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Essay Topic: My experience of English Acquisition – a Success or Failure?

There are two main ways to get the second language. The first is the 'acquisition way', and the second is the 'study way'. Both can be ways to learn English, but from an English teacher's point of view, the more effective, quicker and easier way to learn English is the 'acquisition way'. 'Second Language Acquisition' can be defined as the way to get the new language as nearly the same way as how we get our first language. When learning an instrument like the piano or guitar, no one try to study it. An instruments should be familiarized with practices. When I learned English, I tried to 'study' English. The result was not a success, but a failure. In this essay, I would like to write about my six years of English learning experience, from the first year of middle school (age 14) to the third year of high school (age 19).

For 6 years, I have learned English by 4-5 teachers. First of all, I will share about *the teachers' type*. All of these teachers used traditional teaching methods. First, no teacher tried to form a relationship (**rapport**) with the students. That is why, as a young student, I basically had no 'hearing heart' of these teachers. And I didn't even have a 'desire' to get English. Second, from the viewpoint of the **quality of an effective teacher**, the teachers did not check the students' understanding nor review their condition. Therefore, it could not be an effective teaching. Third, teachers were not interested in **individual learner differences**. They did not try to find out the differences asking the students what their motivation to learn English was, what their interests were, etc.. Fourth, in the **multiple intelligence theory**, they did not consider each student's strongpoint, thereby hindering the **comprehensible input**.

Secondly, I will share about *the classroom atmosphere*. There were over 50 students per class in traditional classrooms. All the students were to sit facing the blackboard in front of them. First, from the **classroom dynamic** point of view, the amount of students per class and the type of classrooms were inefficient, not letting them be active to participate. Second, in the **teaching style**, teachers were traditional **explainers**, not **involvers** nor **enablers**. Only the teachers mainly talked, and the students were not allowed to speak unless the teacher asked a question, which they did not even ask a lot. They did not allow the students actively think or get involved (involver), nor did they give the students a project or let them get it on their own (enabler). The teachers' only concern was to let the students get good test scores. Therefore the classes were not exciting nor active. Third, in **the** **types of learners**, naturally all students became **rule-formers**, not **data-gatherers** since the teachers made all the students be quiet in classes but accurate in tests. So in this kind of atmosphere, many students were not motivated but simply got bored of English. The students' only concern was to get high grades in tests. Each student's **language proficiency level** was ignored. Classes were not divided according to each level, so over 50 students had to learn same contents together.

Finally, I will share in terms of *the teachers' teaching methods*. It was focused on **lexis** and **grammar** only among the **5 Language Systems** (phonology, lexis, grammar, function, and discourse). They first read the textbook for each lecture and explained the grammar and lexis by interpreting the text into Korean. In **Stephen Krashen**'s point of view, students were thoroughly monitored by the teacher (**the monitor hypothesis**), and only accuracy, not fluency, was emphasized. Teachers did not allow students to naturally correct themselves. The **motivation** of the students was neglected; it was difficult for them to have **self-esteem** or confidence without chances to speak on their own most time; rather, **anxiety** about English became inherent in students' emotion. The result was that an affective filter was formed in their brain and hindered acquiring English (**the affective filter hypothesis**).

In conclusion, my English learning experience was not effective, considering my past 'teachers' type', 'classroom atmosphere' and 'teaching methods'. As I write down this essay, I feel the importance of 'motivation' and good 'method'. For me, learning English was not simply interesting, not causing a good start. And I did not know the importance of acquisition. So based on my past experiences, now I decide to be a good teacher that people may really enjoy English.

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