**My Experience about Learning English**

Heeyoon Moon

TESOL 111

3/13/15

When I entered the elementary school, there was no English class in the school. Also, English education was not important as much as now. When I turned to grade 3, the school system has changed and chosen English class as an essential course. At that time, I followed some phrases and did some game with character cards, but it was just one of subjects for me, not a second language. When I entered the middle school, English class became one of the important subjects. However, it was the hardest subject for me, and I could not even read out the basic words. I did not even understand what my English teacher teaches me, and I kept getting lower grade on English. I did not even know how to study English. At that time, there was very famous English tutor, so I decided to take her class because I wanted to get a good grade on English class, but it was my one of the worst choice ever in my life. She forced me to memorize whole English book and gave a lot of homework. When I did not finish my homework or memorize the textbook, she did not let me go home. The reason I did not finish the homework was ignorance of knowledge. I did not know, so I could not do the homework. Also, there was punishment such as poking chest part with chopstick or push up if I did not do the homework. After a month, I stopped studying with her, and I started to hate English more and more. I believe their teaching style was explainer, so they only explained to me. When I became grade 10, my level of English was not still low. One of the ways of learning English was to divide the sentences and find out structure. It was very useful to me, but it also very limited when I applied to complex and long passage. Even though English is a language, I only approached like other academic subjects.

 With my limited English, I had a chance to study abroad when I was 16 years old. At first, I have been to New Zealand for 4 months. With language barrier, I had hard time to adjust new environment. Luckily, I had a nice homestay family, so they tried to understand me and wait. Although it was very hard to communicate each other at first, it was getting better. At that time, I had no fear to speak in English with very basic level of English. When I did not understand, I kept asking until I get the point. Even though my English was not good, experience in New Zealand was fun. English was no longer education for me, and it became survival tool. Facing by myself to new environment was one of ways of acquiring English skill itself. Experience in New Zealand gave me full of confidence and went to Canada as an international student. However, a “real” school life was different. As a student of grade 11, I had to study to graduate. For me, studying the subject was easier than communicating with others. It does not mean studying was easy. I had hard time to understand what the teachers say. I had to keep asking for help and tried to read textbook several times. I started to like Math, which I used to hate. Even though I got better grades on the classes later, I had hard time to speak in English. Reading was comfortable for me. Later, my speaking skill gradually had improved to a certain point. After the graduation, my level of English got much better, but it was very limited. Fortunately, I had an opportunity to study in the U.S., so I could earn the degree. For me, my speaking was better when stayed in Canada even though I’ve been in the U.S. longer. My overall academic English had much improved, but there were too many Koreans in the U.S, so I did not have to speak in English.

I was exposed to English-based countries for long, so I could learn English naturally. Learning experience in Korea was not helpful while I was staying in English-based countries. English is a language, so keep using is the key when we learn. If I was taught as a participant while I was learning English, I could have had better grade on English and enjoyed more. There is no answer while learning. One of role of teachers is to find style of their students because learners have different type of learning depending on the style. Hopefully, my experience helps me become a better teacher.