# Second Language Acquisition

Hyunju CHO

 (920)

I have achieved success in learning English, as a secondary language, from a pre-intermediate to intermediate level. There are many programs that provide persons, who wish to learn a new language, with the best tools and methods to achieve success at varying levels. However, I believed two methods that have allowed me to make remarkable progress in English during a four-year period. I will explain why my “Multiple Intelligences” and “Modern Teaching Techniques” are more important than other methods.

First, I must place emphasis on my own learning to style to continually improve my English. This is because all students have developed over time, individual learning techniques. As an example, I participated in a ‘Multiple Intelligences Survey’. The survey had seven (7) sections entitled “Musical”, “Logical”, “Interpersonal”, “Kinesthetic”, “Verbal”, “Intrapersonal”, and “Visual Strength”. Comparing the survey to my favorite pastime of watching television programs, I discovered a direct correlation of learning by visualization. I used my visual learning strength to read and write English at a pre-intermediate level (reading and writing simple material on a familiar topic) before studying English in the U.S.A.

Upon beginning my studies in America, it was very hard to express my thoughts into words to other students, people I met, and my American “host family”, whom I lived with for one year. The primary reason was due to the Korean educational “Rote” learning method (the memorization, by repetition, of information.) This learning process did not provide sufficient practical application to absorb and use the information correctly and effectively. I studied alone using the intrapersonal intelligence method. I did not have many opportunities to communicate, individually or through group-activities, to obtain or share information.

Everyone was very friendly and we tried to communicate with each other, but it was difficult, due to having limited vocabulary and grammar that could be used in daily conversations. Unfortunately, I couldn’t enjoy the time we shared. Whenever I had free time in the house alone, I would always turn on the TV to watch and listen. The speed of each person talking seemed very fast to me at that time. It was very difficult to understand what they were saying.

I decided to adapt to speaking quickly first. I placed great emphasis on acquiring that skill and now, my hearing has grown accustomed to the normal speed of English speech. I can now mimic and understand almost everything people say during a television program.

I was swift to hear, faster to speak successfully. By extension, I have learned how to use the words correctly in each situation. For instance, “toilet” and “restroom” have similar meanings, when defined individually in the dictionary. One day during my English language class, I wanted to go to the restroom (this would be the correct usage in English). However, I suddenly forgot the word “restroom” and used “toilet” for my request to my instructor. My instructor looked unhappily at me as I left the classroom, and so I realized it was wrong choice for this situation. This would be a perfect example of discourse; a formal way of thinking that can be expressed through language and/or the limits of acceptable speech within the society, with Western Society the basis of the above example. Personally, I am flexible with these types of experiences; however, each language student must adjust to the discourse of the studied language’s society.

Second, from my perspective, utilizing a “Modern Teaching Techniques” is a far better method in learning a new language, especially English, than by traditional methods.

.

Due to the traditional learning Techniques I had grown up with and was accustomed to, I began my English studies. It was a comfortable method to study; using text books, writing short notes within the books, and writing lengthy explanations on separate papers. However, all of the modern classes, especially during the lecture process require the use of the latest technologies, such as notebook computers, tablets, and smart phones. Professors provide individual electronic numbers to each student to maintain attendance records, with homework and teacher/student communication provided via the University’s website and email system. The pace of learning and the amount of information provided does not allow enough time for the use of traditional methods of pen and paper. I had to acquire many new skills, along with learning English, at a very fast pace.

Because of mastering the technology to learn quicker, I have acquired a good working knowledge of English in a short amount of time. For example, I can quickly find answers to questions from search engines (such as Google or Bing), use email to request assistance or provide assistance, use social networks (such as Facebook and Classmates) – all within the English language. If my spelling is incorrect or grammar is mispronounced, most computer applications will assist with corrections. This also allows me to remember the correct spelling and grammar when typing the same word or phrase again - Typing further reinforces the learning process.

In conclusion, understanding and utilizing both my “Multiple Intelligences” and “Modern Teaching Techniques” have greatly improved my understanding and usage of the English language and literature. My visual and mathematical strengths have been a good source of learning through remaining engaged with television programs for listening and speaking, while the same skills, in conjunction with the modern teaching techniques (I was forced to quickly learn) have furthered my reading and writing. Each student must learn and cultivate their style of learning. Therefore, I can tell you my English skills, although a lifetime work-in-progress, feels comfortable.