**My personal perspectives**

**On studying second language in the UK**

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It was windy and cold when I arrived in the UK for the first time to take a language course. I was only 14 and went to a language school called “BSSC”, Bedford school study centre, in 1997. By that time even though I had studied English for more than 2 years in South Korea, the only thing I could understand was “hello” and “bye” due to a different pronunciation compared to how I learned and the anxiety facing foreigners in person. In this Essay, I’ll be talking about two teachers I met in the language school who had a much different teaching methods.

There (at BSSC) I took lessons according to the level of English graded on the first day of the school. There were 5 classes, A to E; A being the highest level class. My first class took place at Level D. I was ever so embarrassed as I didn’t understand any words the teacher was saying to me, so another Korean student had to translate what she was saying. That is when I first decided that I had to put much effort into learning a second language. Perhaps that is also when I first thought communication is very important as ‘not being able to communicate with others’ was feeling like ‘losing my whole world’. **Malcolm quoted “Adults are goals-oriented” which I totally agree with.** If I wasn’t so embarrassed in the class by that time, I might still be unable to speak English as I wouldn’t have a strong motivation.

In the very first class, I met an American teacher; Mrs. Parsons; who I think was much of an Explainer. She began lesson by reading out hand-out’s first and then explain what it meant ,not giving much chance to students to speak out than to answer her question. But solely being an explainer can be problematic to students. They may lose concentration, get bored, not an efficient method to hand over the information. Though it was a good for the student who first faced English to speak or listen as we were all very intimidated to talk in English that we might make mistakes in speaking. As there were 5-6 lessons a week with her, we all got bored and lost concentration after 2 weeks. Even so, as time went by most of the students showed improvements and we all started talking in English all the time even outside of classroom. The grammar or the sentence structures the students used were not necessarily correct but we were picking up slowly.

Usually a class consisted of 5-8 students seated in a ‘horse shoe’ arrangement. Even though the class size was small, the teaching was traditional. This method usually allows one way communication from teacher to students so the teacher talk time is long. This was okay for the first time second language learners as there weren’t much to elicit from them. But it had limited influence on improvement in speaking as students only speak and write just for answering topic-related questions. For this method, it wasn’t so good for intermediate and above students as they crave for more productive activities.

Another teacher, Mrs.Heffils, who was from Scotland usually taught language using lots of different methods like vocabulary exercises, songs, grouping students in small numbers and practical exercises. Mrs.Heffils was such an Involver and Enabler. She tried to elicit from the students by giving simple hint (modeling) word on the white board. Therefore, students were more engaged while guessing what she tried to elicit from them and had much longer talk time. Through the activities and assignments we were given in the class, we got familiar with some strange English terms and idioms and mostly it was rather fun. The class was always enjoyable and at the end of the lessons students learned a lot. Remembering English lyrics and idioms helped making full sentences when speaking in real life.

Kinesthetic physical ice breakers were sometimes introduced in class such as making ice-cream. Mrs.Heffils demonstrated how to do the activity then students would try to do the activity and at the same time they made as many English sentences as they could along with new vocabularies she told them in the beginning. Mrs.Heffils also taught the phonology of words and let students to try to say it to make the new words familiar to students. So the student’s retention was usually high with her teaching method. Also, students got active feedback with studying English from her whenever she was around which allowed them to build a rapport with the teacher. This, as a result, enhanced student’s learning curiosity and willingness to learn more.

Language can be learned by students in many ways; studying in classroom, picking-up naturally in life (immersion), learning by themselves using many helps (books, e-books, DVD’s etc.)

In the past the traditional teaching thought to give students a lot of information. But people realized that it was ‘mug and jug’ where teacher’s knowledge was just poured into students and was not so effective.

Modern teaching includes many different activities such as kinesthetic physical activities so students are more engaged and so talk more productively in class. There is more interaction between students and teacher which will enable them to build rapport. Teacher’s teaching style is also important that Enabler and Involver would let students to develop languages in diversity as they know how to use the time management. Teaching using modern methods will give students better opportunities to learn the language fully.