My success learning a second language, English

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From years before, I have been asked about my success learning English. Almost all people who asked me of the way to study English thought that I had studied abroad but I have never been to some countries to study English. The language and I were enemies when I spent middle and high school days. However, I have been a second language speaker. I can speak English now, there are three successful facts.

First of all, I was an autonomous and self-directed learner. After twenty years of age, my learning English speaking often ended in fail although I tried to take speaking classes many times. Those were always very boring so I just attended each class for only three or four days. However, I had to get more than 800 points on the TOEIC when I was finishing the university. That was not just my wish or dream. That was a precondition for a graduation. I went for the doctor to find out a best way, book and also a best instructor to me. At that time, I watched almost every renowned lecturer’s sample class on the Internet and finally I could get high score from TOEIC.

My effort and plan to learn English did not end there. I felt my reading and listening skills improved, while writing and speaking skills were going round in circles. Actually, my goal for higher score on TOEIC rose and also I was eager to ask an instructor some questions in person. That was how Mac, a TOEIC expert, and I were met. Learners in that class were all upper intermediate or advanced because we all got above 850 on TOEIC. Mac, first, showed his 36 report cards and those were all perfect. He mostly gave a lecture, 99% in the class. For the most part Mac was an explainer. Mac always kept his distance from learners and he even went out of the classroom to give more comfortable time while his students were taking a daily test which he made from last month TOEIC as well as he answered students’ questions as best he can. His grammar was really excellent, of course, but his pronunciation was not good. Learners were surprised at his clear and authentic lecture, managing time and treatment of students but more surprising was that he admitted his poor pronunciation so he gave time to listen to native speaker’s pronunciation. Mac provided learners with useful vocabulary note every day and explained how the word use with other words, he often used an expression “collocation”, and also demonstrated the word applied to actual TOEIC.

My first content has been from my effort, student’s own effort, and second has been from good teacher. Lastly, I would like to mention something from both. I think there isn’t only one perfect answer of a good way when a student learns a second language. Some people may say GTM or DM are not good but ALM or TPR are better and also I sometimes see some people say CLT is the best methodology in teaching a second language. However, in my case, I realized the difference between acquisition and learning also I knew the difference of sentence order between Korean and English. Even some native speakers tell me “your grammar is really nice when you speak or use English”. I was afraid of making errors, of course, but I would rather use my habit to monitor so I cannot speak idioms or spoken language well, on the other hand, I can make formal sentences. I continued to make sentences and read out correct sentences or good test of a speech over and over, and I had a wonderful time to teach other learners through Mac’s other teaching and managing techniques. He gave us some additional materials for us to use in group study after his class every day. About 5 learners prepared his/her materials to teach others, and I was so excited about listening to other students’ lectures or making my own lecture because our style and intelligences were all different. Even though the type of TOEIC was almost same, our approaches were different, each. I did not try to be perfect in everything. When a team member gave us video clips or music, I skipped or rarely enjoyed it. I just kept my style and sometimes referred to the others.

My success learning English is from my, teacher Mac’s and our efforts. Good teaching can influence on learners. Meeting Mac was a good chance to learn English well but before that, I did my best as a learner.