**My Experience of Learning English**

Nowadays, a study of the English language starts at almost the same time as one’s native language. This is due to an increase in the awareness of the importance of learning English, and because learning English has become compulsory in the Korean education system. I started studying English at the age of 10 and have been learning continuously since. I was taught English in three different countries – Korea, the Philippines, and the USA. As I take TESOL class now and look back my past experiences of learning English, I think about the factors that influenced me while learning English and how those factors play an important role in learning a language.

I grew up in Korea until I was 13 years old. Back then, English was taught in a very traditional way in a public school. According to the “Traditional vs. Modern Teaching,” a traditional class is teacher-centered and a modern class is student-centered. I still remember that I had never asked any questions or said a word in English in class because no other students did so. Also, as stated in “Three Teacher Types,” the teachers I had in Korea were all explainers. They always talked for 50 minutes and I listened. The only issue I considered then was getting a good grade on my exams. According to the “Individual Learning Difference,” everyone has different capabilities when learning a language. However, my teachers didn't care about individual differences. They were busy with teaching a daily lesson. On the other hand, in the English institution that I attended after school hours, teachers were foreigners. They always asked us questions, taught English songs, and played games. I was taught completely different style.

After graduating from an elementary school in Korea, I went to the Philippines for a better English education. I was exposed to a culture which required the use of English every day. For the first three months, I could not speak or understand English. It seemed like there was no progress in learning. However, as stated in the “Second Language Acquisition Hypothesis” by Stephen Krashen, everything was being input into me. Also, as I hung out with foreign friends, bought things in markets, and by just being there, I could acquire words that a teacher didn’t teach in class. This was the time “Language Systems & Skills” were developing in me. In the ESL class, I learned vocabulary, how to pronounce words, how they sounded, and how grammar functioned. The four basic language skills were developing both formally and informally. Also, the "Learner Retention" skill was high at this time because all the lessons I learned in classes were demonstrated in my daily life.

After I graduated from the junior high school in the Philippines, I went to the USA for high school and college. Unlike teachers in Asia, teachers were more caring. I went to Christian High School. The first year in the USA was very hard for me. Classes were tougher and new English words were used every day in lessons. However, my English teacher helped me both educationally and spiritually. After class, she stayed with me and helped my homework, became my friend, and prayed for me. On looking back at this incident now, I have come to realize that the rapport between a teacher and student is very important. Beside the school works, there is one thing I did at home every day. According to the "Multiple Intelligences Theory," by Howard Gardner, seven distinct intelligences influence learning. I believe that my visual intelligence is more developed than the other intelligences that I have. Also as stated in “Three Learner Mode,” I’m a visual learner. Every time I memorize vocabulary, I made a poster and put it on the wall of my room. I also watched American dramas and movies every day to study English.

There are a lot of new technologies being applied to the education system, and classes are changing to a modern style gradually. As I rethink my past experiences, there are advantages and disadvantages to each learning element. Just focusing on one skill doesn’t help in learning a language. Even though most of my classes were very traditional and boring, it helped me to force myself to learn about topics and this improved my receptive skills. At the same time, by living in that culture, my productive skills could be built up further. I have realized how important it is to develop integrated skills.

Word Count: 749