Name: Young

Class Number: 203WD

Essay Topic: My experience of L2 Acquisition – a Failure

Stephen Krashen, the American linguist and educational researcher suggested the concept of L2 Acquisition that means a way of learning a second language after people’s first language has been learned is similar to the way they learn their first language. From this point of view, my experience of L2 Acquisition in middle school days was not successful.

The basic principle of the English class I had was entirely based on **traditional teaching**. My teachers rarely made any effort to build **good rapport and classroom dynamics.** They were obsessed about the textbooks and grammar instead of touching **language skills and systems**. The teachers primarily transmitted the knowledge to the students and I were busy to take notes of grammar and vocabulary on the blackboard as the content was used for the exams. I also had to take weekly and monthly tests to be evaluated if I memorized or understood the textbook. There was no consultation nor communication between the teachers and the students, and sometimes the teachers told off, rebuked, criticized instead of cheering, encouraging, supporting without any consideration of **individual learner differences.** In this process the students’ role was mainly to listen and concentrate on taking notes instead of communication. No teachers ever applied **three learner modes** nor **multiple intelligence theory**, so proper approaches to their students were barely made to enhance **effective teaching**. Hence, the teachers were typical **explainer** rather than **involver or enabler** and there was no **respect, empathy** and **authenticity** towards the students, and it caused me poor motivation and low morale.

The lack of **assessing language proficiency** for the students was also a big element to inhibit my L2 Acquisition. The class comprised various levels of students without any level test, so each individual’s English level was ignored. Many students who had lower level than the class level naturally be excluded and eliminated in the class as they had tremendous difficulties to obtain comprehensible input supported by **the input hypothesis** of L2 Acquisition. The higher level the teachers required, the more students were eliminated from the class. The Anxiety level went high and it naturally hampered my enthusiasm with the affective filer supported by the **affective filter hypothesis.** The class was full of anxiety, low self-esteem and low motivation because the scores of the weekly and monthly test, which is basically a paper test only, were regarded as the absolute criterion of each individual student’s level but other tests such as speaking, listening, writing were not taken at all. Consequently, the learning system was activated all times and the monitor strongly prevented fluency of the students according to **the monitor hypothesis.**

The teachers never attempted to provide the students with audio-visual, live-demonstration, discussion groups/cooperative learning, and experiential learning but unilaterally preferred to provide a lecture to impart the knowledge in the textbook to me. When they explained grammar, they simply instructed me to memorize it as if we memorized a mathematical formula. Occasionally they confided their own lack of understanding by saying ‘I don’t know. It is hard to explain but you keep memorizing what you learn, someday you will eventually understand.’ With constant torment of fruitless memorization, my learner retention rate was naturally maintained low. I am now struggling to remember what I actually learned from the classes but cannot recall much. I believe it can be explained only by **learner retention rates**. According to the theory I had naturally low learner retention rate because my explainer type teachers used only lecture to teach English to me. They conveyed a large number of knowledge throughout the lecture, but I nearly forgot all. In the classroom I surely was a **rule-former**, not **data-gatherer** and most students were closely akin to factory workers or soldiers in **traditional teaching**, not in **modern teaching** of **L2 acquisition.**

In retrospect, my middle school English classes were rough and inefficient and my L2 Acquisition was a failure. Nevertheless, luckily, English showed me its own glamorous attraction as a thrilling gateway to explore a bigger world. I do not want to blame any of my English teachers for their inadequate techniques or insufficient knowledge. On the contrary, I want to make a lot of effort to achieve better L2 Acquisition for my students by applying what I have learned in Module 1 and life-experience if I become a teacher in the future. I, as English learner, also hope my untiring journey for L2 Acquisition can be eventually successful.

Word: 750