**Was my experience of L2 acquisition a success or failure?**

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According to Dr. Stefan Krashen, L2 is learning a second language after first language is already established. Also he said anyone can do it at any age although it takes a lot of practice. Acquisition is a natural and subconscious process like learning how to walk when we were young. Then, was my experience of L2 acquisition successful? Unfortunately, it was not.

It has been almost 25 years since I started learning English when I was 14. There were 40 students in one classroom and we were all wearing exactly same school uniforms with similar hair styles. The classroom environment was strict and quiet. It seemed like our teacher considered establishing a classroom dynamic including interests, personalities, strengths and weaknesses, and levels was not that important. Not only that, we were all different 40 persons, but no one cared about the individual learner differences, even our teacher. The main resource of learning and teaching was a textbook. Now I know there are four basic language skills- Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking. But the most critical parts of our learning were reading, vocabulary and grammar. As soon as the teacher read each sentences, she immediately translated them into Korean. And whenever she pointed at each of us, we had to stand up, read out loud and translate. Particularly at this moment I didn’t feel comfortable. And then when we repeated reading new vocabulary after her, she explained those meanings of the words and the grammar points in each chapters. During that time, I hardly had any chances of authentic learning experiences such as fun games, group works, role plays etc which are some examples of modern teaching that teachers use. It was nearly impossible to improve fluency under this environment. For these reasons, I automatically became an auditory learner and partly a visual learner. Our teacher took the role of explainer. There was always teacher talk, no student talk. The ways of teaching and classroom environment were strictly traditional. When I was in 8th grade, there were some sorts of efforts for assessing English levels of students. The test was focused only on reading and grammar. Based on the test results, we were divided into just three levels A, B, C; the highest, middle, and the lowest. Our Multiple Intelligence which is that individuals have at least seven distinct smarts that can be developed over a life time was not the factor considered. I was in level A, but if anything, I used to get extremely stressed being afraid of going down to B or C rather than being motivated. In that way, my anxiety went up, and self-esteem went low. The main purpose of this was not to assess English Proficiency, but just to evaluate our grades and it didn’t work at all.

When I was in High school, Listening had become quite important than before. But the method of listening was just relied upon the created contents which were so boring related to the text book. Besides, at this time, the goal of learning English was only for getting high grades to enter good colleges. Therefore, I couldn’t feel any respect or empathy from teachers. Almost the only matter they cared was results. It was only after I entered the college that I actually had a few experiences about practical English. But by the time I was in college, I had already lost confidence in learning English since I had no chance to communicate, thus I was always afraid of making mistakes. The ‘Monitor’ and ‘Affective Filter’ had constantly been preventing me from gaining confidence especially in real world English.

Learner Retention Rates show that the techniques teachers use such as lecture and reading were rated as the least effective; 5% for lecture, 10% for reading. For me, it has been proved clearly. Nowadays, fortunately, the way of teaching and learning English as L2 has been changing more like to be natural as possible. Many teachers are trying to develop good rapport, show respect and empathy, provide meaningful learning experiences toward their students like Knowles mentioned. I hope, as a foreign learner first, I can have the experience that L2 acquisition can be really fun and accomplished even at my age through this opportunity. In addition to that, I will try to keep all the knowledge that I learned in mind if I might have a chance to teach sometime in the future and have my students feel much more engaged and relaxed when they learn English.

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