**The First Essay- Second Language Acquisition**

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“To teach is to learn twice over,” as the saying goes. I think it is perfect to describe my situation. While I am studying teaching English, I will figure out how to teach English best. Before starting that, I am writing about my learning English experience based on “Language and Learning topic”.

The first time I started learning my second language was when I was 12 years old. The second language was English. I could have started learning English in middle school, but I chose to do it in a private academy before entering middle school. At that time every day in order to be tested I had to memorize many words and several sentences which were made for understanding grammar. Besides, my English teacher let me repeat the words after she read them during the class. And I did not have any native English teacher then, only a Korean English teacher facilitated our learning.

Since middle school my English was studied for examinations only for entering the university or being hired by a company. Though I knew many words and had knowledge of grammar, I could speak only simple sentence. I was always embarrassed whenever I met an American since I did not have any experience in dealing with foreigners, not until I graduated from the university.

Studying in London brought great changes to my English. After graduation from the university I decided to study my major marketing and promotion in London. To apply the school I prepared for the IELTS test and received the needed score. However, the big problem started from then on. I was puzzled what to do to see a foreigner in person even though I met Asian guys in language school. At that time my British English teacher had encouraged and suggested how to improve my English with various methods. For instance, there were reading interesting article and summarizing, talking with classmates in terms of light news or common interest, and visiting hot places and meeting new friends. What impressed me most was how to think and spell and make notes once I heard new words during the class. Looking back on it now, I learned many things which are how to write a report and essay, make a presentation and discussion and so on.

As soon as finishing the language school, my school life began and my English improved. While I was in class I did group work, seminars and lectures. And all of these were useful and helpful to my English and school life as well.

Nevertheless, it still was difficult regarding writing a report and presentation. Firstly, in order to complete writing, I read, copied others, and practiced to make a sentence by changing words. And then I applied it to my report. Secondly, to develop a presentation I made a note per one slide and memorized all things. Also, before starting I had a rehearsal with notes, but until quite recently presentation in English was over.

My experience in learning English in Korea years ago was difficult compared to how students learn today. On the other hand, my experience in London was great. I had classmates who were high level and native speaker friends. The most important thing is I had many things in common and shared the same goal and knowledge with them. And my friends and I had a similar tendency and my teachers understood it very well to apply to class. Because of these situations I was happy to learn English and to study my major in English. Sometimes it made me very stressful.

English educators in Korea nowadays recognize the problem of learning the subject in the country. To improve such learning system, every primary school was assigned a native English teacher who allows students to experience learning English with native English speakers. In addition, students can learn English through diverse activities like a role-playing, sports and playing music. Through these activities, they can learn vocabulary and practical expressions naturally. They also get the opportunity to speak with a foreign teacher so they don’t fear face to face conversation with foreigners anymore. In fact, they think English class is enjoyable.

Today’s students experience English naturally, a learning process that is totally different from their parents who learned English for examination only like me.

What is the purpose of learning language? I think it is for communication. Sometimes we study language for examination, but the fundamental purpose of learning language is communication. So, learning language should be separated from studying language. If so, what is the difference between learning language and studying language? The interaction between students and teachers defines the difference. If there’s no interaction, it is just studying.

The reason why I couldn’t talk with any foreigners in English prompted me to study the language, not to learn. There was no interaction with teachers because they couldn’t speak English since they also studied English as a subject. If interaction operates well in a language class, students can learn that language effectively. Teachers shouldn’t think that this work is only for foreign teachers; but they are also meant for Korean English instructors. Therefore they should have the abilities to carry out an active interaction and provide effective methods of teaching English to their students.