TESOL 01: Second Language Acquisition Assignment

65rd TESOL - Jay Song

I met David when I was first grade in elementary school. I couldn’t remember his last name or anything else about his personal information, but what I can remember is he was my first native English teacher whom I called David and what I learned from him. At the very first time I saw him in my class, my friends and I was scared about our new looking teacher because he was totally different from other teachers. He was bigger than any other teachers, has different color of eyes and skin but mostly he spoke different language which I heard from only from movies. I had English class with David once a week and had fun while drawing, making, or playing during this class. I felt it was more like play time. However, during those playing, we were defiantly learning English. It was my first experience about learning second language and enough to induce get interest about English.

However, learning a second language is not easy as learn our own language and it couldn’t be fun anymore when I grew up. In middle school and high school, a system of Korean classes is only focused on exam. For this reason, our class were stricter and formalized than American’s. We only concern about a success or failure on the exam. Therefore, we studied English only for read, memorize and find the right answer. It didn’t seem different any other classes which we were studying usually such as History or sciences. The way that they taught was just lecturing; that’s all. Since I studied English only for exam, it wasn’t interest anymore.

Nevertheless, there was other opportunity which drags me in to interest about English when I was sophomore in University. My parents sent me to the United States for studying during the summer vacation. The first impression of the ESL class was confused because it was similar with my English class at elementary school. I mean the class was uninhibited. While I wrote about my story, I found some differences among my three experiences such as different style of classroom, teaching and learner.

A decided difference is shown in type of classroom. In comparison with English class at United States and a high school classroom, a high school classroom was much more traditional because we just focused on the exam at that time. In my memory at high school, our teacher was always located in front of students, led the class, busy to talk for lecturing us and student were just listen and wrote it down for memorizing. Students kept silence during the class; thus, we seemed we didn’t actively participate in class. Otherwise, class at ESL was represented modern classroom. As we learned, the teacher’s location varies with the situation. Teachers were more like helper or facilitator than being an explainer and they made student to communicate with other students. As so, I could see higher participation in this classroom.

Another difference is type of teacher. According to the three types of teaching which we learned at class, my teacher at high school was an explainer. She has plenty of knowledge about the subject and lots of experience of teaching. For getting better test score, we needed to memorize more words and grammar rules. That’s why our teacher was more focused on lecturing. Because she led the class, what I had to do was a listening lecture and taking note. During the class I didn’t participate actively. I think less participation occurred reducing my interest about English. However, the teachers in college at United States were different. Some of teachers were enablers but mostly were involvers. They also were experts of what they taught and they did also lecturing but the difference was they knew what more effective way to teach is. This type of teachers may encourage students to participate in class.

Also the style of teaching can be varied by different type of leaner. We cannot teach same material to children and adult or treat them a same way. Sometimes we compare child with canvas. They don’t have much knowledge or life experiences; therefore, they could absorb what we taught. But they forced to being at class, the teacher has to be concerned to lose their interest. While children are forced to be there, the adult learners choose class with strong motivation. I choose English class to improve my language skill when I was a university student. Every class was scheduled by my decision with basic knowledge so I knew what I needed to learn. As we mention is class, the adult leaner has strong motivation to learn, clear goal to achieve and they already had knowledge. Thus, teacher of adult learner should consider students’ life experience and knowledge and incorporate students’ knowledge.

Of course we cannot judge which way of teaching is right or which way is wrong but we can say what we have to concern and how can we effetely teach the learners. A teaching is depends on the learner, such as how old the students are, what their level is, what they expected to learn and more. For instance, although we can give a chance to lead class to adult leaner, we cannot make children to lead class or give freedom to choose classes. Also, different type of teaching and different pattern of classroom work differently. The traditional type of classroom and explainer teaching type can be work if we teach history or literature by our own language; however, learning a second language is not same as learning other subjects by our native language. Because learner doesn’t have the innate ability to learn second or third languages, we need to prepare effective skills to teach them. Lastly, we need assessment about the learner before we prepare classes. Those are all about what we were discussed at class learning the concept in Module 1 and we cannot avoid any of those articles.