Second Language Learning Experiences that I Have Encounted

Serl Hee Park

TESOL for Children 151

Jasmine Jones

 How many second language teachers have you had in your life? I have met more

than dozens of English teachers. My first English teacher was a Korean homeschooling

teacher when I was only 5 years old. My last English teacher was an American professor

when I was an ESL student in the United States. Among the most influential teachers in my

life were when I was a child. There are two totally different types of teachers in my life. One

used teacher-centered teaching method, the other used student-centered one.

 When I was a second grade of elementary school student, my English teacher forced

me to memorize more than twenty vocabularies every his class. Unfortunately, his classes

were 4 times a week, so I was forced to memory 80 new words every week. i made an effort

to remember new words, but it didn't work well sometimes. When I couldn’t memorize the

day’s vocabularies, I felt nervous and couldn’t eat anything. As soon as his class is coming, I

was almost crying. There was no exception on his class. When a student couldn’t pass his

daily vocabulary quiz, he was punished by hitting in palm as many wrong answers the student

did. The Behaviorist Approach, which is teacher-centered and applied repetitive learning, is

suited for teaching the child who learns second language for the first time. However, if a

teacher only uses the approach without regard to learner’s tendencies and intelligences, the

learner could not enjoy the subject what they learn. As multiple intelligences theory said, all

children have a variety of intelligences, so teacher needs to communicate in different ways

with each student’s intelligences. One who has a high level of linguistic intelligence may feel

easy to remember new words. However, another who has a low level of linguistic intelligence

with much higher level of mathematic intelligence may feel harder to memory in new words

in specific time limit. My English teacher didn't care about what the best individual

intelligences are. He was not ‘an active helper’.

 When I was a first grade of elementary student, there was a teacher who gave me an

English essay homework once a week. At that time, I had learned English as a second

language for 12 years, but I had never written an English essay which belonged to my own

three sentences over. It was hard time for all my classmates at the first time, but we all had

much achievement. As time goes by, this essay homework helped me to write an English

diary by myself every night. Learning English was much fun and interesting for the time. The

teacher stimulated my intrinsic motivation. As a well-known American educator Malcolm

Shepherd Knowles said, pedagogical learners, contrast adult learners, are motivated by their

extrinsic pressures in fun and interesting. The Constructivist Approaches can be a useful

method to draw one’s own potential, because it considers a learner as an active explorer who

makes a sense of the world in which he finds himself. Teacher let the learners communicate

with each other without formality and constraint, and help them to go above level from the

present step.

 I believe that the most important role for the teacher is let the learner knows why he

is learning the subject. The teacher needs to stimulate the learner’s motivation of studying the

subject. As soon as the learner notices the reason why he needs to study the specific subject,

studying by himself will naturally happened. The teacher needs to be an observer, a guide,

and a co-worker for learners.