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My Experience of Second-Language Acquisition

Second-language is that people choose to acquire for various reasons after learning their first language. There are two ways of acquiring second-language, which are acquisition and studying. Acquisition is a way to acquire a second-language more naturally. It is better way to acquire a language, but not every learner can learn in the way. Since I have studied in two different countries, I was able to experience different ways of acquiring second-language. I am going to compare learning experiences in Korea and U.S.

I started to study English, which is my second language, in Korea. English was one of required subjects to study, and it was taught in a traditional setting of a classroom where over 30 students look at a board while a teacher is lecturing. The teacher was typical explainer who was busy writing on the board without making any eye contact. She did not consider if her students understood a concept or not. The teachers at schools I attended mainly focused on grammar and vocabulary. Among five language systems, they took Lexis and grammar seriously. Students were placed in a class by age, not by different level of language proficiency. I often saw some students with low motivation sleeping during the class. When I was a high school student, there were only two different levels of English class. There was a placement test that was only based on reading and grammar. My speaking skill and listening skill were not assessed to get into higher-level class. I was in an awkward position changing a class almost every semester. I was not good at grammar and was placed in a low-level class for one semester. However my reading skill was good considering test score, and I ended up being placed in a high-level class next semester. I felt like I did not belong to anywhere and had low motivation to acquire my second-language. In this setting of class, students include me do not have many chances to interact each other. The teacher assumed that students could spend their break time to get to know each other. There was no icebreaker or other activities to build up good rapport. Obviously not much class dynamic was going on. I did not have a chance to talk to the teacher what my difficulty was. The teacher judged students’ understanding by test score instead of interacting with students. I was stressed out to get a good score on the test and was anxious thinking of second-language. Although there were eight multiple intelligences to use, mostly verbal intelligence and logical intelligence were used. Sometimes I had a short-term project to use musical intelligence memorizing lyrics of a famous pop song to sing. It was more like finding grammar points from lyrics, and memorization was required. I could not enjoy the music have fun. Before studying abroad to U.S, my experience of acquiring second-language was studying.

I took ESL classes for two months before going to high school in U.S. In the ESL class, I felt less pressure because it was not related to school report. Only thing I need to care about was just to enjoy communicating with other people in English. My classmates were all in different age and nationality but were in similar level of language proficiency. It was a good chance for me to attempt speaking in my second-language without much fear. During high school years, I was naturally exposed to second-language being surrounded by native speakers and began to learn function of second-language. The teacher showed empathy, which is one of qualities for effective teaching, and checked on me if I had a hard time to follow up the class. It gave me confidence to participate to the class. Most teachers I met in U.S were involver or enabler. They encouraged students to interact by having various group activities. These activities made me use various intelligences. It helped to have good class dynamic that involved lots of students laughing and talking. According to learner retention rate, the more learners talk, the more they learn. I had opportunities to talk in the class and learned more. Acquisition of second-language happened more naturally while I was in U.S.

In conclusion, the points made in this essay support that acquisition is preferred. When a teacher makes effort to encourage students interact more in a class throughout activities, students can acquire their second-language effectively.

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