Name: Kim, Sooyeon (Sue)

Date: June 9th, 2014

Class: TESOL 101WD

**My First English Learning Experience**

I believe I was very lucky to have a special experience in having to learn English from when I was a child. It goes back to 1980s, when my first experience in learning English begins. Owing to my father’s business, our family moved to Hong Kong and lived abroad since 1983. There was no English subject in the elementary course in Korea so I didn’t have any knowledge in English at all and started from learning alphabets at the school in Hong Kong. There weren’t any preparatory classes in school so I had to be placed in the class (P3) with the classmates who were fluent speakers, however, owing to my parents’ concern I was placed in grade 2 with a year younger kids. To be honest, I can’t remember how I learned English and how long it took for me to communicate in English. I guess I just ‘acquired’ the language than ‘learning’ it. After a year, I was able to transfer to a different school through an interview with a simple written test and I was placed at my original grade.

As it was an international school, there were over 10 different nationalities in a classroom. Some children’s parents had two different nationalities, but we were in a class with no border, no racism, and no discrimination. I clearly remember doing a lot of activities for each subject. I still remember making a solar system in science class using wires and sponge balls. I guess this is still in my clear memory as I remember having so much trouble making each planets round and eventually mine turned out to be the ugliest among all of the other work.

Thinking back how I acquired English so naturally brought me into these conclusions. Firstly, as being a child everyone used simple sentences, knew easier and fewer words and used them repeatedly which made me learn easier and faster. Secondly, as being a child, I was not worried about being ridiculed in class as everyone around was still a child and not all the classmates were native speakers they were all from different countries. Also, no one had a perfect knowledge in grammar or rules. I can say the ‘Affective Filter’ was very low. I had no fear or anxiety in class. And lastly through a various classroom activities I not only had fun in class but also was able to improve my language skills.

After coming back to Korea, I entered high school and English was one of the most important curriculum for the University entrance examination. The teacher always brought a CD player into the class to play the dialogues in the text book and used a blackboard to explain things. It was originally a traditional way of teaching. Although it was not fun, I was able to improve my vocabularies as I had to memorize lots of different words for the word quizzes at every beginning of the class.

 When it comes to second language teaching, there are various ways of methodologies. Thinking back from my experiences in learning a second language, there got to be a better way than the ‘jug and mug’ style. During when I was in high school in Korea, I won several prizes in English competitions such as English Speech Contest or English Listening Competitions. Honestly, I did not do well in other subjects, but I have been always very confident when it comes to English. Having to know these language acquisition theories and by learning various teaching methodologies, I would like my future students to enjoy in their learning and I wish they have fun and learn better. Also, I will have high expectations for each of my future students.