

My Experience of L2 Acquisition – a Success or Failure?

510 Words

It is difficult to categorize my experience with second language acquisition as success or failure. Although my fluency is not enough, I am still able to communicate with native speakers. In this essay I will discuss my experience from the time I first started learning English in middle school to my 40's in America.

In middle school and high school, I only learned English focused on Grammar, reading and lexical specificity. These skills refer to **Language Skills and system**. Most of my English teachers taught by asking simple questions and giving long explanations. My teachers were Explainers and light Involvers by **Three Teacher Types**. Usually I learned from textbook with pictures and audio system without any Kinesthetic method. The reference is **Three Learner Modes**. Because of my good relationships with my English teachers of middle and high school, I felt motivated to study. This type of motivation was by **Individual Learner differences**. Thus, my English grades were good. However, I couldn't say anything in front of a native speaker out of fear and anxiety.

Once I reached over 30 years old, I settled in the US. Learning English then became a necessity to survive. Teachers from my adult school were patient, enthusiastic and respectful to their student. Most importantly they empathized with students' problem, culture and beliefs. I was very encouraged by their attitude, which allowed me to have an open mind. This reflects **effective Teaching**. Most of the American teachers I have learned from were often student-centered and communicative. For example, they utilized horse-shoe shaped desk arrangements, small group discussions. These are referred by **Establishing a Classroom Dynamic** and **Traditional vs. Modern Teaching**. My level at the time was Low intermediate, because my grammar and vocabulary were advanced-intermediate but fluency and listening were below intermediate. This reference is **Assessing Language Proficiency**. I learned new English vocabulary through cross word puzzles. This activity uses Logical intelligence, Visual intelligence, Intrapersonal intelligence and Linguistic intelligence. This is an example of **Multiple Intelligence Theory**. Experiential learning such as living in America and interacting with native speakers was more effective for my second language acquisition than lectures or reading. This is an example of **Learner Retention Rates**. Whenever I tried to have a conversation with a native speaker, I thought too much about grammar and perfect sentence.(Monitor Hypothesis) Even though I had a high motivation, my self-esteem was very low and anxiety was very high.(Affective Filter Hypothesis) This made it more difficult for my second language acquisition. This is referred by **Second Language Acquisition**.

After comparing my second language acquisitions in Korea versus America, I realized that experiential learning is very effective, even though I lived in Korean communities in America. My second language acquisition was successful in the aspect of just experiencing America. On the other hand, I did study than acquisition and still have a lot to improve in the aspect of fluency. Also I realized that emotional conditions(Affective Filter) had a very important effect on me as a second language learner.