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**Korean Education of English**

Tesol for children 132

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Today, Korea spends a lot of time and money on English education is also one of the non-English speaking countries that has high scores on English tests. However, we still seem reluctant to talk to foreigners. 70 to 80% of Koreans can’t say anything when they meet foreigners, 15% barely communicate in English and the rest of 5% can speak in English fluently.

The strength of Korean English education which is grammar and high scores on tests is also our weakest spot. Korean students who are studying abroad and students from the US took the same grammar test and the result was surprising. Korean students had almost everything right on the other hand the students from the US couldn’t answer some of the grammar questions right. As seen in this example, Korean’s English education is very focused on grammatical English.
 The first problem when I think about our English education is we rush too much. When we learn our mother tongue, it takes a long time to understand, speak and write. However, when we learn ESL, we only study for tests, promotion or entering schools and we study for a short period of time.
If we know what our purpose of learning English is then Korea’s education system will be improved.
  The second problem is the way we learn Linguistic. We start learning English in elementary school or in some cases in middle school. Unlike our native Enunciation, we learn it the opposite way. It should be listening and speaking first and then reading and writing but in our reality it is the other way around.  I think this is why some people have problems making very simple sentences in English. For instance, when we have a conversation with an English native speaker, it should flow smoothly but instead we think of a sentence in our head make sure we don’t make any grammar mistakes and because of this the conversation can’t be natural. Since this is harder than speaking in Korean, we avoid talking in English more and more.
  The third one is we learn English to show the result. We learn English as a tool to get in a good school or get promoted. We should learn English to learn other cultures to express our own thoughts not to get good scores.
This is why we lose interesting on learning English fast.
 The fourth weakest point is that we learn English not as a language. When we learn our native language we start in our mother’s womb. We start learning by hearing or reading our mother’s expression on her face. Since English is a language, it should be taught in the same way but we start with ABCs before we even understand English. For example, when we learn a new word we learn how to spell that word instead of learning what it actually means or the situation the word can be used.
 And the last one is that we focus on memorizing grammar and spelling. In the result of this, even though we know how to write ‘accumulate’  we probably cannot pronounce the word or how to use it in a sentence. This can’t be the way we learn English words. We focus on how to write and read too much we can’t actually use in ‘real’ English.

We’ve been learning English at school just to get good grades on tests. The most difficult parts of learning English for Koreans are listening and speaking. I think we can find the reasons from how we teach English at schools in Korea.The center of English classes is neither a teacher nor students. As long as we are learning English to get good scores on SAT, a great job or a promotion, both teachers and students will not be able to teach or learn “REAL” English. At the end, we can’t help but being a frog in the well and keep making ourselves victims of the Korea’s education system.

This is why I think we need to act now and re-construct the English education system so there will be a win-win situation for both teachers and students.