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My experience of L2 acquisition

To define the term “L2 acquisition”, it is the way of getting an L2, which involves the subconscious acceptance of knowledge where information is stored in the brain through the use of communication. The process of acquisition is the same way of developing the L1. According to the **Stephan Krashen’s acquisition-study hypothesis**, my experience of L2 acquisition from 1999 to 2006, learned in Korea, was a failure.

**Traditional teaching** hindered my acquisition of English. When I recall my classrooms at school, there were lots of students in a class and the teacher did not care about **individual learner differences**. My teacher gave lectures using text books, did not prepare attractive resources and rarely did group activities. **Classroom dynamic** was negative and there was a lack of relationship between teacher and students. As a result of the absence of **rapport**, I was bored and uninterested in learning English.

My English teachers were explainers and this prevented me from getting an L2. As Adrian Underhill has suggested, there are **three teacher types**, explainers, involvers and enablers. Explainers taught English based on lecture and reading, which have very low **learner retention rates**. I found out that this is the reason why I forgot almost everything what I studied after the exam. Also, explainers tend to create **rule-formers** rather than **data-gathers** because their teaching style has high T.T.T, low S.T.T and stale classroom dynamics. This explains why, despite my good test scores, I hesitated to speak that I concerned about errors. On the contrary data-gather type learners are created in modern classroom, who communicate fluently regardless of possible inaccuracies or ingrained errors.

In addition, when I learned English, comprehensible input was not provided because there was not level test **assessing language proficiency**. The level of students in my class were very different and it affect rapport negatively. I was not motivated in learning English because the level of the class was too easy for me, which prevented my English from improving. And some students could not participated in class because the level of the class was too high for them. According to **the input hypothesis**, language acquisition occurs if input is at the right level which should be one step beyond the learner’s current language ability in order to allow learners to progress with their language development. Classes that did not consider differences in students' language proficiency did not help L2 acquisition for both higher and lower level students.

Furthermore, what I learned in my English class was only concentrated on **grammar** and **lexis** among five **language systems; grammar, phonology, lexis, function, and discourse**. Almost my English teachers read text book and explained the rules of grammar and the meaning of words. Because of this unbalanced studying, I was not able to actually use the language I learned although I got good grades on the test. I had trouble speaking and writing. On the other hand, what we do with language are **language skills**, which are **listening, reading, speaking and writing.** Successful language acquisition requires a balanced learning of five language systems and four language skills.

**Stephan Krashen’s acquisition-study hypothesis** states thatacquisition is impossible to achieve if there is an **affective filter**. This filter is caused by low motivation, low self-esteem, and high anxiety, which prevents input from reaching the language acquisition part of the brain. When I was a student, my teachers were not generous about mistakes. They forced me to memorize vocabulary and grammar for tests without motivation. I was stressed by the pressure on my grades. What I studied for exams were easily forgot after the exam. Therefore, although I was able to learn English at that time, it was though study, not acquisition.

In conclusion, L2 acquisition was not successful for me. I realized that my failure in English acquisition was due to classical teaching methods. Therefore, if I become an English teacher, I will teach students with modern teaching methods. The first thing I should do in class will be to build **rapport** and to make **classroom dynamic**. Because the goal of my L2 teaching is for learners to be able to communicate effectively. What to focus on my class is helping students to getting language instead of just studying it.

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