



My second language acquisition

Stella Seo

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Some students learn a new language quicker and faster than others. This is a fact known by those who have had to learn a second language. Parents push their children to learn a second language at a very young age. Then why do so many students have difficulty acquiring fluency? In my experience, second language acquisition has been both successful and unsuccessful because of the student's different needs and individual learning styles.

First of all, when I was an elementary school student, I used to attend an English academy after school. At the academy, I was taught English by a passionate and enthusiastic native speaker. He was contributing to a modern education style, allowing children to learn English in fun ways that are also easy to understand. He used various materials to introduce and teach new vocabularies and had the students play all kinds of games and activities related to our daily lives such that the vocabularies learned can be remembered for a much longer period. The teacher was always using gestures and the students were speaking all the time. TPR (Total Physical Response) approach will help develop confidence and familiarity with English, such that even shy and introverted students can be motivated and encouraged to speak by other classmates. Through the Natural Order Hypothesis, I have acquired English naturally by getting enough linguistic input materials. Thus, it can be said that my second language acquisition was successful up to this point.

Secondly, the years of learning English during middle and high school have not been so successful. Most of the time was spent listening to dialogues, memorizing vocabularies, and completing fill-in-the-blank worksheets. The curriculum was much more focused on grammar, vocabularies, and reading comprehensions than GTM (Grammar Translation Methodology)-based teaching approach was controlling the class

room. As a result, I got good at solving grammar questions, but my English skills in speaking and writing gradually got worse. English was and still is my favorite subject, but it was also extremely stressful being forced to learn grammar and vocabularies in ways that were just not enjoyable. Interaction and intercommunication plays an important role in a language acquisition process but such traditional teaching styles used in most of the middle and high schools in Korea prevented me from actually learning to communicate with foreigners.

Lastly, s language acquisition is influenced by the personality of the learner. Introverted learners usually make slower progress particularly in the development of oral skills, while students who are extroverted will not worry about making mistakes. In addition, students who enjoy language learning and take pride in their progress will do much better than those who do not. I had a friend from university who has lived abroad for three years. She has been exposed to various cultures and has excellent command of English. Sadly, I was afraid of communicating with foreigners because I was not confident in my speaking skills mainly from comparing myself to others such as my friend. Clearly, second language learners who have little or no access to native speakers are more likely to make slower progress, particularly in the oral aspect of language acquisition. According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, increased anxiety and low levels of motivation and self-confidence are obstacles that needs to be overcome for successful language acquisition.

In conclusion, learning a new language is not as easy as it sounds, and teaching it is even more difficult than I thought. Before attending TESOL, I did not know how much teaching methods can affect second language learners. Now I know that methods like the multi-module approach meets the learning needs of all students with different

learning styles. People's mind and motivation vary and teachers have to find ways to connect with their student. For example, if I see that my students are exhausted, I should not try to teach an overly complicated topic. This means building up trust and rapport. Although teaching is difficult, I would like to become enabler teacher who could control, manage, and monitor the class.