Success Learning Second Language

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There seems mounting interests in learning English as second language among Koreans. Some want to learn English for work, others do for their own pleasures, people have their own reasons or motivations for learning English. In my own case, I needed abilities in writing and listening and fluency in speaking in English to take course in another country and that was my reason why I wanted to learn English as second language. I do not think I am good enough to say I mastered English at all, but I would like to share my experience of learning English as second language with those who are struggling with learning it like I was.

First of all, repetition lasts long. Like many people did, I first learned English in elementary school class when I was ten years old. We started learning English by repeating loud the alphabet that the teacher wrote on the board after she read one after another. After that the teacher showed us easy vocabularies on the board such as cat, dog, pencil, book, and so on, then she wrote short sentences like “I am a boy. You are a girl.” and “This is a book. That is a pencil.”, and we read the words and sentences loud several times. Next class, she taught us even more difficult vocabularies and longer sentences with plural forms. And she taught what pronouns are, what kind of verbs they needs and the order of words. She taught us new different stuffs in every class and as always she did not forget to make us repeating them after her. I, maybe the other students as well I guess, did not understand when it comes to grammars like why the words order in English is different than in Korean but I remember on the way home after school that we were mumbling the sentences we learned and even next day I spoke them unconsciously.

Furthermore, this is important to know not only what type of teaching style you like, but also what kind of learner you are. In upper grade in elementary school, I became able to understand what English is and how things are going in it. I had tutor from a private English book-publishing and educating company once a week. I was given with a practice book and audio tapes. Once a week, I had short time with the tutor to check my practice book and to get brief teaching of vocabularies and grammars for the next week homework from the tutor. I worked with this practice book and audiotapes by reading a text along the native speaker’s voice recorded in audio tapes, making sentences out of scattered words, or putting correct word to complete a sentence. I had this type of tasks during whole school years in elementary, middle, and high school classes but I preferred having it by myself because I liked one-to-one teaching better than lecture style class and I needed some time to absorb what I had learned.

Last but not least, my reason for learning English was to go to school in another country. I first learned English when I was ten and I studied intensely for the Toefl test for years. I had my Toefl score that proved how good my English is and I got myself ready by spending time on learning English about twenty years and taking English conversation class for two years. However, when I faced foreign teachers and students at the first class in another country, I could not speak English as much as I expected I would. My first class was like a disaster and I hated myself could not speak at all in spite of the many years I spent on learning English. Strangely, taking classes and hanging out with foreign friends, my English improved faster than I ever did in Korea. In my opinion, as I assumed, this could be one of the best ways to learn English; being surrounded by area where English is spoken and by people who speak English.

Learning English or another language as second language takes commitment. It is time and money consuming work. Knowing what type of learner you are and what type of teacher you need, repeating what you have learned then finally living and studying in English-speaking country. Some people think anyone can say like this about success learning English. But I guess these are the best way to learn English.