My Failure learning Afrikaans in South Africa

Jung Hun Hur (Kathryn)

(522 words)

It is definitely worthwhile to acquire foreign languages despite it is hardship. When I was in High school, I had to take Afrikaans as my second language subject in High school in South Africa. Afrikaans is one of the South African languages. In my situation, it was hard to learn both English and Afrikaans one at a time, and Afrikaans was unfamiliar for me, and also it was compulsory subject that I had to take. The following paragraphs will explain the reasons I failed to learn Afrikaans, and these are traditional teaching, no visual input and affective filter hypothesis.

First of all, the reason I failed to learn Afrikaans was the teacher’s teaching style. Her teaching style was traditional and teacher-centered. She was very strict to learners and she only used text book, and everything explained by lecturing in Afrikaans. Her language systems focused on syntax, function and discourse, and her language skills focused on Reading listening speaking and writing. It was difficult for me to understand the lecture, and could not catch up the work. All the learners in Afrikaans class had different levels, but their levels were all above intermediate, and I was the only one in beginner. The learners’ sitting were fixed, and all the works were in individual. If the teaching was more in learner-centered, and had group work, then I could learn more easily by interacting with peers, and with the assistance of classmates.

Second, My Afrikaans class had no visual input. My Afrikaans teacher type was Explainer and she never used visual images or any various materials to teach the learners. I am more visually developed than verbally, especially in learning second language, because I cannot concentrate on lecture, andI think one picture is worth than a thousand of hearing. During the class time, I had an experience to read a passage and explain to the teacher in Afrikaans, which was for mark, but I had no clues what to say because it was written in full text without any images. I think it is easy to understand through visual images and I should get more interested in Afrikaans. This could be positively influence on learning Afrikaans.

My last reasons of failure learning Afrikaans is Affective filter Hypothesis. I think to learn second language needs to have the patience to success, and also needs to have self-confidence and self-esteem. In my situation, teacher was not aware of my learning problem, and treated me same as the learners who had the level above intermediate. I had to write an essay and doing speech for mark. It was very stressful and feels uncomfortable to learn Afrikaans and pass the grade. I think teacher’s role and relationship with learners are very important to develop the learner’s self-confidence and self-esteem for learning language.

To conclude, the reasons I failed to learn Afrikaans were traditional teaching, no visual input and Affective filter Hypothesis. I could not reach to the goal but it was a valuable experience to learn other language. Although these three points leads me to fail to learn Afrikaans, I still gained a lot of knowledge from Afrikaans class.