. So why did I say that I learned English by written words? Can you guess what happened to me?

All languages are started from speaking first, and then the letters are made. First language is acquired naturally by speaking and listening as well. So even if I don’t know about the grammatical points very well, I can speak, listen, read, and write Korean without difficulty.

I should have learned English the same way that I acquired my mother tongue. But I had started learning the English grammar first before speaking or listening to English.

English had become just one of the boring and difficult subjects that I had to learn for good grades and graduation. I was being raised in the traditional education environment. My classmates and I sat in rows in the classroom, so we could see just teacher’s face. Also, most English teachers were explainer types in common with other teachers. They had just explained about vocabulary, grammar, and so on. It made me get sick and tired of this subject. Even if I were good at reading, I didn’t have enough chances to speak English and to get feedback about my English pronunciation as much as I wanted during the class. Studying English was just for examinations at that time. So, I used to feel ashamed of my English speaking ability. For example, when I saw foreigners who asked me for some help, I couldn’t talk to them with any confidence, even though I really wanted to help them. However, I bet this case was not only for me, but for the many Korean people who have had difficulties learning English as a second language.

When I went abroad to study English, I got a lot of good impressions. The atmosphere in the classroom was totally different from Korea. The teachers were involvers or enablers who tried to make me feel comfortable and give me confidence about English. I could learn it through exciting games, group activities, and things like that. In addition, I was surprised with the students who were not afraid of making mistakes. They weren’t good at English grammar, but they tried to speak in English over and over. A little while later, I saw they improved their English skills faster. In this case, the way of second language acquisition was similar to first language acquisition. At least, to them, English was a language, not a boring school curriculum. Their thoughts changed me, so I could have more and more confidence than before, though I still make lots of mistakes.

In conclusion, I think English needs to be taught similar to the mother tongue. Of course this way is difficult and limited. But we can try to make our students feel comfortable and have confidence as much as possible. I want my students to enjoy learning English without stressing about grammar, and I hope to be an interesting teacher with various teaching methods. Last of all, my belief is simply that English is a verbal communication, so hopefully all English learners could enjoy speaking English.